Selling and lending e-books
Changes in the Swedish literary field

Birgitta Wallin
Selling and lending e-books: Changes in the Swedish literary field
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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science, University of Borås.

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In memory of

my father Sven-Erik (1939-2014)
my brother Peter (1964-2015)
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This thesis deals with public libraries and booksellers as the distributors of e-books. It is part of a research project, that was funded by The Swedish Research Council and it included funding for a doctoral student. The e-book research project, *The case of the e-book in a "small language" culture: Media, technology and effects in the digital society* (grant number 340-2012-5740) was a four-year project that commenced in January 2013 and finished in January 2017. The objective of the project was to examine the whole chain of e-book production, distribution and use in Sweden and the actors involved in it, from authors, publishers, booksellers, public and academic libraries and readers.

As the doctoral study was part of the larger e-book study, some of the empirical data collected for the doctoral study have previously been analysed by the author of this thesis and published in two chapters in the monograph *Books on screens: Players in the Swedish e-book market* (Bergström, Höglund, Maceviciute, Nilsson, Wallin & Wilson, 2017) as a result of the project research. The empirical data for these chapters was collected using two questionnaires, one for booksellers and one for public libraries, and seven interviews including two aggregators, two online booksellers, two physical bookshops and one subscription service.

The methods and data collection instruments were designed by the author of this thesis. For the thesis, ten additional interviews were collected with one subscription service and nine physical bookshops. This was added to the previous data and interpreted using a different theoretical framework than in the book. In the project monograph Winston’s (1998) innovation theory was used for interpretation of the data. However, in this thesis the theoretical framework consists of Bourdieu’s (1996, 1993a) field theory, Mintzberg’s (2003) strategy theory and Winston’s (1998) concepts of suppression of radical potential and supervening social necessity. The text in this book is entirely original and written specifically for this doctoral thesis.

Professor Lars Höglund, Project Coordinator
Professor Elena Maceviciute, Principal Supervisor
Birgitta Wallin, doctoral candidate
Abstract

This study explores the actors distributing e-books in the Swedish book market. The focus was on public libraries and booksellers, which included aggregators, subscription services, online booksellers and physical bookshops. Field theory (Bourdieu, 1996) was used in order to investigate the positions, dispositions and capitals (social, cultural, economic and symbolic) of the actors in the literary field. Innovation theory (Winston, 1998) was used to identify the suppression of radical potential and supervening social necessity of the e-book on the Swedish book market. Different strategies utilised by the actors in the changing digital market were explored using the concepts of planned and emergent strategies (Mintzberg, 2003). A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used for the data collection. Surveys were used in order to reach a large portion of the respondents and semi-structured interviews were added to reach additional respondents and get further in-depth responses.

Key findings revealed that the e-book distributors in the Swedish book market maintain their positions by adapting to the changing digital market. There are two main strategies found in regard to e-book use: the first in which the use of e-books is encouraged in order to maintain relevance for customers and library users; the second in which physical bookshops and some public libraries are passive and do not encourage the use of e-books when it comes to their customers and library users. The risk of disintermediation was considered to be low and was really only the concern of one aggregator who was the mediator of e-books between publishers and public libraries and booksellers.

The tensions found mainly concerned the availability of e-book titles and conditions of selling, licensing, lending and use of e-book titles as dictated by the most powerful actors in the field. There were ideological tensions which emerged with e-book lending which were not present with print book lending (at least not from the beginning of the 20th century). Booksellers considered that e-book lending was unfair competition as the principle of one book and one loan was no longer valid given that e-books can be lent out to several library users simultaneously. Public libraries were worried about the better usability and technological advantages offered by commercial e-book providers as they offered more attractive options to their users. The findings
illustrate that there were social necessities pushing and radical potential suppressing e-books on the Swedish book market, which were sometimes created by the same actors.

The study contributes to research that explores how actors in small language markets, like the Swedish book market, can deal with the changes brought on by the digital production and distribution of books.
Acknowledgments

On April Fool’s Day 2013, I embarked on this journey and it felt like I was going on an adventure. Then reality hit me and the first year was demanding, the second year was laborious, the third year was onerous and after the fourth year I went into a bit of a decline. Nevertheless, here we are, almost six years later, and the thesis is finally finished.

There are some people who have been particularly helpful during these years. First of all, I wish to thank my supervisors, Professor Elena Maceviciute and Docent Skans Kersti Nilsson, without whom there would be no thesis. I am so grateful for your belief in my ability and for encouraging me to begin this journey. I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to work alongside, and learn from, the professors in the e-book research project, Thomas D. Wilson, Lars Höglund and Annika Bergström.

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“Cela est bien dit, répondit Candide, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin” (Voltaire, 1759).

Birgitta Wallin
Borås, December 2018
1 Introduction

This thesis explores the situation of distributors of e-books in the Swedish book market, that is booksellers and public libraries, and their strategies related to this relatively new development that is causing disruption in the whole book sector (Law, 2016; Colbjørnsen, 2015a; Wilson, 2013; OECD, 2012). The impact of technology on writing and distribution of printed and digital books has changed the conditions for the actors in the literary field. Books are an important part of the culture of a society, which can be seen in how the society expresses its relation to the book, both as an intellectual and aesthetic (cultural) asset as well as a physical, material object (Kurschus, 2013; Raabe, 2002). Today, books are mass-produced and their value, economically and culturally, compared to the hand-written books of the monasteries, before the printing press, is low (Borg, 2014). The codex has been the dominant form for disseminating information and knowledge for hundreds of years (Darnton, 2014; Kovac, 2008; Steinberg, 1972). The book market is built on printing and printed books and the order of the book is still prevalent today despite of the digitisation of books (Darnton, 2014; van der Weel, 2011). The codex offered a better reading experience than the scroll and the codex is still unchallenged as a medium (Darnton, 2014; Kovac, 2008) but the e-book offers new possibilities for the readers.

The Swedish book market is a small language area with a restricted market for books in the Swedish language (Bergström, Höglund, Maceviciute, Nilsson, Wallin & Wilson, 2017). Concentration of ownership and vertical structures affect several aspects of the market, such as access and the price setting of books (Steiner, 2015a; Rimm, 2014; Government bill 2013/14:3; SOU 2012:65; Rønning, Slaatta, Torvund, Larsen & Colbjørnsen, 2012). The distribution channels for e-books, both commercial and public, offer the

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1 A small language area or markets are countries with languages that are spoken by a few million people or less, of which Swedish is a good example. Large languages are for example English, Spanish and Mandarin, which are spoken by hundreds of millions of people, and many also speak these languages as a second language.
readers access to digital books. The commercial distributing actors are diverse as some business models are directed towards consumers and others to businesses and public libraries. However, the commercial and public actors are competing for the same readers and it appears that e-books have brought back the old controversies regarding the lending and selling of books that were resolved in 19th century (Maceviciute, 2016). The commercial distributing actors in Sweden sometimes access e-books directly from the publishers but mostly from Axiell Media and through their platform Elib. Public libraries are more dependent on Axiell Media for the provision of e-books as there are virtually no other platforms through which they can access Swedish e-books.

The Swedish book market has been under pressure due to changes in the past, for instance the deregulation in the 1970s, which saw new actors entering the market, such as book clubs (Steiner, 2015a). The arrival of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) meant that people spent more time online, which in turn led to commercial actors moving online as well. In the late 1990s, Swedish online booksellers started selling books and the advantages they have compared to physical bookshops are that they can stock far more titles and have a higher turnover, which means that they can set lower prices than the High Street competitors (Baverstock, 2008).

Digital technology has made an impact on the book market and digitisation of books into audio books and e-books is affecting the whole value chain of production and distribution (Bergström et al., 2017; Hillesund, 2007). When new actors enter the book market, they put stress on the established actors, who in turn must try to position themselves in relation to the new actors in the distribution chain of books. The establishment of online booksellers has put pressure on the small, physical bookshops and several have had to close down (Bergström et al., 2017, Olsson, 2015).

Public libraries are important actors in the Swedish e-book market as almost 90 per cent of publishers’ sales of e-books are to libraries (Steiner, 2015a; Facht, 2012). So far, public libraries, not booksellers, have been driving the growth of e-book use and reading, as they are major buyers and providers of e-books to readers on the Swedish e-book market (Wischenbart et al., 2013; Bergström & Höglund, 2014). However, it is important to put this in perspective as e-books sales was approximately 2.85 per cent of the total book sales in Sweden in 2017, including subscription services (Wikberg, 2018). Wikberg (2018) points out that there are missing respondents, so the actual
figure could be higher, but *Boken 2018*, where these figures were reported, is still the most comprehensive report on book sales in Sweden today. It is estimated that about three quarters of the general literature sold is included in the data (ibid.).

The Swedish government considers that the digitisation of books and the ability of libraries to provide e-books, is an important question for the future (Government bill 2013/14:3). The inclusion of e-books in Swedish library collections has been influenced by the idea of provision of equal access in all media formats to all inhabitants of Sweden (ibid.; SFS 2013: 801). The function of public libraries in a democratic society is to provide access to culture and knowledge to all, and they are obliged to offer access to all media formats (Kulturutskottet, 2013; SFS 2013: 801).

There is an ongoing discussion whether printed books, and their position in the literary field, really are challenged by digital books. Statistical data show that few people in Sweden have ever read an e-book, so it would appear that the position of the printed book in Sweden remains unthreatened. Other entertainment media, such as film and music, have almost completely moved from analogue to digital formats (van der Weel, 2011; Benhamou, 2015). In Sweden, books have been slow to follow this trend, and in May 2016, the large online booksellers had about 20,000 e-books in stock (Swedish Publishers’ Association, 2015) In autumn 2018, the websites of the two major online booksellers, Adlibris and Bokus, reveal that they now have between 26,000 and 27,000 fiction e-books in Swedish (adlibris.com; bokus.com).

**Concepts and definitions**

In this thesis, the term “bookseller” refers to companies selling books to consumers or business-to-business. Included in the term bookseller are the aggregators, subscription services, online booksellers and physical bookshops. It is important to note that booksellers are studied as an institution, that is to say bookselling companies, and not as individual booksellers.

---

2 In a field, agents or institutions struggle over positions and capitals. In the literary field, cultural and symbolic capital is important and actors in possession of the right capital can set the agenda in a field. (See, for example, Bourdieu, 1996, 1993a). See further in Chapter 4.
“Online bookseller” is used to distinguish the retailers that sell books on the Internet, from other booksellers, while the term “bookshop” or “physical bookshop” is used for the booksellers that have an actual physical, brick and mortar shopfront. This has lately become more complicated and not as clean cut, as some online booksellers, such as Adlibris and Amazon, have established physical bookshops too, and some physical bookshops sell digital books on their website.

Public libraries are publicly financed and their purpose is to promote the development of the democratic society by contributing to knowledge mediation and the forming of free opinions (SFS 2013: 801). According to the Swedish Library Act, every municipality should have a public library and they should promote reading and access to literature. Their services and media provision should be characterised by diversity and quality (ibid.). Note that public libraries are studied as an institution, not individual public libraries and public librarians are not in focus.

In the mid-1960s, UNESCO’s definition of a printed book was that it is a “bound, non-periodical printed publication of at least 49 pages, exclusive of the cover pages” (Escarpit, 1966, p. 46). A more recent definition is “a printed book is a communication device empowered with navigation tools, used for transmitting longer texts that invoke a variety of different reading practices” (Kovac, 2012, p.190).

There are several terms used for digital books, for example electronic books, ebooks or e-books. The definition of the term e-book is also diverse and according to Armstrong (2008), one of many discussions is about whether an e-book is the content and/or the container. Garrod and Weller (2004) state that there is an important distinction to make between the technology that enables access to the content and the content itself. Armstrong (2008) argues, “that the content rather than the delivery mechanism is the essence of an e-book” (p. 196). Also Garrod and Weller (2004) state that “the term ebook tends to mean actual content – that is books that are available in electronic form, and which can be downloaded from the Internet and read on a variety of hardware platforms with the aid of reading software” (p. 1). Borg (2014) argues that the text cannot be separated from its form in printed books, but the opposite applies to e-books and its content is separate from its form. A simple way of defining an e-book could be to just consider it as an electronic version of the printed book, which is downloaded for reading on e-readers, tablets, smart
phones or computers (Bergström & Höglund, 2013). A more comprehensive definition for an e-book could be a “text in digital form, or a book converted into digital form, or digital reading material, or a book in a computer file format, or an electronic file of words and images displayed /.../” (Rao, 2003, p. 86-87) on a screen (Armstrong, 2008; Rao, 2003).

In book production today, books are inevitably made into digital files regardless of whether they are being printed or made into e-books (Bergström et al., 2017). There is also a distinction to be made between digitised e-books and born-digital ones. The former refers to printed books that have been digitised and the latter means that there may be added value to the text by the inclusion of, for instance links, video and sound. Armstrong (2008) states that an e-book may have audio book capabilities, as sound may be included in them, but it is not correct to assume that audio books are e-books. However, both require software and devices in order to be used by a reader. In conclusion, Armstrong (2008) defines an e-book as “any content that is recognisably ‘book-like’, regardless of size, origin or composition, but excluding journal publications, made available electronically for reference or reading on any device (handheld or desk-bound) that includes a screen” (p. 199). In this present thesis, the last definition is used as it includes any content and device, as well as the term book-like, which well describes an e-book.

The term “digitisation” refers to, for example, making a printed book into an e-book, that is to say going from the analogue format to the digital. On the other hand, “digitalisation” refers to the societal level, when it comes to changing the way we live our lives or changes to booksellers’ and publishers’ business model in how they sell books.

Research problem

The book market is in a transformational phase of change, from paper-based to digital production, dissemination and reading. According to Winston (1998), innovations encounter suppression of radical potential and supervening social necessity, which both enable and hinder them from their establishment in the market. This is also the case with e-books, as there are social necessities which enable the e-book’s being adopted and suppression of potential that constrain the use and growth of e-books in the Swedish book market.

Mangen and Van der Weel (2016) argue that the implications of digitisation for reading are socially and culturally vast and according to Darnton (2014) reading has become more varied as there are more options open to readers. The digitisation of books is also affecting the Swedish book market and the different actors (see Figure 1, Chapter 2) in it are trying to find their place in the new publishing and distribution chain. New actors have emerged to deal with e-books and other digital material, such as aggregators, and subscription services, as well as free Internet sources, for example net libraries, making books that are out of copyright available to readers. Consequently, booksellers and public libraries are in competition with several other providers of e-books as well as other media formats, like video games, films, magazines and social media (Baverstock, 2008).

Competition between different actors distributing digital books leads to the displacement of actors located between producers and the readers of books and it is causing tension on the book market. There are actors who are taking over the roles of others, so there is a chance that booksellers might be replaced by other actors. For example, there are authors who self-publish, libraries who are acting as publishers of university books and online booksellers who are acting as producers and distributors of books, that is publishers, printers, aggregators and libraries (Clark & Phillips, 2014, p. 20; Thompson, 2012).

Furthermore, publishers and authors leave booksellers and libraries out of the book distribution chain by selling directly to readers. However, these changes

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3 Winston’s (1998) concepts of suppression of radical potential and supervening social necessity will be explained further in the theory chapter, Chapter 4.
in production and distribution of books do not necessarily include e-books, as the e-book market is still small in Sweden (Wikberg, 2018). Should the market for e-books grow more substantially, its effects on the actors and the book market will become more apparent. There is a visible tension between actors in regard to e-books and the actors’ possibilities to survive in the literary field.

In a social field, agents and institutions struggle over positions and power (Bourdieu, 1996, 1993a). The positions of agents in a social field is given meaning in relation to other agents’ positions in the field. There are dominant positions occupied by powerful agents, which means that there are agents occupying subordinate positions in the field as well (Bourdieu, 1996, 1993a; Broady, 1983). The disposition, or habitus, of the agents determines which field they will enter but also their position in the field (ibid.).

Booksellers and public librarians are the actors in the distribution chain closest to the readers and most at risk of losing their position if publishers and readers decide to exclude them from the distribution chain. The established patterns of power relationships are shifting between the different actors and the role of the bookshop has been diminishing for some time (Olsson, 2015).

Olsson (2015) states that some bookshops are struggling with profitability and predicts that many will have to close down. The majority of Swedish physical bookshops do not sell e-books today and if e-book sales increase in the near future it might affect them negatively (ibid.). Online booksellers have a stronger position in regard to sales of e-books as they are already providers of e-books. The aggregators have an exclusive position, as they are the intermediary providing a service business-to-business, between the publishers and their customers, for instance bookshops and libraries. Other actors on the e-book market affect and influence booksellers and public libraries such as authors, publishers, academic libraries and readers; however, it is not within the scope of this thesis to address them more than briefly.

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4 A social field is a system of positions between agents and their relationship to one another. There is an elaborate connection between dispositions and positions, as individual positions in a field are decided by their disposition and their capitals (Bourdieu, 2010, 1996; Broady, 1983). See further in Chapter 4.

5 Habitus is a system of dispositions, which includes different capitals, for instance social, cultural, economic and symbolic. Dispositions are capitals embodied by the individual through experiences in work, school or at home etc. A disposition is the way we view the world and it affects how we act in certain situations (Bourdieu, 2010, 1996; Broady, 1983). See further in Chapter 4.
There is a need for further understanding of how the digitisation of books is affecting the Swedish book market and the actors in it, with the specific situation of a small country with a small language market and the laws and regulations that influence it. It is not the technology as such that is studied but how changes in the book market potentially affect the distributing actors in the literary field.

Furthermore, research within the library field on e-books has mainly focused on academic libraries, thus leaving a knowledge gap where public libraries are concerned, especially in Sweden. Libraries together with online booksellers are the main distributors and providers of e-books to readers. In local book markets, public libraries and physical bookshops are collaborators as well as competitors. The situation for libraries and booksellers is uncertain and they need to position themselves in order to find stability, among them but also in the book market as a whole.

In this thesis, the Swedish e-book market and the distributing actors are studied as they are those who are providing the readers with e-books. The actors are public libraries, aggregators, online booksellers, physical bookshops and subscription services, and they will be presented more in-depth in Chapter 2. The changing situation of these actors because of e-books in the literary field makes it interesting to investigate at this point in time. The distributing actors are currently trying to position themselves in the book market due to the new challenges that e-books have brought, and it is likely they will continue to affect the actors in the coming years.

**Research aim and questions**

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the positions and dispositions of the distributing actors, public libraries and booksellers, and the effects of the e-book as a new format in the literary field. Furthermore, the thesis explores the actors’ strategies in regard to the distribution of Swedish language consumer e-books and the supervening social necessities and suppressions of radical potential enabling or constraining their establishment on the Swedish book market.
The first research question will help in examining the distributing actors’ positions in the Swedish book market. The book market is not a static market and several changes have put pressure on the different actors in the past (see Chapter 2). The actors have had to adapt to the changing situations and it has affected their positions in the market. Therefore, it is of interest to find out how the actors’ view the effects of e-books on their situation at present. Bourdieu’s (1996) theory of the literary field and the concepts of position, disposition and capitals (see Chapter 4) are used for this purpose.

1. How do the distributing actors perceive the effects of e-books on their positions and dispositions in the literary field?

Changes in the book market and competition from new actors, leads to tension in some cases, as the actors compete over the same customers and market shares. The second research question deals with the different strategies public libraries and booksellers use, for example, position themselves in the book market and to deal with tensions among actors or changes brought by e-books in the digital book market. In order to reveal the strategies, the concepts of planned and emergent strategies (Mintzberg, 2003) will be used.

2. What strategies are employed by distributing actors to cope with changes and negotiate their positions in the literary field?

When a new product - an innovation - enters the market, there are different forces at play, some enabling the entrance and others hindering or slowing down the establishment in the market. The concepts of supervening social necessity and suppression of radical potential (Winston, 1998) can help determine the potential when it comes to the introduction of a new product (see Chapter 4). The third research question attempts to find if these forces are at play in the Swedish e-book market.

3. What are the supervening social necessities and suppressions of radical potential of e-books in the Swedish book market?

All three questions help in achieving the aim of the thesis and understanding how the strategies of the actors under research and the external forces are related to their situation in the literary field and in turn affect the changes in this situation.
Limitations of study

The respondents in this thesis were public libraries representing the non-commercial sector and online booksellers, physical bookshops, aggregators and subscription services representing the commercial sector on the book market. There is a certain lack of clarity concerning the term “e-book” and what it entails. It became evident during the data collection process that some respondents, both booksellers and public librarians, include audio books when talking about e-books. This is why audio books are often discussed even though e-books are the main focus of the study.

The data collection for this thesis took place between 2014 and 2017 but there are constantly new developments and changes taking place in the Swedish e-book market. In the background chapter news from 2018 is included as much as possible and especially when it is highly relevant for this thesis. The research data in this thesis are limited in time between the years 2000 up until 2018. In 2000, Elib entered the Swedish e-book market to provide e-books for publishers to distributors. This started an increased activity in provision and use of e-books from public libraries, online booksellers and the subscription service Storytel began their business venture.

This thesis was part of a larger study on e-books in Sweden investigating the entire chain of e-books from author, publisher, distributor and reader. The object of this thesis was to study the distributing actors on the Swedish book market. Authors, publishers, academic libraries and readers were not studied in this thesis, but they have been explored and presented in the larger study. The booksellers in the study were limited to those who sell books as their main merchandise and therefore supermarkets, petrol stations and online shops were excluded.

The study was also limited to the provision of consumer e-books in the Swedish language and therefore actors who provide e-books in other languages, like The English Bookshop, are not included. This is also the case for Amazon, Bookmate and Overdrive who all provide e-books in Swedish, but as they are mainly conducting their business from other countries than Sweden, they are not the main focus of this thesis. However, it is difficult to leave them out completely as Amazon especially is an important player on the Swedish market and Overdrive could fast become one. Self-publishing
services, like Bonnier’s Type & Tell, offer authors the opportunity to self-publish both e-books and printed books (Elfving, 2015) but as authors are not included they are not relevant for this study. Free Internet sources are likewise not investigated closely in this thesis.

Positioning and relevance

The book market, publishing, digital books and reading are studied in many disciplines such as media and book studies, history, economics and sociology of literature. The research conducted for this doctoral thesis is positioned within the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) with a focus on public library studies.

The strategies of public libraries and the development of their services in a digital environment is significant for this thesis. The digital development has put new demands on public libraries and the library profession. The services provided need to strengthen the public library’s credibility and legitimacy (Michnik, 2018). In the first draft of the Swedish national library strategy, one identified area is digitalisation and it is suggested that the National Library of Sweden will be responsible for developing a national digital service to equalise the digital services of public libraries in Sweden (National Library of Sweden, 2018).

Books, literature and reading have always been important aspects of the field of LIS, both on a professional and academic level. A change in format from the printed codex, which has dominated book culture for hundreds of years, to the digital book, affects how books are distributed, disseminated, promoted and read. Public libraries are essential for the provision of information, reading and cultural material to communities. Understanding this new format and the impact it has on librarians’ work as well as in our understanding of the book as a phenomenon, is important as we go forward in an increasingly digital world. Public libraries have always been a part of the book sector as buyers of books on behalf of their communities, providing books for education and leisure.

Public libraries are often perceived as competitors to booksellers and publishers, as they offer a service which is different from most other
distributing actors’ services in that it is free of charge to the readers. This ongoing debate about the provision of Swedish literature in digital formats through public libraries, mainly addresses economic issues. (Whitney & de Castell, 2017; Biblioteksbladet, 2012; Swedish Library Association, 2012; Svedjedal, 2012). Public libraries’ strategies, in this particular case, are defined also by the competition of commercial distributors and the debate in the book sector, so this study cannot be done without examination of their direct competitors.

The findings of this study are relevant as they may help disclose the public libraries’ role as distributors of e-books and their unique position in that role compared to public libraries in other countries (Wischenbart et al., 2014; Bergström & Höglund, 2014). The new commercial services are active in driving the market of e-books forward as can be seen in recent developments with the subscription service Storytel which has launched its own e-reader in May 2018 (Dagens Industri, 2018). Up until now the Swedish aggregator Axiell Media has had no competition in their provision of Swedish e-books to public libraries, but this will change when Overdrive becomes an important actor on the Swedish book market. This research should help to identify these issues and contribute to further knowledge about the status of the Swedish e-book market.

Outline of the thesis

This doctoral thesis consists of nine chapter and begins with the Introduction in Chapter One, which includes the research problem and research questions that form the basis for this study. The thesis’s relevance and positioning within LIS is discussed as well as concepts and definitions that are relevant for the study.

Following the introductory chapter, Chapter Two introduces the background to and context of the empirical setting. The chapter describes the actors, public libraries and booksellers, distributing e-books in the Swedish book market and their changing position in the literary field. Chapter Three, presents literature relevant to the study, including previous research and policy documents regarding the e-book market. The library provision of e-books and booksellers’ views on e-books is also reviewed.
In Chapter Four, the theoretical framework is introduced and discussed. The theories used in the thesis are Bourdieu’s field theory, Winston’s concepts of suppression of radical potential and supervening social necessity, and Mintzberg’s planned and emergent strategies. Chapter Five, presents the research methods applied for the empirical data collection, both surveys and interviews are used. For the analysis both statistical and thematic analysis of the data are performed. The limitations of the study and also the ethical considerations of the methods for data collection and analysis are discussed.

In Chapter Six, the results from the public library survey are presented and analysed. The capitals of the public libraries and their strategies used to position themselves in the literary field are analysed, as well as the perceived necessities and suppression of the e-book in the Swedish book market. Chapter Seven, presents the booksellers’ study, which follows the same outline as the previous chapter, with the presentation and analysis of the results from the survey, but also the seventeen interviews with the four different types actors in the booksellers’ group.

Chapter Eight, presents a discussion on the findings of the empirical data and the previous research. In Chapter Nine, the conclusions and contribution of the thesis as well as recommendations for further studies are presented. It is followed by the reference list and the appendices.
2 Empirical context

This chapter, presents a background to the Swedish book sector and market. This will provide a contextual and historical background to the market and the actors, with a special focus on the distributing actors. The first part gives an overview of the public library system, the Swedish Library Act and e-book lending models in public libraries. The second part presents characteristics of the Swedish book market and the commercial actors, such as aggregators, online and physical booksellers, and subscription services.

The Swedish public library system

Sweden is a sparsely populated country with approximately 10 million inhabitants, of whom the majority lives in the larger cities of Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö and Uppsala (SCB Statistics Sweden, 2017). These larger cities house the major libraries but there are also a number of smaller public libraries in each municipality throughout Sweden, giving a total of 290 main public libraries but also additional branches of public libraries (National Library of Sweden, kb.se). In addition to these municipal public libraries there are 20 regional libraries whose original services included interlibrary lending services, deposit collections of additional books etc. Today the regional libraries mainly offer consultancy services, such as professional training and reading promotion in the communities (lansbiblioteken.se). There are also three lending centres serving the regions and they are based in; Umeå in the north, Stockholm in central Sweden and Malmö in the south. In Stockholm, there is repository for foreign language literature, and in Umeå, there is a repository for little-used and out-of-print materials.

Today, public libraries fill many functions even though many still associate libraries with book collections (Eriksson & Michnik, 2018; Höglund, 2012). Digital books have been part of the collection for some time now and Michnik
(2018) considers digital services as important for public libraries in order to strengthen their legitimacy.

Public libraries are important actors on the e-book market as they are large buyers and providers of books and e-books. The Swedish context is very specific compared to other countries, as it is the public libraries that are at the forefront of the e-book trend and not the booksellers (Wischenbart et al., 2013). Public libraries are providing e-books to readers free of charge and thus helping to push the growth of the Swedish e-book market. There are also several free Internet sources that turn printed books out of copyright into e-books and provide them for free to readers. In some cases, public libraries add links to these resources on their websites as a service to the public library users.

The Public Libraries of Malmö and Stockholm both host a digital library and are working together to develop a national digital public library service for Sweden. They have already developed Bibblix, a common digital service for children, aged 6-12 years. It opened for service in 2016, at the public libraries of Stockholm, Malmö and Katrineholm. The aim is that more municipalities will join and open up Bibblix for children at all libraries in Sweden (Digitala biblioteket, 2017). Since 2016, Världens bibliotek is another online library providing e-books in different languages (www.varldensbibliotek.se). Behind it are the national libraries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Public libraries are dependent on local economic and political decisions made in the municipalities. Even though the library visits are decreasing and have been for some time, public libraries are still the most visited cultural institution in Sweden (Höglund, 2012). Höglund (2012) suggests that the reason for the decrease in library visits are other options for accessing books and information, but also a decrease in reading books in general. Teenagers and young adults in Sweden in particular read fewer books (ibid.). Other possible reasons can be that branch libraries have closed down and that distance to a library affects the access and lending numbers (ibid.).

**The Swedish Library Act**

The Library Act (SFS 2013: 801) covers all publicly funded libraries and it defines the responsibilities of local, regional, national authorities and other
bodies for library service provision, funding and maintenance. The original act was promulgated as late as 1997 and due to changes in the supply and acquisition of digital material, a revised act came into effect in January 2014. The law affirms public libraries’ responsibilities to work for the democratic development of society by providing access to information. Furthermore, the law requires public libraries to provide access to materials in all formats, which suggests that both printed and digital books should be provided. (SFS 2013: 801). It is unclear in the Library Act whether it is sufficient to provide a book title in one format or if it is necessary to it in all formats. In the latter case, public libraries that do not provide e-books appear to infringe the law.

In the Library Act, the National Library of Sweden (Kungliga Biblioteket - KB) is also established as the organisation with responsibility to monitor the development plans of municipalities and regions in promoting collaboration within the public library system. Currently, the National Library of Sweden is working on a national strategy for public libraries, which will be presented to the government in spring 2019; a draft version is available as of May 2018. One of their goals is to incorporate e-book titles into Libris, the national library system and catalogue, which would be an important step in order to include e-book collections in the library catalogues.

E-book lending models

In 2012, the Swedish Library Association (Svensk biblioteksförening) had a campaign aimed at politicians stating that lack of availability and the high prices for e-book lending in public libraries was a problem affecting freedom of speech (Whitney & de Castell, 2017). In 2015, the American Library Association (ALA) noted that the Swedish model for e-book provision in public libraries was one of the more successful compared to other such models in other countries (Whitney & de Castell, 2017) The main provider of e-books to public libraries is the aggregator Elib⁶, which acts as an intermediary between publishers and booksellers and public libraries. The Axiell Group and Publit entered the market with an alternative service, called Atingo, for a short period of time. The Atingo service was terminated when Axiell acquired 70 per cent of Elib in 2015 (Axiell, 2015).

⁶ Elib and other commercial actors here mentioned will be presented more thoroughly under the section Commercial distributors in Sweden.
The company name was changed to Axiell Media but the name Elib was retained for the e-book platform.

In the previous Elib service, public libraries were charged a fee for access to the platform and an additional 20 SEK for every e-book loan. However, not all e-books were available for e-book lending in public libraries as publishers placed embargoes on new and popular titles, which were made available for e-book lending months after they were first published (Svedjedal, 2012). As the number of e-book loans started to rise, publishers feared that consumers would prefer lending e-books to buying them. Public libraries in their turn started having problems financing the rising cost for e-book lending, so neither the publishers nor the public libraries were satisfied with the situation. Thus, following an extensive period of negotiation, a new model was introduced in the spring of 2014.

According to a report from Axiell Media/Elib (Waller, 2016), the new agreement means that publishers can set flexible prices, so that newer titles cost more and become cheaper when they get older. Public libraries now have better control of which titles to include and can set a price cap on each loan, which leads to better budgetary control (Waller, 2016). In this model, the publishers set the prices, which usually range from 5 SEK to 999 SEK, even though there are examples of non-fiction e-books that cost close to ten thousand to lend out. The price of new titles is usually lowered within a couple of months and then gradually dropped as the title gets older.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL – Sveriges kommuner och landsting) (2014), have together with the publisher Natur & Kultur actively worked on a better deal for public libraries. Since 2014-2015, they have had an agreement in place with five other publishers apart from Natur & Kultur, namely Modernista, Bokförlaget ETC, Humlan förlag, Melker förlag and Virvelvind förlag. In this model for e-book lending in public libraries there are, first of all, no embargoes on new titles, and secondly, there are three levels of price setting, depending on how new the book is. New titles cost up to 30 SEK, titles that are between 3-24 months old cost 20 SEK and titles that are older than 24 months cost 13 SEK for each loan. Furthermore, all e-books in this model are also provided through Elib’s platform to public libraries. During 2016, the agreement was revised and the next step the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL) is
considering will be the development of a common agreement for e-books, similar to that which is already in place for printed books.

The situation for e-book lending may change since, on November 10, 2016 the European Union (EU) ruled that e-books can be lent out by public libraries on the same terms as printed books (Court of Justice, European Union, 2016). This includes the concept that only one person at a time can borrow an e-book from a library, which is compromising the possibilities of lending to multiple users at the same time. The major achievement is that the EU has acknowledged the right of public libraries to manage e-books in general and to some extent equated an e-book with a printed book as a cultural product.

**E-book lending at public libraries**

In the National Library of Sweden’s statistics, the scale of e-media lending at public libraries in Sweden in 2017 (National Library of Sweden, 2017) shows that e-lending constituted nine per cent of total loans. However, there is a wide range of number of loans between the different public libraries; for example, the e-lending at Borås city library and Ulricehamn city library are 1.5 per cent of their total loans. But it can be misleading to look at a percentage as such, as 1.5 per cent in Borås means approximately 12,000 e-media loans when in Ulricehamn it is approximately 2,600 e-media loans (National Library of Sweden, 2017).

**Table 1**: E-loans at public libraries in Sweden

**Source**: National Library of Sweden, statistics 2012-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>E-loans $^7$</th>
<th>Annual increase</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,073,581</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,543,913</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,600,000</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,504,646</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,879,363</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1,795,501</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^7$ E-loans include e-books, digital audio books and talking books.
In the 2014 report, the National Library of Sweden notes that the question of e-book loans was not answered by a quarter of the respondents. This makes the figure of 3.5 per cent increase very uncertain as the stated 1.6 million number of loans could have been more or less if more respondents had replied. It also affects the 2015 statistics as the real decrease for the year could have been lower. However, the data do show a significant increase between 2011 and 2015 of 57 per cent. It is interesting to note that in 2016 there was a substantial increase while 2017 shows a slight decrease of e-loans.

Audio book lending has increased at public libraries since the release of Axiell Media’s Biblio app in 2017. The app will shortly also include e-books.

**Commercial distributors in Sweden**

The Swedish book market was deregulated in 1970 and this meant that fixed prices disappeared, as well as the system of commission and the control over the establishment of booksellers. The commission system was built on an agreement between the Swedish Publishers’ Association and the Swedish Booksellers’ Association (Svenska Bokhandlareföreningen – SBF), which included fixed prices. Booksellers would not get any refund on unsold and returned books, but on the other hand, they had no competitors holding down the prices and they were able to sell all new titles (Steiner, 2015a). According to Steiner (2015a), the present changes in the Swedish book market with digital technology and e-books can be compared to similar changes in the past, such as book clubs and online booksellers. Book clubs emerged after the deregulation of the book market. They became significant in terms of size and market share in the 80s and 90s but have since declined in importance.

Online booksellers, with Amazon in 1995 and Adlibris and Bokus in 1997, brought with them cheaper books and more titles available to readers, and more English language books (Steiner, 2015a). Online booksellers’ business model relies on low profit margins, with large quantities of books sold for a lower price (Steiner, 2015a; Steiner, 2015b). According to Steiner (2015a), none of these changes has affected physical bookshops significantly or on a longer term as they have retained their market share of around 35 per cent.
since the 1970s. However, free price setting of books have led to some problems for bookshops as some have closed down, while others have shown resilience to the pressure of the changes and have diversified their business (Steiner, 2015b; SOU 2012:65).

There have been several changes in the Swedish book market in the last few years with mergers and changing ownership, start-up companies and increasing vertical integration by the publishing houses and in some cases other actors on the e-book market. One example of this is KF Media, which was formed as late as 2010 and since then has seen several significant changes. In the beginning, they owned the publisher Norstedts, the bookshop chain Akademibokhandeln and the online bookseller Bokus, including its e-book branch Dito. In 2013, Akademibokhandeln merged with Bokia, another large bookshop chain in Sweden. A few years later, in 2015 KF Media sold their share of Akademibokhandeln and Bokus to a venture capital company Accent Equity (71.7 per cent). In 2016, Norstedts was sold to Storytel, a subscription service.

The media house Bonnier is significantly vertically integrated as they own publishers, bookshops, book clubs and magazines, as well as newspapers, broadcasting and film companies. In regard to the e-book market it is interesting to note that Bonnier owns the largest online bookseller Adlibris and part of the e-book aggregator Elib. They have an audio book publisher and started their own subscription service BookBeat in 2015. Bonnier is currently working on digitising their backlist books.

There is also horizontal integration on the Swedish book market, as Axiell and Publit used to work together with developing and establishing Atingo, which was an e-book aggregator and platform offering competition to Elib, especially in provision of e-books to libraries. Atingo was closed down when Axiell bought the majority share of Elib in 2015, leaving its partner Publit without the possibility to continue the work with Atingo.

Free Internet services providing access to e-books are also competing in the book market, such as Litteraturbanken, Project Runeberg, Project Gutenberg and Google books. There are also Internet sources that provide illegal access to copyrighted material. One major actor until recently was The Pirate Bay. Its users shared files with each other and provided films, music and books for anyone who wanted it. Swedish authorities closed it down after a court ruling,
but it was reopened again in six other domains (Russon, 2015). In February 2017, in a court ruling from the Swedish Patent and Market Court, all Internet providers must block access for their customers to pirate sites, such as Swefilmer and The Pirate Bay. In the ruling, it was noted that the Swedish copyright act should be interpreted in the same way as in other European Union countries (Patent- och marknadsöverdomstolen, 2017).

The e-book market in Sweden is still small but growing slowly. Audio books, on the other hand, have grown fast the last few years, perhaps mostly due to new entrants on the book market: the subscription services. In 2014, 28 per cent of publishers’ book production was e-books but the sales were only 2 per cent of their income, of which the main part came from libraries’ contribution with payments for e-book loans through public libraries (Swedish Publishers’ Association, 2014). The situation did not change in 2015; though e-book production increased to 33 per cent of total book production, but the sales remained at the level of 2 per cent (Swedish Publishers’ Association, 2016). Looking at individual actors, Bonnier had a 100 per cent increase in sales of e-books in 2015, and between January and September 2016 their income for digital books (audio books and e-books) was 19 per cent (Wikberg, 2016).

The Swedish Publishers’ Association (Svenska Förläggareföreningen) present three essential conditions that need to be resolved in order for the e-book market to thrive. The first condition that needs to be solved is the differentiated VAT, which is 25 per cent for e-books and 6 per cent for printed books. The Swedish Publishers’ Association considers it important that the VAT is the same for all formats of books. The second condition is regulation of e-book lending in public libraries. According to the Swedish Publishers’ Association, 85-90 per cent of total purchases and loans of e-books come from public libraries, which means that they have a dominant position in the Swedish e-book market (Nyberg, Strömbäck, Rosén, Lindbäck & Nilsson, 2013, p. 5). The final condition that needs to be fulfilled concerns copyright, which must be upheld, in order for publishers to be able to invest in e-books (Nyberg et al., 2013).

In October 2018, the EU finance ministers decided that e-books, audio books and digital newspapers and magazines will also have the lower VAT of six per cent. It is not certain when it will be applied and in legal effect in Sweden.
Aggregators

Elib has been dominating the business-to-business aggregation of e-books in Sweden and has had no real competition. In 2014, one could read on their website that they had 97 per cent of Swedish public libraries as their customers. The company was founded in 2000 by four of the major publishing houses in Sweden: Bonnier, Norstedts, Natur & Kultur and Piratförlaget. In spring 2015, 70 per cent of Elib was sold to the Axiell Group, an IT company selling library management systems, with the four publishing houses retaining a 30 per cent interest. Elib has now changed its name to Axiell Media but the platform is still called Elib. On the platform publishers can upload e-books which are then accessed by booksellers, libraries and subscription services. All Swedish publishers use Elib for provision of e-books to public libraries, including Natur & Kultur. However, Natur & Kultur together with a five other publishers do not follow the free price setting of Elib, but have their own price model with set prices of 13-30 SEK.

Publit is a small publisher and e-book aggregator, offering a self-publishing service for authors, print on-demand for backlists and new books, and the sale of e-books for publishers. Publit also offers distribution services and sales channels for the customers through some of the largest online booksellers, for example iBooks, Bokon, Dito and Adlibris, and subscription services (Publit.com).

Overdrive is an American aggregator providing e-books to public libraries and booksellers. They have been in business since 2000 offering a content distribution service in approximately 50 countries. In 2003, they started to provide libraries with e-books and audio books. According to Overdrive they offer 3.3 million titles, from which each library can build their individual collection (overdrive.com). In June 2018, Overdrive won a procurement deal for e-book provision over its competitor Axiell Media. SKL Kommentus and Overdrive will sign the first agreement on provision of digital books to Swedish public libraries in autumn 2018, if everything goes to plan. However, Axiell Media claim that Overdrive won the deal without having an agreement in place with Swedish publishers (Houltzén, 2018). SKL temporarily stopped the procurement deal from going ahead, but have now concluded that there has been no breach of the agreement in the procurement deal (Laxgård, 2018b). Axiell Media has so far been the dominant provider of e-books to public libraries (Laxgård, 2018a). What this will mean for Axiell Media and
their platform Elib will become clear after this book has gone to press, but it should mean that there will be competition in the Swedish provision of e-books to public libraries.

**Online and physical bookshops**

There is a range of different booksellers in Sweden; for instance, there are general bookshops offering a wide selection of books, but also specialised bookshops offering a specific genre of literature, and academic bookshops providing students with books. There are independent bookshops, chain bookshops, as well as a number of outlets that sell books as part of their merchandise selection, such as online stores, supermarkets, food shops and petrol stations. One important factor that is affecting readers is that there are no bookshops in some municipalities, especially in the more sparsely populated areas of the north. In 2015, 114 municipalities had no bookshop, and 135 had only one physical bookshop. The concentration of bookshops in the big city municipalities is apparent, as Stockholm had 35 bookshops, Göteborg had 14, Malmö had 10 and Uppsala had six bookshops (Olsson, 2015). Physical bookshops in general do not sell e-books nor streaming audio books. However, they do sell CD audio books, but these sales have declined in the last few years and are not as substantial as they used to be (Wikberg, 2018).

Several independent bookshops are organised in consortia, like Ugglan and JB, and they cooperate in certain areas, for instance in purchase. In June 2018, JB and Ugglan merged into one consortium under the name of Ugglan. It now consist of approximately 96 bookshops (Dahlberg, 2018). The bookshop chain of Akademibokhandeln has a subsidiary online bookseller, Bokus, where their customers can buy audio books and e-books. Other sellers of e-books are authors and small publishers who sell e-books from their websites.

There are three main online booksellers in Sweden: Adlibris, Bokus and Bokon. The two first started their businesses in the 1990s and are substantially larger than Bokon, which started its business in 2012. Adlibris, owned by the publisher Bonnier, has now also become a High Street bookshop, as they opened a physical bookshop in autumn 2015 in central Stockholm (Laxgård, 2015). Adlibris mainly sell printed books; e-books and audio books are only a small part of their total sales. They started their e-book platform Mondo in
2013, but it has now been replaced by the Letto app, where they sell both e-books and audio books. Adlibris also have their own e-reader, Letto Frontlight.

Bokus also sells mostly printed books, but e-books are slowly increasing in number of sales. Bokus’s platform for e-books and audio books, Dito, has been in service since 2011. In 2014, Bokus was sold to Akademibokhandeln and a year later, KF Media, the owner of both of them, sold them on to a venture capital company. Bokon, owned by the publisher Piratförlaget, like the others primarily sells printed books, but also e-books and audio books. They have a service known as “send to Kindle” which makes it possible to read Swedish e-books on Kindle.

There are a number of smaller online booksellers in the Swedish book market, for example Saska, a family owned business which was started in the summer of 2016. Its owners work for publishers in Poland, and they sell only e-books. They focus on popular titles, niche genres and also e-books from east and central Europe. AddBooks was founded in 2010 and is a family owned small online bookseller. The book club Bonniers Bokklubb also has e-books in their stock.

Amazon is another large online bookseller on the Swedish market, even though they are technically and legally not in the Swedish book market, and Swedes buy from Amazon USA or UK. Since 2014, Amazon has an agreement with Bokinfo which means they now have access to metadata on Swedish books from all Swedish publishing houses. Bokinfo, previously Bokrondellen, is a database with information about Swedish publishers’ publications, prices and stock.

**Subscription services**

There are several subscription services on the Swedish book market offering audio books and e-books for a monthly fee. The price used to vary with supplier but has now settled at 169 SEK a month for several of the subscription services offering the same level of service. However, some services, like Nextory, has three levels of subscription fees where the user has access to a different selection of books depending on the price. The price
setting is one of the most competitive measures for the subscription services as they offer services similar to one another.

Bookmate is a subscription service based in Russia but they offer e-books in Swedish. BookBeat is one of the newer Swedish services; it started in 2015 and is owned by Bonnier. On June 1, 2018 BookBeat lowered the price from 169 to 149 SEK and opened up the possibility for a family account in which each additional family member pay 49 SEK per month. Readly is a subscription service that used to offer e-books, but has refocused its efforts and now only offers magazines and newspapers on subscription for online reading. They still offer e-books through Kidsread for children up to 12 years.

Mofibo, which is the largest distributor of e-books in Denmark, entered the Swedish market in autumn 2014. In May 2016, Storytel bought Mofibo in order to get access to its international market and to access some of Mofibo’s technical systems. The two companies will co-exist to begin with in both Sweden and Denmark, but Mofibo will close down in the Netherlands in favour of establishing Storytel there instead.

Storytel has also acquired the publishers Massolit and B Wahlström, audio book publishers Storyside and Earbook, and one of Sweden’s oldest and largest publishers Norstedts (Ström, 2016). In March 2017, Storytel acquired the large Danish publisher People’s Press (Svenska Dagbladet, 2017) Storytel is a fast-growing company and since 2010 it has doubled its revenue every year (Allabolag.se, 2016; Ström, 2016). Storytel has launched their own e-reader, Storytel Reader, in May 2018 in an attempt to increase e-book reading in their service which so far has been dominated by audio books (Dagens Industri, 2018).
Table 2: The major commercial actors in the Swedish book market

Sources: company websites, year of prices in force 2018.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overdrive</strong></td>
<td>Founded in 1986</td>
<td>Owner: Rakuten USA CEO Steve Potash</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Booksellers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adlibris</strong></td>
<td>Online bookseller</td>
<td>Founded in 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amazon</strong></td>
<td>Online bookseller</td>
<td>Founded in 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner: Jeff Bezos</td>
<td>E-reader Kindle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bokon</strong></td>
<td>Online bookseller</td>
<td>Founded in 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner: Piratförlaget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Bokus** | Online bookseller | Founded in 1997 |
| Owner: Accent Equity | E-book platform Dito, E-reader Cybook Opus |
| **Akademibokhandeln** | Chain of bookshops | Owners: Accent Equity (71.7%), Killbergs bokhandel, Natur & Kultur. |
| **Independent bookshops** | | Organised in a consortium, for example Ugglan and JB gruppen, who merged in June 2018. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscription services</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Storytel</strong></td>
<td>Founded in 2005</td>
<td>Owners: Jonas Tellander and Jon Hauksson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly fee: 169 SEK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bookmate</strong></td>
<td>Founded in 2007</td>
<td>Owners: Victor Frumkin and Simon Dunlop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly fee: $ 8.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boksnok</strong></td>
<td>Founded in 2011</td>
<td>Owner: Boksnok förlag AB, Michael Hjortholt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital books for children aged 0-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly fee: 69 SEK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Mofibo** | Founded in 2013 | Owner: Storytel |
| Monthly fee: 169 SEK |
| **Nextory** | Founded in 2013 called E2GO | Owner: Frescano Group |
| Monthly fee: 99, 199 or 249 SEK |
| **Readly** | Founded in 2013 | Owner: Joel Wikell |
| Offer magazines and newspapers. |
| Monthly fee: 99 SEK |
Comparison of the distributors

The public library system is more or less homogenous in that it is governed by one law, follows similar acquisition rules, and has collections and services managed according to the same principles. Commercial distributors are much more varied and different in nature, when they were founded and how they operate. Booksellers’ unifying principle is deriving income and profit from selling books and other merchandise. Both e-book lending and e-book sales are very small and insignificant in terms of the operation of both sectors – public and commercial – but in both cases serve the users and readers in Sweden.

The sale of e-media is considerably lower in volume than the e-loans, as can be seen in the statistics provided by the Swedish Booksellers Association and the Swedish Publisher’s Association (Wikberg, 2018). In 2016, the sale of e-books was 338,000 and in 2017, 320,000, which is a decrease of -5.4 per cent. The sale of digital audio books, on the other hand, increased by 15.6 per cent, from 117,000 to 135,000. These figures do not include subscription services and the e-book and audio book use through them. The e-book use in subscription services was 413,000 in 2016 and 891,000 in 2017, which is a significant increase of 115 per cent (Wikberg, 2018).

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8 The data come from the subscription services Storytel, BookBeat and Nextory.
In Figure 1, the distributing actors in the Swedish book market can be seen. The aggregators provide both commercial actors and non-commercial actors with e-books. Public libraries, booksellers (online booksellers and physical bookshops) and subscription services, in their turn, provide the readers with e-books. The free internet sources and the users/readers are not studied in this thesis.

**Reading devices and apps**

When it comes to reading an e-book, a complex set of technologies come into play, such as file formats, reading devices and service provider to use, together with different apps and platforms. It is possible to read e-books on laptops and desktop computers, but the special purpose devices, such as smart phones, tablet computers and e-readers, offer portability. In Sweden, most e-book
readers access them by tablet or laptop computers (Findahl, 2014), but in the USA, special purpose e-readers, like Kindle, are still the most common (Zickuhr and Rainie, 2014).

Adlibris uses the open format epub for its e-books and Adlibris’ e-reader, Letto Frontlight is consequently open for all e-books using the same format. Amazon, on the other hand, uses a proprietary format for its e-books, which means that users of Kindle are tied to Amazon’s selection of e-books (Bergström et al., 2017). It is, however, possible to convert epub-books that are not copyright-protected by use of DRM (digital rights management) to a Kindle-friendly format. But as e-books in Swedish libraries have DRM, it is not possible to use a Kindle for reading library e-books.

The subscription services as well as the online booksellers Adlibris, Bokus and Bokon all have apps for their customers to download in order to read e-books or listen to audio books on their reading devices. Apart from distributing their own books to readers through their app, Storytel and their publishers also send their e-books and audio books to Elib so that other booksellers, subscription services and libraries have access to them. Elib is not open about who their customers are on the publishing-side or the bookselling-side, but it seems as though most publishers use Elib for selling or lending out their e-books.
The previous research is used to explore what is known about public libraries’ and booksellers’ adaptation to the new conditions on the book market, in regards to changes in book production and distribution. The distributing actors, public libraries and booksellers, are not usually explored together, but it is relevant to do so as they are in similar positions as cultural providers in the literary field.

In this chapter, Darnton’s (1982), Ray Murray’s and Squires’ (2013) models of the communication circuit of the book are presented. Research articles, books and reports which deal with the aspects of book history, book culture and cultural policies that are relevant for the thesis are explored. Furthermore, the existing research on the book market, e-book provision and management in public libraries and e-book sales by booksellers will be discussed to identify the gap that this thesis could help close.

In order to find research texts for this literature review several strategies have been followed. First and foremost, relevant articles and books have been found via recommendation and snowballing, that is to say, scanning through reference lists in books and articles dealing with relevant research, some going back as far as the 1940s. There have also been searches in databases conducted by the author of this thesis or library staff at the university library. The search strings used were, first, public libr* AND e-book* and the second was Bookseller* OR Bookshop* AND e-book*, and finally, Bookseller* OR Bookshop* AND public libr*. To narrow the search, I sometimes added Sweden to the search string.

In the search for texts, it has become evident that not much has been written about research on e-books in libraries, especially public libraries in Sweden, so it is necessary to look at the more prolific writing of USA and Britain. However, the texts are often from a practical, professional point of view, with the problem of e-books in focus. They are about agreements with publishers
and deals with the day-to-day running of a library and its e-book collection and there is also a general focus on technology, the reading devices, format, DRM etc., and legal issues like copyright as well as the price of e-books.

In Sweden, the large publishing houses own several retailers in book distribution and sales, for example bookshops (Steiner, 2015a; SOU 2012:65). Thus, their trade associations, the Swedish publishers’ association and the Swedish booksellers’ association, often present statistics and trade information concerning bookselling together in reports, such as their yearly report about the book market.9

The previous research will be used to discuss the present thesis’s findings in the studies regarding booksellers and public libraries. The key words used for identifying and selecting the texts for review are, Swedish book market, e-books, public libraries and booksellers.

The book circuit models

There are several models describing the book market, for example the Swedish researcher Lars Furuland’s model (1991) the Literary Process, which includes public libraries as distributors (Steiner, 2015b). However, according to Steiner (2015b), the model has its limitations as it is fairly rigid regarding the different functions and a bookseller is always a distributor and cannot also be a producer. Two additional models presented here are Robert Darnton’s model (1982) the Communication Circuit of the Book, and Ray Murray’s and Squires’ (2013) adaptation of Darnton’s model.

“Robert Darnton’s influential model of the communication circuit of the book, which tracks how intellectual property circulated in eighteenth-century France has been a largely accurate representation of the publishing industry until the late twentieth century” (Ray Murray & Squires, 2013, p. 3).

The model shows activities by actors, for instance libraries and booksellers, in the life-cycle of the book, and Darnton (1982) states that “printed books

9 For example, Boken 2017: marknaden, trender och analyser.
generally pass through roughly the same life cycle” (ibid., p. 67). The model shows the economic and material conditions of the market but also outside influences from the society on the book content, that is to say the written text (Steiner, 2015b).

Figure 2: The Communication Circuit of the Book¹⁰

Even if it is considered an influential and useful model by some, others claim that it has its limitations, as it could be argued that it describes “only part of another larger whole” (McDonald 1997, p.108-109), which of course may be said about most models. McDonald (1997) continues by comparing the communication circuit to Bourdieu’s field of cultural production. The field has its own traditions and ways of doing things and its own arguments and controversies. According to Kovac (2008) Darnton’s communication circuit offers a useful methodological approach to exploring the changes of

¹⁰ The model is adapted by the author of this thesis and the original can be found in Darnton, R. (1982). What is the history of books? Daedalus, 111(3), 65-83.
production and dissemination of books in modern society. Printed books remain analogue in storage and distribution even though they are digitally created (ibid.).

Adams and Barker have criticised that the communication circuit puts focus on the actor rather than the book (Adams & Barker, 2001; Steiner, 2015b; Kovac, 2008; Howsam, 2006; Jacobsson, 2001), but Darnton argues that models have a way of keeping people out and it is his aim to “put some flesh and blood on this one” (Darnton, 1982, p. 69). In 2007, Darnton published a new version of his influential article What is book history? from 1982. In What is book history? Revisited, (2007) he points out that many researchers have made models to substitute his, and he points out that Adams and Barker’s from 1993, the Whole Socio-Economic Conjuncture, is one of the best ones (ibid.). However, the focus in their model is not on the actors as “they shift attention from the people who made, distributed, and read books to the book itself and the processes through which it passed at different stages of its life cycle. /…/ I still would stress the importance of studying the activities of book people in order to understand the history of books.” (Darnton, 2007, p. 504). This feature of the model fits in with the position adopted in this thesis.

Ray Murray and Squires have revised Darnton’s communication circuit to better suit today’s print publishing, and have thus come up with three new circuits: print publishing, digital publishing and self-publishing; in the latter of which both publishers and literary agents disappear (Ray Murray & Squires, 2013, p. 6). Their model describes the situation in the Anglo-Saxon book markets rather than the Swedish as for instance literary agents are not common in Sweden. Several activities that used to be performed by, for instance, publishers are now done by other actors. In some cases, the actors or activities have disappeared altogether. For example, libraries have disappeared but readers have become more influential in the Digital Publishing Communication Circuit. However, it is the same as Darnton’s model in many other ways.
The intellectual, economic and political influences on texts are still there as in Darnton’s model. These influences can be, for example be differentiated VAT for printed books and e-books and cultural policies helping to promote printed books. The problem with models is that they separate the different functions that are performed by the actors, while in the modern book market several actors perform many different tasks (Steiner, 2015b). The model can also be read as visualising a function rather than an actor, so a publishing company can perform the publisher’s role but also the role of a retailer selling books from its website or own sales outlets. It is also seen in the historical model by

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11 The model was made by Ray Murray, P. & Squires, C. (2013) and can be found at https://www.bookunbound.stir.ac.uk/the-digital-communications-circuit2/ The model is adapted by the author of this thesis without the colour scheme of the original.
Darnton (1982) that a book binder could also act as a printer, or a bookseller as a publisher.

In the next two sections, the thesis explores the literature related to the middle elements of the circuits, i.e. on political, cultural and economic influences on book and e-book publishing.

Books and cultural provision

Hesmondhalg argues that it is necessary to start by understanding the distinctive role of the cultural industries as their products “have an influence on our understanding and knowledge of the world” (Hesmondhalg, 2013, p. 4-6). In order to assess cultural industries and their altered cultural production it is important to look into which changes are fundamental and which are superficial (ibid.).

The Internet is an important factor in modern cultural provision and it is helping to transform the cultural sphere by either allowing direct access to culture or providing means to research and plan cultural activities (European Commission, 2006). It is clear that people’s everyday cultural experiences have changed because of the development of the Internet and the web, but has it also changed the “underlying dynamics of cultural production and consumption” (Hesmondhalg, 2013, p. 4-6)?

Digitisation does not only change our cultural experiences; Kurschus (2013) argues that “[t]he increasing mediatization of everyday life changes the structures of human interaction and, thereby, the structure of society and culture. Book culture is a part of media culture and, as such, a part of the changes and developments in communication” (p. 20). O’Connor (2010) points out that printing transformed media and communications, as it gave people access to books, which in turn lead to more people learning to read and thus having access to information outside that which was previously available to them from, for instance, the church (O’Connor, 2010). The production of books has changed again with digitisation, as with the advent of printing which brought us the cultural commodity of mass-produced books (O’Connor, 2010).
Digital books have been a part of the Swedish book culture for some time, and publishing is both commercial and cultural as the book is a product as well as a work of literary art (Kurschus, 2013, O’Connor, 2010; Howsam, 2006). Lundblad (2016) argues that it is evident that publishers are selling books rather than literature as the price of the book is due to the number of pages rather than the content. Furthermore, Lundblad (2016) states that the economic interest of publishers is being curbed in order to promote the publishers and their publications’ cultural value.

Kurschus (2013) states that “[t]he book market may be seen as the economic dimension of book culture” (p. 22). However, digital technology has made the concept of the book more complex and it is questioned what a book is (Borg & Snickars, 2016). There is also a question of the durability of the book as e-books are required to be transferred to new formats and new storage media every few years. Printed books are much more durable and have a life expectancy of hundreds if not thousands of years.

Escarpit (1966) argues that “the book as a thing can have three uses, /…/ [i]t may be an investment, a decorative item or what is now called a status symbol – the sign that its owner belongs to a certain social category” (p. 34). As far back in the mid-1960s when Escarpit’s book was published, he pointed out that the two first uses were more or less disappearing, as reading had become more common and the book therefore became expendable – not a valuable, unique product. However, the book as a status symbol still remains and the book as an object is supported by the improved technology of producing books.

Whether or not these are actual issues can be discussed, as printed books and e-books may have different uses, but Thompson (2012) claims that a “book is a social object to be shared with others” (p. 316). The printed books that you keep on your bookshelf, or place on your coffee table, tell others about who you are. Printed books can have a second life, being lent out to your friends or sold on, and as Chiarizio (2013) points out, in regard to e-books, that the user is a license holder rather than an owner and is therefore restricted in his/her use of the e-book and cannot lend it out or sell it to another reader. On the other hand, digital books can be easily distributed to all and owned by everyone when the copyright restrictions expire. One example of free access to digital books is Project Runeberg, which since 1992 works to digitise Scandinavian books out of copyright.
State intervention in the book market

In the book communication circuit models (Darnton, 1982; Ray Murray & Squires, 2013) some very powerful institutional actors, such as political bodies, are hidden under the circles in the middle. Political bodies influence the book market with political and legal sanctions and legislations.

O’Connor (2010) discusses cultural policies established in post-war Britain in relation to the effects of the commercial market, arguing that cultural policies were needed to regulate the role of the market in order to defend the cultural value against the market value. The high symbolic value of books is often manifested in cultural policies as they are used to support books and book culture (Benhamou, 2015; Kurschus, 2013; van der Weel, 2011). According to Kurschus (2013) the promotion of book culture has become imperative, as it has to face the challenges of the digital revolution.

“However central the book market may be to book culture, market trends and the digital media revolution have resulted in developments that make state intervention in the book market seem expedient. Therefore, book promotion measures such as a reduced value added tax on books are applied by all member states of the European Union. These measures and projects are considered to balance detrimental market effects such as a loss of diversity because of consolidation. Thereby, they address the ambivalent nature of the book as a product and a cultural asset” (Kurschus, 2013, p. 22).

The high status of books brings prestige to whoever controls the book market (Kovac, 2008). Thus, the positioning of the actors in order to gain control is expected. Several researchers argue that literature is a question of culture and education and the book is too important to be treated as any other commercial product to be sold and bought, as the ability to read is fundamental to the individual and to this society (Steiner, 2015b, Höglund, 2012). According to Svedjedal (2012) the predominant view for Swedish national cultural policies are that public libraries are beneficial to the book market. This would indicate that public libraries should have a strong position in the book market.

There is economic support by the Swedish state for printed and electronic books with the purpose to support quality and diversity as well as to encourage the spreading and reading of literature. These books are then distributed to public libraries. During a few years, publishers could also get funding for
digitisation of backlist books and especially if the possibilities of the new media are utilised (Government bill 2013/14:3; SFS 2010:1058, §3).

From a cultural policy perspective, there is also a question of empowering the Swedish culture and language, in which e-books in Swedish are an important factor. In Johannisson, Lindsköld and Sandin’s (2012) text, they show that Swedish literature and cultural policies are democratic policies, as their aim is to offer as many citizens as possible the opportunity both to create and read fiction. By applying measures to promote books, like reduced VAT, it is hoped that the effects of the market will be less significant (Kurschus, 2013).

In the European countries, printed books usually have a lower VAT than e-books, and the higher tax on e-books is due to the fact that they are regarded as electronic services, equivalent to television and radio broadcasting (Baron, 2015). According to Baron (2015), the higher VAT on e-books is detrimental to the European economy as readers instead chose to buy their e-books from providers outside Europe with better prices.

In 2002, an important change that affected the book market was the introduction of a lower VAT for print books, from 25 to 6 per cent, while e-books and other digital media still has a VAT of 25 per cent. The reasons given for lowering the VAT was that the government wanted to stimulate a varied publishing of quality literature and increase the access to and interest in literature for all groups (Lundblad, 2015). However, according to Lundblad, the e-book is fairly taxed and any exceptions of the 25 per cent VAT is very costly for the authorities. Additionally the lower VAT on printed books has not led to any positive effects as promised beforehand (Lundblad, 2015). In December 2016, the EU commission suggested that member states should be allowed to have the same level of VAT on e-books as on printed books.

Public lending rights is another state intervention in the book market to ensure variety within literature provision and fair remuneration to their creators. Copyright holders are thus compensated for the use of their works in libraries through the public lending rights and in 2013, 28 countries had public lending rights in use (Chiarizio, 2013). However, in Sweden public lending rights do not include e-books (Wilson, 2016). In Britain, a law was passed in April 2017 for e-books and audio books to be included in the public lending rights. It will be in effect as of July 1, 2018 (Cowdrey, 2017).
Public libraries have played an important part in the democratic process by making information available to everyone. In the USA, most public libraries provide e-books to readers (O’Connell & Haven, 2013). However, larger publishers are not willing to work with libraries and some publishers have stopped providing public libraries in the USA with e-books altogether as they claim that library lending is cutting into their sales (O’Connell & Haven, 2013; Walters, 2013). The solution O’Connell and Haven (2013) suggest is to deal with smaller publishers that are interested in cooperating with libraries. Publishers use DRM as a mechanism helping commercial actors to protect their profits from piracy copying of their products and it occurs with a number of other similar protective mechanisms, as a method of denying distribution of e-books via public libraries or prohibitive pricing. Chiarizio (2013) suggest that libraries should be allowed to remove DRM from the e-books they have bought and repackage them in the libraries own DRM system to prevent abuse of the use of their e-books.

According to Walters (2013), researchers have identified a number of problems regarding e-books, such as impermanent physical media, proprietary file formats and software, high cost and unsatisfactory pricing models, and also difficulties regarding the move from a product (printed book) to a service (online access). E-book technology offers the potential of unrestricted access to information but the economic goals of the companies who control it are at odds with the range of possibilities. The proprietary formats make it impossible to read e-books on all platforms and in the end, there is a need for a “[r]easonable license provisions that maximize both reading and revenue” (Walters, 2013, p. 194). State interventions, especially, legal and economic, may alleviate some of the occurring problems, but far from all.

**Positions of actors in the book market**

There are several aspects affecting the actors’ positions in the Swedish book market – for instance concentration of ownership and disintermediation – as new actors enter the market. E-books have caused several actors to take a stand and position themselves in different ways. In June 2012, the Swedish Library Association published a full-page advertisement in one of the major newspapers in Sweden: “say hello to your new librarian”
which featured a businessman in a suit, thus, making the claim that the big publishers determined which e-books were available in public libraries, not the librarians themselves (Swedish Library Association, 2012; Biblioteksbladet, 2012, June 28).

The advertisement was followed by two reports by the Swedish Publishers’ Association dealing with e-books and the book market; Freely available or free of charge? The future of the digital book (Nyberg et al., 2013), and The libraries and the book market: from elementary school to e-books (Svedjedal, 2012). In the report, Svedjedal (2012) mainly discusses the history of the book market and its actors, public libraries, booksellers, authors and publishers. The report is slightly outdated as since it was written, there are new models for e-book lending in public libraries and a new library law (SFS 2013: 801). Svedjedal (2012) begins the report by discussing whether there can be an increase of e-book production and sales in Sweden if public libraries block the market by lending out e-books for free.

This is much the same opinions that Nyberg et al. (2013) express in their report; they argue that the dominance of library e-lending in combination with the small revenue from libraries means that it is a financial loss for the publishers and authors. This is contradicted by the statements of small publishers in Bergström et al., (2017) as they see that their e-books find their readers through public libraries and that is where most of their income comes from. Borg and Snickars (2016) argue that e-books’ immateriality makes people borrow rather than buy e-books and they claim that this has stopped the Swedish e-book market from growing.

A Swedish e-book research project, of which the author of this thesis was one of the researchers, dealt with all actors in the Swedish book market and the e-book. The aim of the project was to look at the impact e-books made on the book market and the response from the different actors was varied. The findings of the project, based on vast empirical data, show that there are tensions between the actors, for instance between publishers, libraries and booksellers, but also between the same type of actors both as competitors and in defending their choices and ideologies (Bergström et al., 2017). The actors also seem to blame each other for the lack of success of the e-book, as it is not finding a mature position in the book market. Bergström et al. (2017) conclude that the slow uptake of e-books in Sweden is mainly due to lack of marketing and high prices by the publishers, the reason being to maintain existing
industry structures and profit levels of the printed books. Thus, it is suggested that the future of e-books may be in the hands of other actors outside the traditional publishing industries (ibid.).

**Concentration of ownership and vertical integration**

The book circuits as any of the models show, is a simplified abstract image. They are only the first step (or the last) in understanding the complex, modern media markets. Actors in these markets acquire power in different ways. Book markets are mainly national but there are large media groups that increasingly operate internationally (Kurschus, 2013). These media groups are taking over distribution channels of books by acquiring, for instance, publishing houses, bookshops, technical platforms and book clubs. This vertical integration of the book market and concentration of media ownership is a strategic move in order to be able to influence and control the book market (Rimm, 2014).

The problems with vertically integrated markets according to Rimm (2014), are that this leads to markets with distorted book prices, constrained competition and monopoly as the publishing houses become larger by acquiring competitors. The advantage to these large publishing houses is that the vertically integrated market gives access to metadata and information about customers, data their competitors do not have access to. It is only in the last ten years that the Swedish book market has moved towards vertical integration. Large publishing houses have bought up retailers and distributors, such as online and physical bookshops and aggregators, in order to secure sales channels (Steiner, 2015a; Government bill 2013/14:3, p. 14; SOU 2012:65, p. 262). Thus, they can, if they wish, block competitors’ books from being available in their bookshops (Rimm, 2014; SOU 2012:65, p. 263).

Sweden’s book market is particularly characterised by the concentration of ownership and vertical integration in both publishing and book distribution in comparison to other European countries (Rønning et al., 2012). It has been discussed that these vertically integrated markets are a result of free prices and deregulated markets, but Rønning et al. (2012) conclude that these tendencies can be seen both in countries with free prices and fixed prices on books.

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12 Vertical integration of the book market is when one actor in the chain of publishing and distribution owns or controls other actors, for example when publishers’ own retailers. (Rimm, 2014; Rønning et al., 2012).
There are fixed prices of books in several European countries, but in Sweden the book market has been deregulated since the 1970s. The “idea behind fixed prices is to preserve independent bookstores” (Baron, 2015, p. 192). Rimm (2014) compares the Swedish and German book markets and states that they have fixed prices in Germany in order to protect books as cultural goods, that is their quality, but also in order to protect small physical booksellers and publishers (Rimm, 2014, p. 81). Rimm (2014) claims, that it would be unthinkable for publishers in Germany to own bookshops as they do in Sweden.

It could be claimed that the small and mid-sized publishers in Sweden try to counteract the large publishing houses’ vertical integration by becoming vertically integrated themselves, by extended co-operation and by marketing and selling books through social media and their web (Rimm, 2014). To a large extent, this is made possible by the digitisation of the book market, as it has made it easier for smaller, independent actors to make use of the ‘long tail’, which refers to sale of older titles that are available as e-books or still in stock at online booksellers (Baverstock, 2008; Anderson, 2006). They may have specialised books that only sell a few copies, but together all small sales make up a reasonable income (Rimm, 2014). E-books offer small publishers and self-publishers the opportunity to publish books in small quantities, which has increased lately in the Swedish book market (Svedjedal, 2012).

**Mediators and disintermediation**

In the book circuit (Darnton, 1982), the actors are dependent on cooperation with other actors and some are mediators between different actors. The Swedish book market is structured around different types of mediators that add value to the production and distribution chain of e-books. These mediators are safe as long as someone is prepared to pay for their services in the value chain. However, several researchers have found that the digital market threatens mediators, as the changes brought by technology have led to mediators’ changing their position by taking on roles and tasks previously performed by others, as well as new actors entering the digital book market to perform new roles brought on by technological change (Steiner, 2015a; Waldfogel & Reimers, 2015; Wilson, 2013). This is leading to disintermediation as mediators are being removed completely from the
production and distribution chain of e-books; for example, authors are selling books directly to readers, thus excluding the retailers (Clark & Phillips, 2014; Thompson, 2012; SOU 2012:65, p. 232; Kovac, 2012).

Researchers have shown that publishers will be the main benefactors of the digital book market and that digital content will make it possible for publishers to bypass all intermediaries in the traditional book supply chain (Thompson, 2012). E-books are advertised and sold online and this means that publishers may exclude mediators such as physical bookshops and take on their tasks themselves or use online booksellers (Lloret Romero, 2011, p. 175). Other researchers believe that several other actors may benefit to some extent as well. For instance, online booksellers are presently acting as various mediators in the book market; that is as publishers for authors who self-publish, as aggregators selling e-books business-to-business and as libraries, lending and sometimes renting out e-books to readers (Clark & Phillips, 2014). Steiner (2015a) discusses how large US actors like “Amazon, Apple and Google are refining their methods of disintermediation, technologically, practically and for business purposes” (ibid., p. 23). While Joint (2010) believes that access to e-books is likely to be provided by libraries and suggests that perhaps the solution to a viable e-book business model lies outside the traditional publishers.

Waldfogel and Reimers (2015) argue that publishers have been the traditional gatekeepers in book trade deciding which books to publish, and booksellers as well as librarians have been the second filter, deciding what to stock in their bookshops and libraries and that this again limits what is available to the readers. The digitisation of books and the removal of or diminished importance of publishers and booksellers in the book production and distribution chain has led to that new authors and more titles are being available online to readers (Waldfogel & Reimers, 2015). One reason is that authors self-publish and thus provide readers with new titles that perhaps otherwise would not have been published. Another is the disintermediation by academic libraries who publish open access articles and books written by the universities’ researchers and staff.

Hence, both physical bookshops and online booksellers risk being affected by disintermediation if new actors enter the Swedish book market and if e-book sales grow significantly. The risk for public libraries regarding e-books is twofold: first, the risk of disintermediation lies in public libraries’ budget
constraints and the cost of providing access to e-books to library users. Secondly, there is a risk that publishers decide not to provide libraries with e-books at all, as Walters (2013) states has happened in the USA, thus excluding them from the distribution chain. However, public libraries still have the option of providing printed books to readers. Public libraries are more threatened by the transfer of their functions to private actors.

In the next section, we will look at research on digital services in public libraries – organisations that provide free access to books to all members of the served communities.

**Role of public libraries**

Public libraries have several roles to fulfil in society and are associated with the service of lending out books and other media, such as film and music. One important role is to promote the habit of and joy of reading in people (Svedjedal, 2012; Kovac, 2008). Kovac (2008) states that in some countries libraries are important book buyers and as such significantly impact the ways book industries make profits. However, Svedjedal (2012) claims in a report for the Swedish Publishers’ Association that free lending of e-books in public libraries affects the Swedish book market and the possibility of making a profit on e-books sales thus becomes problematic for publishers. However, in France, it is considered that the expansion of e-book lending in libraries has helped the growth of the e-book market (Wilson, 2016, p. 152).

According to Hansson (2012), the educational mission of public libraries has become less important and public libraries are now competing for customers on the book market. Svedjedal (2012) also argues that the public libraries’ mission used to be to educate and be an alternative to popular culture but that public libraries have become more market oriented in order to reach more readers (ibid., p. 39). Svedjedal states that new public management has made public libraries commercialised in that their efficiency is measured in terms of visitor and lending numbers (2012, p.30).

Statistical output in libraries has been collected since the early 20th century, but according to Huysmans and Oomes (2013) it would be more valuable to measure the societal impact of public libraries through their outcomes and
value to society. The researchers suggest a method to investigate the users’ experience of the outcome in order to be able to pinpoint the value of public libraries to individuals and society (ibid.).

In the mid-1990s, Internet and especially the World Wide Web (WWW) made the availability of information easier than before, and gradually more people had access to personal computers and Internet in their homes. What this meant for public libraries and their role is discussed by Aabø (2005) and the concern was what impact Internet, WWW and digital technologies would have on the use of public libraries. The more information and books are available on the Internet the greater the risk that public libraries become redundant. Therefore, it has to be more rational for people to go to the library rather than search for information themselves if public libraries are to remain relevant in today’s society (Hansson, 2012). However, many households still do not have access to the Internet at home and public libraries’ provision of free Internet connection is a sought-after service (Huysmans & Oomes, 2013).

In his article, Vakkari (2012) comes to the conclusion that Internet use increases the likelihood of public library use as well, as the number of books read and Internet use are strong factors for also using the public library. Choy (2011) states there are four factors that need to be fulfilled for a library service or resource to be used, namely: convenience, awareness, attention and value. In other words, library resources and services will only be used on a regular basis if they are convenient to use, if the library user needs them, if the user is aware of them and if the user has a favourable view of the library services and its resources.

Aabø (2005) argues that the societal role of the public library has not changed due to the development of the digital society but has in some ways strengthened the public libraries’ need to work with inclusion and making the digital divide smaller, as well as functioning as a physical and social meeting place. There is a shift in power from the library to the user when libraries focus more on the digital resources than their print collection (Choy, 2011). The relationship between user and library is important as it defines what a library is and will be in the future. Thus, one could argue that collection management and acquisition is shifting to a user focused collection development.
The importance of the provision of e-books in public libraries in Sweden is stated in the Government bill *Reading for life* (Government bill 2013/14:3). Audunson (2005) suggests that the digital revolution is significant for public libraries, as it is their role to supply the public with a multitude of cultural expressions and values and it is now easier than ever for the public to take part in this diverse communication. Researchers in arts management have found that cultural consumers want instant gratification in their cultural consumption; that is, they want it all and they want it now (Pulh, Marteaux & Mencarelli, 2008). In their article, they look at consumer trends and the strategies of the institutions, like museums and libraries. They have found that new cultural practices are taking place because of digital technology. For instance, public libraries transform how library users take part in culture by the use of new technologies for the dissemination of culture.

In an observation study of families’ interaction in bookshops and libraries in New Zealand during the process of choosing reading material for their children, researchers found that the families spent more time in the public library than in the bookshop. The conclusion they draw is that the library space is more suited for spending a longer time compared to the bookshop. In the bookshops, the children could usually only select one book, while in the public library, the children could select more books to take home and this was a lengthier process (Vanderschantz, Timpany, Hinze & Cunningham, 2014).

**E-book lending and use**

It has been suggested that the more developed e-book markets have lower e-book prices, while in the smaller market of Sweden the prices of e-books are higher, often in the same price range as printed books. This may explain why e-book readers turn to public libraries in Sweden for their e-book provision. In the USA, only one in ten borrow e-books from the library (Rainie, Zickuhr, Purcell, Madden, & Brenner, 2012) but in Sweden more people borrow e-books from public libraries than buy them from bookshops (Bergström & Höglund, 2015; Facht, 2012).

One problem often claimed by Swedish publishers is that there are eight loans for every sale of e-books but for printed books the proportion is one to one (Svedjedal, 2012; Government bill 2013/14:3, p. 16-17). However, this appears to have changed since 2014 when the new e-book lending model for
public libraries began to be used. Maceviciute (2016) has compared statistics from the National Library of Sweden on e-book lending in public libraries with book sales statistics from the Swedish Publishers’ Association in 2015 and has found that the ratio between book lending and book sales is two loans to one sale and compared to e-lending and e-sales the ratio was more even, that is 1.2 loans to one sales. Thus, the negative effect of e-lending in public libraries does not appear to be that significant.

In Sweden, the e-book aggregator Elib was an early actor in the provision of e-books to public libraries. To start with the conditions were straightforward, with a fixed price of 20 SEK per loan and no restrictions on the number of loans per e-book, but as the demand increased, public libraries’ budgets were put under pressure (Wilson, 2016). Since 2014, the new conditions for e-book lending include a differentiated price setting in which newer e-books cost more to lend than older ones (See Chapter 2).

Huysmans (2014) has found four main business models in Europe and the USA and they are as follows: *Unlimited use*, one-copy-multiple-users’ models. *Title-by-title licensing*, streaming models with no downloading allowed. *Download models*, allowing downloading to the user’s device, which is used in Sweden. *Abundance models* that have an unlimited number of titles.

In the article, *E-books in Academic Libraries: Challenges for Acquisition and Collection Management*, Walters (2013) argues that though academic libraries are experienced in offering their patrons e-journals and e-books, there are several challenges for them to deal with. One problem is the lack of e-book titles, which first of all means that it is difficult for libraries to build strong e-book collections, and secondly that only a small proportion of the books required by their patrons are available as e-books. Furthermore, it is difficult to integrate e-books into the normal workflow of the library, in regards to acquisition and catalogue management (Walters, 2013). Moyer and Thiele (2012) claim that public libraries find that they have no option but to offer their users access to e-books and have a digital collection. However, several libraries are instead offering an alternative to a digital collection at the library by lending out e-readers to their patrons, primarily Kindles, loaded with e-books (ibid., p. 262).

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13 E-lending and e-sales figures include both e-books and audio books.
It is considered important that libraries can provide the public with e-books but also that they are an alternative to what the market provides and that e-books are used in public libraries reading promotion work (Government bill 2013/14:3, p. 37). Many public libraries want to include digital collections from free e-sources like Project Gutenberg in their own library collection, but Lynch (2012) suggests that there are several obstacles, for instance that readers are referred to several different websites with different interfaces when using these free e-collections.

In 2012, Wilson and Maceviciute conducted a census survey with the main 290 Swedish public libraries in each municipality and 185 answers were received, which makes a response rate of sixty-four per cent. Ninety-five per cent of the responding public libraries indicated that they offered an e-book service to their users. Nearly all of those who were not offering an e-book service at the time said that they intended to do so in the future. The researchers found that Swedish librarians are unhappy with e-book provision in public libraries, as there are problems with the sudden removal of already licensed titles and the delay of popular e-books from publishers as well as an unsatisfactory number of e-books available. In the survey (Wilson & Maceviciute, 2012), the respondents stated that they also had restrictions on e-book lending due to the cost. If the budget was used up, several public libraries ended the service until the next budget period.

According to Lloret Romero (2011) the price setting of e-books causes problems for libraries as they pay more for a copy of an e-book than consumers are. Bergström et al. (2017) argues that it causes problem for public libraries on a straight cost/benefit calculation. The lending of e-books makes up approximately 2-3 per cent of all lending in Swedish public libraries and the cost exceeds the benefit. However, the professional ethos of librarians and legal requirements makes a strong incentive to continue to provide them (ibid.).

Licensing agreements pose another problem for libraries as titles can be withdrawn or added during the subscription period by the aggregator or vendor, which makes it impossible for libraries to offer long-term access to titles in their e-book collection (Walters, 2013). And as soon as libraries stop paying the subscription, they lose access to all their e-books (Chiarizio, 2013, Armstrong, 2008).
Lynch (2012) proposes that libraries should help publishers understand the needs of libraries and suggests a business model that will be good for libraries and readers. They can offer a library-centred perspective as librarians can help suppliers of e-books understand the specific needs of libraries. E-books have the potential to be a transformational technology in library services if problems with usability, access, licensing and pricing models are solved (Walters, 2013; Joint, 2010).

In a study of e-book readers in Derbyshire County Libraries, Britain, it was revealed that e-book users were also borrowing printed books from the library. The e-book service was used as a supplement to printed books, not as a substitute. It was found that some readers stopped borrowing e-books due to a limited choice of titles or because they experienced technology problems. One common problem was the lack of compatibility of their e-reading devices with the e-book systems. Technology problems have prevented many from starting to use this type of library service, and also from reading e-books in general (Martindale, Willett & Jones, 2014). Similar problems with e-book loans from public libraries are revealed in other studies, for example in New York by Rabina and Peet (2014).

In Sweden, public libraries have put several restrictions on e-book loans, such as the number of loans per person a week and a price cap on each e-book loan. In a case study of a public library in Sweden, Holmstedt and Topelius (2015) showed that if the restrictions were removed, the potential of growth in e-book lending was significant. During the first three months of 2015, the public library in question had the opportunity to remove the limitations they had previously imposed on e-book lending due to limited monetary funds. The dramatic increase in e-book lending can be seen in the table below. In December 2014, before e-book lending restrictions were removed, the public library had 512 e-book loans. Once there were no limitations, e-book lending rose in the first month by 207 per cent.
Table 3: Change as a result of removing limits on cost and number of e-book loans


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total loans of titles</th>
<th>% increase</th>
<th>Total cost SEK</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13,093</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2015</td>
<td>1,574</td>
<td>207%</td>
<td>40,303</td>
<td>208%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2015</td>
<td>1,670</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>48,109</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>2,102</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>55,799</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After this trial-period the public library, has again introduced a limit to number of borrowed titles per library user. They have tried several levels, between two to five titles per person a week, and have now settled on three titles per person a week in 2017. Despite this limitation, the loans of e-books in 2016 grew to 17,513 as compared to annual number of loans of 16,549 in 2015 (e-mail communication with the library director from 2017-02-17).

It is interesting to note that in the Digital Publishing Communication model (Ray Murray & Squires, 2013), libraries are excluded, but libraries are visible as actors in Darnton’s (1982) model. Libraries still fulfil the role of providing readers with books and e-books so it is unclear why libraries are removed from the Digital Publishing Communication model.

In the next section, we will find out more about booksellers and e-book selling in the Swedish book market.

**E-books and booksellers**

The British and American book markets have changed during the last fifty years with fewer but larger outlets for book sales. Thompson (2012) investigated these changes and he found that large chains of bookshops and online booksellers have replaced many independent bookshops. However, in
the last few years, some of the larger chains of bookshops have had to close down both in the USA and Britain. Now Amazon and Barnes & Noble are the strongest actors on the American consumer e-book market, and on the academic library e-book market, Ebrary and Ebsco are the major actors (Walters, 2013).

“[T]he main argument against new ways of selling and distributing books are that they threaten traditional bookshops” (Steiner, 2015a, p. 16). In 2013, online booksellers had 19 per cent of the Swedish book market and their main market shares come from other direct sales, like for instance book clubs. Physical bookshops had 42 per cent of the market in 2000 and have since dropped to 35 per cent but over a longer period from 1970 to 2013 bookshops have more or less retained their market share (Steiner, 2015a). These numbers have been collected from members of the Swedish Publishers’ Association (Svenska Förläggareföreningen – SvF) and are slightly skewed, as mainly large and mid-size publishers are members. Some large book clubs are not members and their statistics show that even though their sales have dropped significantly, they still have large sales directly to consumers (SOU 2012:65, p. 260).

Since the 1970s, and since the fixed prices were abolished, physical bookshops have concentrated in larger cities and more densely populated areas of Sweden and those in many small towns have closed down. In 2012, every third municipality did not have a physical bookshop, which means that approximately 10 per cent of the Swedish population did not have access to a physical bookshop nearby (Government bill 2013/14:3, p. 15; SOU 2012:65, p. 251, 574). Other significant changes have been that physical bookshops have had to cooperate closely in bookshop chains, and the price of books have been under pressure; there has also been a reduction in the number of different titles for sale in the bookshops (Steiner, 2015a).

So far, online bookselling in Sweden has not been researched deeply, but the situation is analysed regularly in government reports. Online booksellers’ exceptional development during the last ten to fifteen years has meant that physical bookshops have been under a lot of pressure from this strong competitor (Government bill, 2013/14:3, p. 15; SOU 2012:65, p. 255). Online booksellers have developed a strong sales profile towards organisations and businesses and, in particular the major online bookseller in Sweden, Adlibris, has been providing printed books to a large number of public libraries (SOU
Sales of course literature have also moved from physical bookshops to mainly online booksellers (SOU 2012:65, p. 572) and online booksellers have about one quarter of the total book sales in Sweden (Government bill 2013/14:3, p. 15). Online booksellers are important to publishers as they offer another channel to sell and market books. In Sweden, the largest online bookseller Adlibris, is owned by the largest publishing house, Bonnier, and consequently they are also dominant in the e-book market.

Laing and Royle (2013) have looked at differences in consumer behaviour at physical bookshops and online booksellers. They found that consumers spent more time looking at books in the physical bookshop and less time online browsing for books. Online consumers had planned what to buy in advance. They also found that consumers who shop in physical bookshops also shop online. The cover of consumer books is essential as it makes the customer decide whether to look at the book in the first place, and then whether to buy or read it (Kovac, 2012).

The situation in the American consumer book market was explored in several directions. In the USA, there has been a successful introduction of e-books on the market and now e-books have a substantial proportion of the book market. The reasons for this are a distribution system and hardware at the forefront helping to make e-books established in the American market (Chiarizio, 2013). Baron (2015) suggests that the introduction of Amazon’s e-reader Kindle in 2007 and Barnes & Noble’s Nook two years later was fundamental for the fast rise in e-book sales in the USA. In comparison, the establishment of e-books in Sweden has been slow and the sales are still only a few per cent of all book sales (Steiner, 2015a; Bergström & Höglund, 2014). According to Borg and Snickars (2016), the failure to increase e-book sales and growth in Sweden is the collective responsibility of the book trade.

The introduction of a new technology will only be successful if it meets the expectations and needs of the users (Joint, 2010). Hesmondhalgh (2013) states that “[t]he slow and erratic progress of the e-book revolution” (p. 357) is due to several factors, for instance the low quality of the reading devices, too many formats, copyright and ownership issues and the high price (ibid.). This argument is strengthened by Benhamou (2015), who claims that the development of the e-book market depends on the quality of the reading devices as well as a rich supply of readily available e-book titles. “While sale
of e-books in most English-speaking countries has used dedicated e-readers, the development in Sweden appears to be towards tablets, apps and streaming services” (Steiner, 2015a, p. 15). Thompson (2012) and others claim that in the USA, Amazon’s e-reader Kindle was the tipping point that saw an increase in e-book sale in the late 2000s. The surge in e-book sales means that a large proportion of the revenue now comes from e-books (Baron, 2015; Thompson, 2012, p. 321). Steiner (2015a) states that “[o]bviously there is a gap in the market for a bookseller that offers a wide variety of reading tablets and a broad selection of cheap e-books in English and Swedish” (p. 15).

So far, Amazon can only partly fulfill that gap as they only have a few Swedish e-book titles on offer. But if Amazon were going to enter the Swedish book market, they would foremost be a threat to online booksellers according to Steiner (2015a) as they offer the same service. Thompson (2012) argues that publishers in countries where Amazon is established are forced to lower their prices on books sold on Amazon so that they in turn can keep down the prices on books to their customers. Amazon has used its size to put pressure on publishers by for instance removing a title from their website if their demands are not met (ibid., p. 44-45). This has lately changed and Amazon now sells e-books at higher prices fixed by publishers. As a result, large publishers sell fewer e-books on Amazon as customers are less willing to pay the higher prices.

According to Steiner (2015a), the implications for the actors on the Swedish book market when e-books are accessible free of charge are difficult to predict. Steiner (2015a) claims that the threat will be greater to online booksellers rather than physical bookshops (ibid., p. 18). However, when researchers look at how a further increase of e-book sales will affect the actors in the Swedish book market, they come to the conclusion that it is likely to affect physical bookshops more than online booksellers, as the latter already have a web presence and sell both printed books and e-books (Bergström et al., 2017). Another issue is the availability of e-books online, and Svedjedal (2012) states that consumers might as well borrow them as buy them, which is problematic for commercial actors who wish to sell them.

Subscription services have so far been more successful in providing audio books for reading to their customers even though they have e-books on offer as well (see Chapter 2). Colbjørnsen (2015a, 2015b) argues that sustainable digital business models can be found at the audio book providers, similar to
that of Spotify for music and Netflix for films. Subscription services for audio books and e-books, are at the forefront of technological development in the publishing industry (ibid.).

Strategies applied in the digital market and the effects of digitalisation on the actors will be discussed next.

**Strategies of e-book distributors**

A number of studies explore the strategies of old and new actors on the book market in relation to the new digital developments. Several studies look particularly at the strategies employed by businesses and public institutions in the distribution of books and e-books.

The book market has been affected in the past due to various changes in the environment. Now, the arrival of e-books has influenced the market in many ways; for instance, it has transformed production and distribution, it affects marketing and pricing policies and how people read and how authors get paid. Libraries’ economic management is affected and also the relationship between publishers and libraries (Lloret Romero, 2011). Moreover, Lundblad (2016) argues that digital technology changes the conditions for the different actors in the book market and publishers stand to lose the power they have over who is seen as an author and which texts should be published (ibid., p. 10).

The Swedish e-book market, and several other European markets, are small compared with the English-speaking markets of the USA and Britain and some actors in these larger markets are trying to establish themselves at or have already arrived at these smaller markets, for instance in Germany (Steiner, 2015a; Rimm, 2014). Braet (2012) is concerned about what these large actors could do to the small publishing markets of Europe and suggest that they should react before it is too late.

The publishing market is facing a digital revolution on which local publishers and libraries have to react, unless they want to relinquish control of the collecting, aggregating and distributing business roles to primarily Anglo-Saxon dominated players (Google, Apple, or Amazon). This dominance could
lead to a social, cultural, content and economical impoverishment of the book publishing landscape in smaller language areas (Braet, 2012, p. 115).

Braet (2012) is afraid that there will be fewer national publishers, and fewer books in smaller languages, and that instead the national book markets will be dominated by Anglo-Saxon media businesses.

Books gives status to the actor who controls the book market (Kovac, 2008) and strategies are used to position the actors, for instance by controlling the price setting and access to e-books. There are tensions between actors in the book market due to positioning, marketing and the price setting of e-books. The pricing models for e-book lending in public libraries are particularly unsatisfactory as they affect the economic management of public libraries (Walters, 2013; Lloret Romero, 2011).

Different strategies can be used to mediate between the organisation and its position in the environment (Mintzberg, 2003). E-books complicate the situation as, in order to protect their property, publishers use DRM and have thus tried to replicate an old business model on a new technology (Kovac, 2008). Actors position themselves in the competitive environment of the book market and use strategies to protect their positions in competition with other actors (Mintzberg, 2003). In order to find the right strategies, it is useful to find out what is expected of them by their customers.

In her study, Addis (2014) found that customers have great expectations regarding the qualities of booksellers; for example, they should be competent, professional, engaging and supportive. They should be knowledgeable about books in general and the titles they have in the bookshop specifically, but they should also be interested and engage in conversation about the book titles that the customer is interested in. Addis (2014) found that the supportive role of the booksellers includes providing in-depth, useful and precise advice. Customers like bookshops that offer customised and social experiences in their shops, so this is something that booksellers need to take into consideration in their marketing strategies. They should offer something more than just selling books: a social platform for their customers to explore and an excellent customer experience (ibid.).

Libraries have been quick to use new technology as they have been with e-books (Svedjedal, 2012). It can be beneficial for public libraries to adopt a
market-oriented strategy in order to deal with changes in the library sector (Sen, 2006). A customer-oriented approach may help the library staff to better understand their roles and meet library users’ needs and expectations. To follow new strategic directions to develop their services can help public libraries sustain their roles in the future (ibid.). Consumers’ preference for the printed book is holding back e-books and according to Kovac (2008), the reasons for the continuous preference are mainly cultural as the codex stands for cultural continuity in Western countries and affects the strategies of all actors on the book market.

Walters (2013), who discusses the American book market in relation to academic libraries, states that there are several barriers put in place by publishers in order to maintain the print book market. For instance, there are embargoes on e-books as they are usually made available months and sometimes more than a year later than the printed version. According to Walters (2013), these embargoes are in place to protect print sales. Also in the Swedish book market, some publishers have embargoes on new e-book titles to public libraries and they are delivered months after they are first published (Svedjedal, 2012). In 2012, Bonniers, Norstedts and Piratförlaget imposed delays of a few months on new e-book titles for public libraries (ibid., p. 37). Svedjedal (2012) argues that publishers do not stop public libraries from making book titles freely available, they just occasionally stop them from lending out e-books, but they can still get the printed version. Svedjedal (2012) compares this with how BTJ\(^\text{14}\) processing of books for public libraries usually take a couple of months, which leads to one sort of embargo on new titles.

On the other hand, there are also beneficial effects on the market because of e-books, such as a reduced cost of producing and distributing e-books compared to printed books. However, printed books have become cheaper to produce as well due to the digitisation of the production of books, but e-books have the added benefit of having no additional cost for every new copy of the book (Kovac, 2008). Waldfogel and Reimers (2015) show in their article that this has led to lower prices on e-books and an availability of more titles in the

\(^{14}\) BTJ is a Swedish company providing services and supplies to public libraries and other organisations.
USA, and this together with the rapid diffusion of e-readers has made the American market the most penetrated for digital books. However, Walters (2013) does not agree that the production cost of e-books is low, due to the fact that paper, print and transports are not needed; instead, e-books require server and network maintenance, online hosting and technical support to customers, and file formats for various platforms.

E-books are made available through many different channels, for instance, through commercial publishers that distribute e-books to the market for profit. Economic copyright for these books is in force and this is held by authors and/or publishers. Most of these e-books have printed equivalents, but some can be available only in digital formats. There are other types of e-books that are digitised books or digital copies of the texts that are entirely free of copyright and there are those that are in copyright but distributed freely by authors or producers.

There are different strategies used for different market segments; this can be seen by comparing academic and consumer e-titles. Walters (2013) has looked at the economic structure of the e-book price and has highlighted that the price of e-books on the consumer market is, in many cases, low in order to build a market for them. In regard to academic titles with a small, specialised market, the prices are often higher than the printed version. The price of e-books is connected to the increase and decrease of sales, as when the price goes up the sales go down (Maceviciute, Wallin & Nilsson, 2015).

### Trends of e-book provision to readers

Waples, Berelson and Bradshaw outlined already in 1940 that the book distribution system in society decides what people read as the mediators determine what should be available on the market. Publishers decide which books to print and librarians and booksellers which books to stock. Recent titles and popular fiction can often be found in the nearest library or bookshop, but more specialised literature may be more difficult to find. “Such factors are mainly responsible for differences between what we do read and what we might read if we could. The factors serve both to explain variations in the supply of print and to suggest how the system of distribution conditions the reading done” (Waples et al., 1940, p. 59-60). However, Steiner (2015a)
points to the fact that online booksellers’ distribution system has changed “who can access what” (p. 22) and that access is fast, as e-books are delivered instantly (Maxim & Maxim, 2012). The amount of titles published today makes it perhaps relevant to have a professional, like a bookseller or a librarian, select books for us to read.

Other actors are free internet sources, who use the strategy of voluntary labour to increase access to older literature. They are important actors in the provision of digital texts and e-books. These free sources have no licensing restrictions as there are no copyright holders or the e-books are published with the permission of the copyright holder (Walters, 2013). In the Nordic countries, Project Runeberg is an important free source of digital books, and Project Gutenberg is the single largest collection of e-books that can be read free of charge (Chiarizio, 2013). In Europeana Collections libraries, museums and archives across Europe provide access to a large collection of digital material; texts, art and music (europeana.eu).

Digitisation has led to easy access to books that can be obtained from many sources, both legal and illegal. Publishers want to protect their work and state that every illegally downloaded book is a loss for the publisher and author (Söderberg, 2008). However, Söderberg (2008) claims that these illegally downloaded books are often not available on the market and could therefore not have been retrieved legally.

Peoples’ reluctance to pay for a digital service or product can be due to access to cheap or free e-books on the Internet (Borg & Snickars, 2016; Maxim & Maxim, 2012), and as a consequence “[t]here is a risk that people will not want to pay for e-books” (Steiner, 2015a, p. 18). On the other hand, Söderlund (2009) argues that books available for free online are good for the book industry and authors, as more readers are reached, and some of these readers will buy the book leading to increased sales.

Other effects of digitisation that have been identified are that there will be more self-published titles, an increase of sales in certain genres and the expansion of the publishing business (Steiner, 2015a). Borg and Snickars (2016) agree that self-publishing is strong digitally but argue that it is easy to presume that easy to read genres will increase due to the digital production of books. This is not necessarily the case, as in USA, technical books are often high on the best-seller list of e-books (ibid.).
Sweden as a small language market, with approximately 10 million Swedish speakers, has its specific constraints, while the book market for English speakers has other opportunities to have an affordable and income-bringing e-book production and sales. Cultural, economic and technological factors could be the cause for a lower proportion of e-book use in some countries (Wilson, 2016). However large the future sale of e-books will be, major changes are believed to lay ahead with consequences that perhaps will affect the book industry profoundly (Thompson, 2012). However, lately the e-book market has slowed down and it could be due to the market’s having reached saturation in regard to e-book sales and reading, or could perhaps be caused by the recession (Wilson, 2016).

The price of e-books is relatively high in Sweden and, according to Svedjedal (2012), Bonnier, Norstedt and Piratförlaget are the publishers that provide the majority of bestsellers and they tend to have higher prices on e-books (ibid., p. 40). In 2014, there was a decline in e-book sales in Sweden and researchers have pointed out that the increase in e-book prices could be a reason for this (Wikberg, 2015, Bergström & Höglund, 2014).

Small bookshops are disadvantaged in regard to economies of scale, which means that there is a lower cost per unit as fixed costs can be spread over more units; it can also entail organisations asking for better terms from their suppliers (Porter, 2008, p. 81). One example of economies of scale is that book clubs and supermarkets buy large numbers of books and therefore get them at a lower price from the publisher. For a small bookshop, this is usually not feasible, as it cannot sell that many copies of the same title, and thus the small bookshop will not get a lower price from the supplier. Another example is public libraries’ cost for printed books versus e-books. One printed book that is lent out several times will be all the cheaper for every time it is lent out as the price of the book is fixed. The contrary applies for e-books, as there is, first of all, an annual fee for accessing the e-book from Elib, and secondly, there is a cost for each loan; consequently, each new loan of an e-book becomes more expensive.

Old systems are threatened by new ways of selling books (Steiner, 2015a) and established companies are reluctant to adopt new technologies (Day & Schoemaker, 2003). One example are physical bookshops who still have not truly adopted e-books; they tend to focus on their current customers who buy
printed books and thus overlook the possible new business opportunities that this emerging technology can bring (ibid.). When the market for the new product grows slowly, scepticism occurs among established companies and they start to question when or if e-books will ever become profitable (ibid.).

**The research gap**

The research gap that has been identified is the lack of research on public libraries as a distribution channel for books, especially, e-books competing with commercial distributors. The research that has been conducted so far pays little attention to this role (of a distributor on the market) of public libraries, let alone in a larger context of the whole book market. This role has been brought to attention once again by the appearance of e-books. Furthermore, there is a need to look at how the digitisation of books is affecting the Swedish book market and the commercial actors. However, the strategies of big actors in the book market are under scholarly scrutiny at present as well as before, but there has been less focus on strategies and visions on how to work with e-books or tensions between the public and commercial actors of distribution in Sweden. According to Kovac (2008) the similarities and differences in the roles of libraries and bookshops in society have not been researched in Europe.

This literature review has shown that the object of my research, namely, the situation of the distribution of e-books through commercial and public channels, is very complex and involves several related issues. Thus, it may be useful to construct a theoretical framework that considers the most important of those: the actors' situation in the market, that enables and prevent they experience in adopting e-books, and particular strategies in relation to this adoption. It is also clear that the threat of disintermediation of the distributors of e-books is present in the research literature. Booksellers and libraries are in competition when it comes to sales and the lending of e-books, but in the research literature and in the public debate they appear not to be in opposition. The strategies of booksellers and public libraries in the e-book market do not reveal the struggles between them or at least the knowledge about the tension is not as visible as that between publishers and booksellers or public libraries. The question is if these directly competing institutions, public libraries and booksellers, have found mutually acceptable positioning strategies that do not lead to conflict?
4 Theoretical framework

In the following chapter, the theories and concepts used in this study will be presented. In this thesis, the author investigates the actors distributing consumer e-books in the Swedish book market. Public libraries are important distributors of e-books to library users and their position in the Swedish literary field is under pressure, from the commercial distributors and producers of e-books in the market. The questions posed are: How do the distributing actors perceive the effects of e-books on their positions and dispositions in the literary field? What strategies are employed by distributing actors to cope with changes and negotiate their positions in the literary field? What are the supervening social necessities and suppressions of radical potential of e-books in the Swedish book market?

There are several theoretical approaches that could help to achieve the research aim and solve the research problem, for instance organisational theory, technology adoption models, and Porter’s market forces model could all help explain the forces that drive the changes in the market. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the dual nature of the book, which is both a cultural and commercial product and functions in literary field and commercial market. This duality is best addressed by Bourdieu’s (1996) field theory. The theory reveals the forces at work in the literary field. In the field, there are struggles over common assets, positions and position-taking between agents and institutions. The different capitals of the actors will help define their position and disposition in the field. Thompson’s (2012) new take on capitals will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

We also need to consider the nature of an e-book as a social and technological innovation. The dynamics of social innovation are best addressed by Winston’s (1998) theory on technological innovation. The theory will be used

15 Bourdieu’s concepts of agent and institution are in this thesis considered to be the same as actor/actors, which is used throughout the thesis.
for understanding social innovation in publishing, such as e-books. The concepts that will be used are the supervening social necessity and the suppression of radical potential which are working for adopting or repressing innovations. The distributing actors are potentially affected by these supervening social necessities and suppressions of radical potential in the adoption of e-books in the Swedish book market. The differences and similarities of these forces can hopefully be revealed in this study. This innovation in the literary field changes the established power relationships of the actors on the Swedish e-book market.

Theories of organisational strategies (For example, Porter, Mintzberg & Lampel, 2003) are used as an analytical tool to look at the actors in the Swedish e-book market. At first glance, bookshops and libraries appear not to have much in common in regard to e-book distribution, as one is a public channel and the other commercial. However, both are actors in the book market, licensing/buying e-books from publishers and aggregators and then in their turn providing readers with e-books. Mintzberg (2003) explains the strategy process by the five Ps: strategy as plan, ploy, pattern, position and perspective. In this thesis, the concept of strategy as plan as well as the emergent strategies that are unintentionally formed in an organisation are in focus (Mintzberg, 2003). Porter (2003) discusses what strategy is and Mintzberg and Lampel (2003) suggest that strategy formation can be developed and investigated by looking at an organisation’s strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities in the environment.

The book circuit (Darnton, 1982; Ray Murray & Squires, 2013) presented in the literature review is not sufficient to explain the positions, tensions and strategies of the actors in the literary field. It shows the activities of the actors in the life-cycle of the book. It has been compared to Bourdieu’s field of cultural production and it is suggested that it can help find the changes of production and spreading of books (Kovac, 2008; McDonald, 1997). However, the book circuit is not entirely suitable here as its focus is on publishing production and dissemination, while this study’s focus is on the distributing actors in the literary field. Furthermore, it shows the commercial part of the book market and libraries are only given a small part in the circuit; additionally, libraries are not present at all in the digital publishing communication circuit (Ray Murray & Squires, 2013). Thus, the book circuit does not allow for a full exploration of the research problem.
Due to this, field theory, innovation theory, and planned and emergent strategies are used, as they can reveal the strategies, positions and dispositions of the actors and reveal which social necessities and suppressions of potential are used in order to enable or prevent the e-book’s expansion in the Swedish book market.

**Field theory**

Pierre Bourdieu’s extensive work and contribution to research over a period from the 1960s to his death in 2002 is considerable. In Speller’s (2011) book on *Bourdieu and literature* he discusses critique that is directed at Bourdieu’s writing on literature but also his methods and theories. Speller (2011) states that Bourdieu’s key concepts of capital, field and habitus are interdependent and thus work best in relation to each other. Bourdieu’s use of field is also criticised and he is considered to use the concept as if it exists in the real world, but it is only a theoretical tool (Speller, 2011). Field theory is useful in the sense that it can help reveal different actors’ activities and positions in the field as well as to identify conflicts and shared interests between actors (ibid., p. 186).

A question raised by critics is whether Bourdieu’s theories are possible to use outside France as Bourdieu’s work is only concerned with the typically French issues in society (ibid., p. 23). Speller (2011) argues that Bourdieu’s theories have been used in other national traditions and literary systems. A further critique concerns the theories themselves, which are seen to leave no room for change but conserve the status quo, while others see Bourdieu’s theory as a work in progress and open to change in new settings of study (Speller, 2011, p. 21). The theories of Bourdieu have successfully been applied in other settings, for instance by Broady and Albertsen (1998) in education in Sweden and Thompson (2012) in British publishing. In this thesis, field theory will be applied in order to disclose the positions and capitals of the actors in the Swedish e-book market.
Social fields and positions

Bourdieu addresses the concept of power throughout his work. There are different hierarchies among the fields and at the very top is the field of power. In the field of power, we find specialised fields such as the political and judiciary fields, and at opposite ends of the field of power we find the field of economic power, inhabited by for example business leaders and economists, and the field of cultural production, inhabited by authors, artists and scientists etc. (Bourdieu, 1996).

Figure 4: Field of power and the field of cultural production

Comment: The model is adapted from Broady’s model of the social room and it shows the field of power and the placement of the field of cultural production.\(^{16}\)

A field is a structured social space with its own rules (doxa), schemes of domination and legitimate opinions. A field emerges where people quarrel over mutual symbolic and material assets (Bourdieu 1996, 1993a). In the field of cultural production, such common assets could be financial in the form of revenue from book sales. The field of cultural production has to relate to the wider fields of power and class relations in society. The field of power consists of two opposite poles with the commercial and economic power at one end and the intellectual and cultural pole at the other (Bourdieu, 1993a). Bourdieu places companies closer to the commercial pole (Bourdieu, 1980). Power in the field depends on the social, cultural or economic capital of the actors, and the rules in the field usually reinforce the dominant actors’ position.

The autonomy of a field “can be measured by its power to define its own criteria for the production and evaluation of its products” (Bourdieu, 1985). Power is possession types of capital, that is economic, cultural, social and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1989), and whoever is in possession of the most valued capital in that particular field has the most power (Bourdieu, 1983). Actors use their symbolic power to control the field for their own means and purposes in order to maintain or improve their positions. Bourdieu describes symbolic power as coming from symbolic capital, which is achieved by recognition from other actors in the field (Bourdieu, 1989).

Symbolic power has to be based on the possession of symbolic capital. The power to impose upon other minds a vision, old or new, of social divisions depends on the social authority acquired in previous struggles. Symbolic capital is a credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23).

There are also subfields within the field of cultural production, for instance the literary field (Bourdieu, 1996). “For Bourdieu, the literary field is a social microcosm that has its own structure and its own laws; while writers, critics and, indeed publishers, printers and distributors, and readers are specialists with particular interests specific to that self-contained world” (Howsam, 2006, p. 38; see also McDonald, 1996, p. 110). The study of this thesis is placed in the literary field.

Fields are not static entities. In a field, there is a system of positions, which agents and institutions clash over. It is particularly useful in this present study as it deals with the present struggles of the distributing actors over the positions in the literary field. According to Speller (2011), the disposition of an actor can be clearly associated with a certain position in the field, that is he or she acts in accordance with his/her disposition which affects their position. The relation between positions of an actor in the field can be seen in the changes and position-takings of the actor (ibid., 2011).

The actors also struggle over power relations and negotiation potential (Bourdieu, 1996). A field develops and changes because of these struggles for positions and the fact that agents often bring in new techniques, themes and perspectives into the field (Bourdieu, 1996, 1993a). There are value hierarchies within the fields (Bourdieu, 1996), and, looking at the literary
field, some literary genres are considered better and more culturally valuable than others.

The rules of the field are called *doxa* and in the struggles for positions in the field, agents make use of the rules of the game. The actions of the agent can change the doxa and when an agent tries to overrule the doxa, in order to strengthen his position, other agents of the field try to reset it. However, in some cases, everyone agrees on the new rules and a new doxa emerges. The existing doxa tends to favour dominant agents and therefore help establish the social arrangement of the field.

According to Bourdieu (1980), the differences between cultural and commercial businesses can be found in the typical features of cultural goods and the traits of the market where they are sold. In the field of cultural production there are two fundamental and different oppositions, between on the one hand the restricted production of literature, which has a high cultural capital, and this sub-field excludes all aspiration for profit, fame or honour. On the other hand, the large-scale production of literature, that is genre fiction or popular fiction, with a low cultural capital, favours the market and a profit. These two oppositions have different economies and audiences (Bourdieu, 1993a).

**Habitus and capitals**

Bourdieu (1996) defines *habitus* as a system of dispositions, that is everything that a person carries with him/her inscribed in their body and in their mind and with all other the assets they have in their baggage, such as cultural, economic and social capital (Bourdieu, 1996; Broady & Albertsen, 1998). Habitus are learnt or socialised norms which determines how the actor will act in certain situations. In short, habitus or the dispositions of actors is reflected in their actions and affects their position in the field.

Different sorts of capital are considered more important and more valuable depending on which pole it is the closest to, that is, economic capital is important to the commercial pole and cultural capital is more important the closer you get to the intellectual pole (Bourdieu, 1996). To position themselves within a field, agents or institutions use not only money and other material assets but also connections with relatives and friends in high
positions, culture and education – that is their social and cultural capital (Broady & Albertsen, 1998). In a field there is both the volume and structure of capitals to consider. The volume of capitals is the quantity of different sorts of capital that exist in a field and the structure of capitals is the division of capital between the actors in the field (Bourdieu, 1993b).

There are hierarchies among the different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1996) and the symbolic capital belongs to the actors in the field of power (Bourdieu, 1993a). The symbolic capital exists within the body in the form of habitus, which is, simply put, the result of our life experiences or a sense of how to play the game (Bourdieu, 1993a). A specific form of symbolic capital is the foundation of power in the field. For example, a person can be acknowledged as a good writer or literary critic, which gives him or her the authority to give judgement on literary works.

Bourdieu states that there is a constant struggle between two opposing hierarchical principles, the first of which is the heteronomous principle, which favours those who are dominating the field economically and politically. The heteronomous cultural producers are the actors in the field that have the least cultural capital and often have to give in to external demands and pressures. The second principle is the autonomous principle, and it tends to be followed by the cultural producers who have the most cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1996, 1983), they believe in art for art’s sake and they exclude bourgeois artist and writers. These principles are at work in Sweden in the early 21st century but it is not as clear cut as Bourdieu describes them in France in the 1980s and 90s. However, these tendencies of quality versus quantity in the profiling of literature still occur in publishing in Sweden (Rimm, 2014; Nyberg et al., 2013).

Bourdieu’s theory can be adapted to other countries and other circumstances as discussed before; Thompson (2012) adapts it to suit the specific situation of British and American publishing in his book Merchants of culture. For example, Thompson (2012) adjusts Bourdieu’s concepts of capitals to specifically suit the publishing fields. In addition to Bourdieu’s social, cultural, economic and symbolic capitals, he adds human and intellectual capitals. Thompson (2012) explains economic capital as the financial resources available to the company; social capital as the contacts and relationships that the company has with other actors in the field; and symbolic capital is the prestige, recognition and respect that the company possesses in
the field. Human capital refers to the people working in the publishing companies and their skill and expertise, while intellectual capital refers to the intellectual property of books that the publisher owns or control (ibid., 2012, p. 5-6). Thompson (2012) claims that all capitals are important for a publishing company but he argues that economic and symbolic capital are the most important capitals because they determine the competitive position of the company in the field. Moreover, as non-commercial, cultural actors are also studied in this thesis, cultural capital is relevant to look at. The capitals explored in this thesis, are thus the economic, cultural, social and symbolic capitals of the actors in the literary field.

**Innovation theory**

Winston’s theory (1998) of technological innovation provides a useful framework and a general basis for understanding social innovation in publishing. According to Winston (1998), the adoption of a new technological innovation depends on generalised social forces which come together to work as a transforming agency, that is, the supervening social necessity. As one example of this, Winston (1998) takes the single-track railway and the need to be able to communicate with the train driver, which led to the adoption of the telegraph. Winston (1998) claims that any force can act as supervening social necessity, they can range from objective requirements to subjective impulses. The development of one technology can be pushed by the introduction of an earlier technology. The case can also be that a new technology does not bring any new uses but fulfils the same functions as an earlier technology (ibid.).

When prototypes of new technologies are developed, it is determined by the supervening social necessity which prototypes succeed as the accepted innovation. There are four sorts of prototypes identified by Winston: the rejected, accepted, parallel and the partial. A prototype may be rejected if there is no obvious use for it, and in some cases, there is a use but the supervening social necessity has not operated yet. Parallel prototypes may occur when a device is in use and another use for it is found. A partial prototype is when a device is not functioning as well as it could. A prototype can be accepted if a need for it has been created. An accepted prototype is a device which effectively fulfils the potential of the technology but, because
the full power of the supervening necessity has not yet been called into play, there is still room for development (Winston, 1998, p. 8).

E-books could, at this point, be regarded as an accepted prototype and invention, but some of its prototypes have been discarded over time and did not reach maturity (Bergström et al., 2017). Sometimes a new purpose is found for a device, and at times subsidiary inventions emerge from the initial invention. The circumstances for an innovation may never be right, for instance if it is not economically feasible to use or if it does not have the necessary commercial support it will never be available in the market. In that case, the supervening social necessity is not strong enough to press for financial support (Winston, 1998).

According to Winston (1998), there is also a brake in which social constraints unite to curb the potential of an invention and to disrupt the social necessities that are already in place. This is called the law of the suppression of radical potential. This law is bound to occur at some stage and it restrains an invention in order to slow down its diffusion so that the society can keep up with the changes and absorb new devices. An example of such constrains could be the different suppressants put in place to slow down the diffusion of e-books in the Swedish book market in order to maintain the printed book (Bergström et al., 2017).

The e-book innovation can be explored by looking at the tension between the suppression of radical potential and the social necessity of the e-book. The suppression of radical potential can slow down the adoption of a new technology; such suppressions can be other technologies and barriers put in place to protect the existing market. The social necessity can be that the market needs new products to sell, and that the Internet, computers and reading devices have made e-books possible both as an innovation and as a product that can be sold and borrowed by users.

Socialisation impacts the use of new technology and many people start using new technologies simply because others have done so before (Rogers, 2003; Zhou, 2008). It is therefore likely that social contexts will influence the uptake of the production and use of e-books as well. There are different contexts in which one medium is preferred over another and it is essential to find a niche in order for new media to compete with old media (Dimmick, 2003). The displacement of an old medium happens at the point when a new medium is
regarded as better than an old. Thus, the user abandons the old medium and replaces it with new (Carey & Elton, 2010; de Waal & Schoenbach, 2010; Lin, 2001). In today’s digital environment, people go from using only one platform to using several in their everyday life, many of these being new digital platforms. (Chyi & Chadha, 2012; Färdigh & Westlund, 2014).

The strategy process

The word strategy can have several connotations within organisation theory and Mintzberg (2003) presents five different definitions of the word, the five Ps: plan, ploy, pattern, position and perspective. Strategy as plan is intended and planned, and it suggests that there are guidelines for how to act in a specific situation, for example in military strategy and in game theory. However, it does not necessarily mean that the plan is realised, as a plan also can be a ploy utilised to outwit the competition by threatening to do a specific action in order to stop the competitors from for instance, expanding their business (ibid.). Strategy as pattern means that the strategy is realised, that it is actually fulfilled and not only planned. Mintzberg (2003) concludes that “by this definition, strategy is consistency in behavior, whether or not intended” (p. 4).

Mintzberg (2003) states that strategy as position is one of the more important concepts, as the position can consist of the internal context of an organisation and the external context of the environment in which the organisation is situated. Strategies can be used to mediate between the organisation and its position in the environment. For example, the position can be seen as the context of several actors in the e-book market or the entire Swedish e-book market itself or the surrounding international environment. This is similar to that of Bourdieu’s (1996) theory of positions in a field. Porter defines strategy as the “creation of a unique and valuable position, involving a different set of activities” (2003, p. 19). Furthermore, these activities have to fit other activities in the company and there also have to be compromises in what to do and not to do in the competition with others (Porter, 2003).

Strategy as perspective is looking inside the organisation and how it perceives the environment, that is, its worldview. It is a shared perspective on strategy by the members of an organisation that matters. Mintzberg (2003) states that
there are deliberate strategies that are planned and those, that are not consciously intended but are \textit{emergent strategies} (ibid.). He suggests that sometimes it is best to focus on the details and the strategies will emerge without planning (ibid., p. 6).

Mintzberg and Lampel (2003) suggests that “The original perspective /…/ sees strategy formation as achieving the essential fit between internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities” (p. 23). By identifying those factors, strategies can be developed to help build a stronger organisation (Dyson, 2004). Internal strengths and weakness of an organisation can be related to the acquisition of power which helps strengthen the actors’ positions in the literary field.

\section*{How these theories will be applied}

The book market (or book sector) will be interpreted in terms of a field where the research objects (public libraries and booksellers) are placed. The entire book market as well as its parts are affected by innovation as an external factor and by the behaviour of the research objects as an internal factor.

The Swedish book sector has specific features and conditions different from those in other countries in a number of features; for instance, the market is limited by the number of language speakers, but they are highly technological and literate. The small size of the Swedish book market has so far meant that it has been protected from Amazon and other large, global media companies. Furthermore, there is strong state support for arts and literature that affects all the participants in the literary field. On the other hand, it has an open market, society, economy and state, and so it develops under the same general conditions as other Western societies. The Swedish book market has strong international actors, although they are not as powerful as Amazon or Google. The combined theoretical approach may be tailored specifically to the actors in Sweden but hopefully provide more general results applicable to, at the very least, other small language markets.

The producers and distributors of e-books in the Swedish book market struggle for positions, symbolic capital, and power over book production, sales and distribution. Bourdieu’s field theory is useful in order to disclose the
behaviour and actions of the distributors and, by extension, the actors’ position and disposition in the literary field. This will be done by identifying the capitals and habitus of the actors but also their strategies. Thompson’s (2012) adjustment and addition of the different capitals are adapted to the publishing field of today and are therefore useful for this thesis. The capitals studied are the economic, cultural, social and symbolic.

Winston’s suppression of radical potential and supervening social necessity will be used to show the adoption of e-books as an innovation in society and in the literary field. Mintzberg’s theories of planned and emergent strategies will be used as analytical tools for identifying the reactions of the actors that is the focus of this study and the changes caused by this specific innovation in the book sector.

In Figure 5, the actors are positioned in the literary field and struggle with each other to acquire capital. It is easy to claim that public libraries are protectors of cultural values and that booksellers are only in it for financial gains, but it is perhaps more complex. For example, is possible to view public libraries as very strong economic/commercial participants gaining savings through usage of pooled resources and using state support to serve free entertainment needs, while booksellers could be seen as guards of highest cultural values and cultural tradition by making literature available.

Public libraries could not function without proper funding and are therefore restricted by their economic situation, but they are not driven by or operated under commercial objectives. Booksellers, on the other hand, need to sell books in order to have a viable business and thus work under commercial objectives, but they also fulfil an important cultural function as they provide people with literature. Bookshops sometimes cooperate with public libraries when it comes to authors’ talks, reading groups and so on. According to McDonald (1997), it is possible to be economic rivals and at the same time cultural allies (p.118). In Figure 5, the capital’s volume and the capital’s structure, that is the quantity and division of the different capitals in the literary field, is negotiated by the actors in order to gain position (Bourdieu, 1993b).
The actors or institutions need strategies to deal with the environment and strategies are individual for the actors and dependent upon the situation. The arrows in Figure 5 illustrate how the actors develop intentional or emergent strategies in order to deal with the forces of suppression of radical potential and the supervening social necessity. These forces, in return, affect strategies and hence the actors may need to recreate strategies. In regard to e-books as an innovation, the suppression of radical potential and the supervening social necessity could potentially come from all actors in the field and be pushed from both commercial and cultural incentives. Perhaps in some cases, an actor may be both blocking and pushing the e-book at the same time. The analysis of the empirical material will hopefully help disclose any such cases.

When studying the book market, it is important to distinguish it from other trade markets, as it deals with cultural production, goods and values. However, e-books are commercial, cultural, and technical products and when these perspectives are taken into consideration, they help explain the emergent e-book market. These theories will help structure the data in the result chapters (Chapter 6 and 7) and discuss and analyse the data in the discussion chapter (Chapter 8).
5 Method

The chapter presents the research design and the methods that were used to explore the position and dispositions of the distributing actors in the literary field in Sweden, as well as the strategies used by the actors and the social necessities and suppression of potential enabling and constraining e-books on the book market. In order to find out more about the situation of the actors; their positions, tensions, strategies and social necessities and suppressions of potential, surveys and interviews were conducted with the actors. In this chapter, the data collection and analysis methods used for the public library study and the bookseller study, are presented. Thereafter follows a presentation of the study’s reliability and validity, limitations and ethical considerations.

Research design

The research design included one large study of e-book distribution, divided into two empirical studies, exploring two different actors involved in one process. The data collection took place during 2014 to 2017 and included two surveys, one with public libraries and one with online booksellers and physical bookshop, and 17 semi-structured interviews conducted with aggregators, online booksellers, physical bookshops and subscription services.

The theories reviewed previously are relevant for and have influenced the research design by informing the creation of the research instruments. The theoretical framework has been useful in designing the questionnaires, interview schedules and the thematic analysis of the data. The actors’ positions in the literary field is disclosed by the actions, dispositions (Bourdieu, 1996, 1993; Thompson, 2012) and the power gained by the possession of different capitals (Bourdieu, 1996). The actors’ planned and
emergent strategies (Mintzberg, 2003) help reveal their strengths and weaknesses as institutions in the literary field. Winston’s (1998) concepts of supervening social necessity and suppression of radical potential help identify what enables or suppress the adaptation of e-books in Sweden. These theories and concepts have been useful for analysis and making sense of the findings by providing a framework and a lens through which the data was studied.

The initial research design included a public library survey and two bookseller surveys. There was one earlier survey\textsuperscript{17} of public libraries done before this thesis project started and it showed the interest of the public libraries and their willingness to respond. The idea was to, early on in the thesis project, conduct one survey study of booksellers and then conduct a second two or three years later.

The first bookseller survey was carried out in 2014 and its purpose was to check the interest and engagement of booksellers in e-book selling. The respondents were online booksellers and physical bookshops. The survey revealed some problems: first, that few physical bookshops sell e-books, and thus the response rate in the survey was low. Second, that other actors who distribute e-books needed to be included, such as aggregators and subscription services. Their nature and activity were quite different from the physical bookshops and the same data collection instrument was not appropriate for all. The decision was made to not conduct a second survey but instead to include interviews in the data collection method for booksellers to try to rectify the situation. Because of these initial findings the design became emergent rather than outlined and fixed from the start and this is consistent with the general qualitative approach.

In the case of the public library survey, the questions were influenced by an earlier public library survey by Wilson and Maceviciute (2012) in the e-book research project. It was also built on knowledge acquired during the investigation of the e-book market and its actors. The characteristics of the different parts of the book sector as they appeared in the data collection have been decisive in the design. The two researched groups of actors are quite different from one another, the first being the stable and regulated public library sector with engaged respondents interested in the research problem,

\textsuperscript{17} Wilson and Maceviciute (2012) conducted a census survey with Swedish public libraries in 2012.
and in contrast to the other sector, the booksellers, with an ever-changing commercial book market and respondents with varying levels of interest in the research problem.

Surveys were chosen as data collection method because they offer the possibility to reach a large number of respondents (Bryman, 2012), even as the respondents were spread out across Sweden. The questions the respondents receive are consistently the same as there is no researcher asking them or interpreting them for the respondents. However, there are also disadvantages with surveys; one is that several possible respondents may decline to participate. The respondents may find that the questionnaire is too complicated to fill in and the respondents may lack the time or have no interest in the topic. Another problem is that the researcher does not have any control over who the respondent is in the organisation.

The objective for doing surveys was to find out what the majority of the distributing actors thought about the emergent e-book market and their place in it. The differences that existed among the actors in the bookseller group did not allow for the same questionnaire to be sent to all, so only online and physical bookshops were included as respondents. Therefore, semi-structured interviews presented the opportunity of including other actors of the bookseller group, which had not been included as respondents in the surveys, for example, aggregators of e-books and subscription services. It also meant that the responses in the survey could be elaborated and fuller answers could be acquired by asking the respondents to explain further or give examples. It helped develop a deeper understanding of the situation in the Swedish e-book market.

The advantage of interviews is that they usually give depth and details to the research topics as the respondents may elaborate and develop their answers. Semi-structured interviews have the advantage that there are a set of questions to ask, but with the possibility to change the order of the questions and even make additions to the questions. This gives flexibility to the interviewer to follow the respondents’ answers to new interesting topics or points of view (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014; Pickard, 2013). The respondents can therefore influence the outcome of the interview by putting focus on things they find interesting and can thus open up new avenues for the researcher to follow.
There were both quantitative as well as some qualitative aspects to the surveys that both provided data for measurement but also brief narratives of the respondent’s actual experiences. The interviews then gave further opportunities for discussions and added details to the previously performed self-completion questionnaire. The methods provided the possibility for both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data. The analysis of the data followed the same pattern in both studies: statistical analysis and qualitative thematic analysis.

Public library study

In Sweden, there is one main public library in each of the 290 municipalities and additional public library branches in each municipality. Public libraries are a uniform organisation with general aims and function defined by law. There are small and large libraries with different sets of issues to handle but there is no competition in the sector. In the library sector, academic libraries were not included, but only public libraries as the focus was on consumer e-books.

Design of the questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions. The quantitative questions were either close-ended with a yes and no response or had a scale to which degree the respondent agreed to the statement. The qualitative questions had open-ended questions with no limitation as to possible answer choices, so the responses could produce ample and exhaustive data on the research topic. The survey questions were tested with a public library that filled in the complete questionnaire in order to see if there were any apparent problems with the questions. After making some additions and changes, the survey was sent out via e-mail with a link to the online questionnaire in SurveyMonkey™. The questions in the public library survey (see Appendix 1) were focused on perceived problems/threats and opportunities, driving factors behind e-book demands, and which factors were considered a hindrance, but also about the effects on the library, their internal strengths and weaknesses and strategies. Some questions were multiple choice
and others were open-ended, sometimes both. The questionnaire was divided into four parts with 33 questions, with additional sub-questions.

The first part dealt with the library’s handling of e-books, that is to say who distributes e-books to the library, what they think about the new model of e-book lending through Elib, which licence they have, problems with the handling of e-books, cost of e-book loans, and weaknesses in the library provision of e-books.

The second part dealt with access to e-books. The questions asked were about e-book catalogue posts, the supply and assortment of e-book collection, and how the library users find and access e-books – through the catalogue or through Elib’s website. Rules and limitations of e-book lending, marketing of e-books, e-books in Swedish and other languages were also addressed, as well as their views on commercial access to e-books compared to their own provision.

The third part dealt with the demand of e-books from library users, what drives the demand, how it affects the library, and whether the demand changed during the last five years. There were also questions about if the library provided education on how to use e-books for the users, complaints about the service from the users, and if the library had sought the users’ view on the e-book service. One question dealt with the number of downloads in each library in numbers and in per cent of total lending.

The fourth part dealt with thoughts about the future, such as will the demand increase or decrease the next five years? Questions also addressed the advantages of e-book provision in public libraries, and potential barriers constraining e-book lending.

**How the study was conducted**

In 2016, a census survey was conducted which entails that the survey was sent to the whole population of 290 main public libraries in Sweden. Of those, 181 answered the questionnaire so the response rate was 62.4 per cent.

The online service SurveyMonkey™ was used for the surveys. It is an online tool used for easy distribution and collection of data. The respondents were given the choice to either use the online service or fill in a paper version of
the questionnaire. After the paper questionnaires were sent in by post, the answers were entered manually into the online version to enable a more rapid analysis of the data. Extra care was taken to accurately transfer the answers by checking and re-checking them. The paper questionnaire removed the anonymity of the respondents (Pickard, 2013) but after the responses were transferred to SurveyMonkey, the paper version was destroyed.

Two reminders were sent out to the non-respondents, one via e-mail and another by post. The reminder sent by post contained a paper version of the questionnaire for those respondents who preferred to fill in the paper version; a pre-paid return envelope was included, but they still had the option to fill in the online survey instead.

It was assumed that all public libraries provided e-books as part of their service, due to the Library Act (SFS 2013: 801) which states that public libraries should provide all media formats. It occurred to the author of this thesis that perhaps the reason for not replying to the questionnaire was that not all public libraries provided e-books. An e-mail was sent asking the non-respondents if they provided e-books to their library users. Two non-responding public libraries reported that lack of financing was the reason for not providing e-book service. One library had requested funding on several occasions but had never received it. Another library had provided e-books during 2012-2015 but the need to make savings meant that they had to withdraw the service.

Twelve public libraries provided other reasons for non-response, the most common being that their e-book service was the result of collaboration with public libraries in neighbouring municipalities and that the coordinating function lay with another public library, which meant that they did not have the necessary information to complete the survey. Similar reasons may have prevented other public libraries from participating.

Data analysis

Statistical analysis
Excel was used for the analysis of the quantifiable data in the survey. The statistical data was descriptive and two variables were compared and analysed; for example, the size of the municipality where the public library
was situated was compared to number of e-book loans in that specific library. Other data show the number of downloads of e-books in a public library and how many libraries use a specific service or aggregator etc. The variables chosen indicate if e-book provision and use is in any way connected to the size of the municipality or its location, that is, in a big city or in a small municipality. The variables also demonstrate how the different public libraries manage their e-book collection.

The statistical significance test used for this thesis was Fisher’s exact test. It is useful for finding out if there is any significant correlation between the variables in a contingency table and it is often applied to small samples.

**Qualitative thematic analysis**

For the analysis of the open-ended survey questions, a thematic analysis, a form of qualitative content analysis, was used in order to find themes under which the empirical data could be organised. In the thematic analysis, it is important to read the data thoroughly in order to identify themes and subthemes. In this study, it included an iterative process of moving back and forth between the data and the themes, with the option of removing or adding new themes as the work progressed.

The themes in the study were related to the research focus and questions and some themes were theory-related concepts. The themes were:

- Provision/management/sales of e-books
- Positions and dispositions of distributing actors
- Advantages, strengths and opportunities
- Difficulties, weaknesses and threats
- Public libraries’/booksellers’ emergent and intentional strategies
- Social necessity and suppression of e-books

These themes are part of the structure both of the result chapters and the discussion. Rules applied in handling of the data during the analysis were that the quotes were kept in their entirety when assigning them to a theme. It was also indicated where the quote came from, to which question it was the answer.
Table 4: Example of thematic analysis of empirical data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Difficulties, weaknesses and threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme</td>
<td>Relations with other actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>”Public libraries have been too passive, waiting for someone else to do something.” (Question 2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Passive role of public libraries in driving e-book lending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Internal weakness, strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The theme is the overarching subject while the subtheme is narrowing down the topic of the answer. The quote is presented in full under example and the question number it answers is stated. The description is a condensed meaning of the full quote and the code explore elements of the theme.

Next, the data collection method and analysis method of the bookseller study be presented.

**Bookseller study**

The bookseller study included two empirical studies and first the survey study will be presented and thereafter the interview study.

**Survey**

The bookseller group is complex as there are several actors who sell e-books, from large online businesses to small bookshops with few employees. There is variation when it comes to aims, types of capital they acquire and organisational structures. The respondents were booksellers from large and small cities spread across the country, from bookshop chains, independent bookshops and online booksellers.

There are approximately three hundred physical, general bookshops in Sweden, and about twenty specialist bookshops, usually located in the big cities (Olson, 2015). There are also student literature bookshops and a number
of other outlets for book sales, for instance, supermarkets and petrol stations. According to the Swedish Booksellers’ Association website, they have approximately 300 members, including both physical bookshops and online booksellers (www.svb.se, April 9, 2017).

The population of 300 booksellers was a manageable number of respondents so the Swedish Booksellers Association members’ registry was used as a sample frame in order to select which booksellers to include as possible respondents in the first survey.

**Design of the questionnaire**

The bookseller questionnaire consisted of quantitative, close-ended questions and qualitative, open-ended questions. The questions were about suppliers, agreements, demand, technology and the role of bookshops and the predicted sale of e-books in the near future. The questions were multiple choice and open-ended and they generally answered the research questions regarding the external environmental factors but touched upon the internal organisational factors and strategies as well. The formulation and content of the questions were discussed with one bookshop, which indicated that there were no problems with understanding the questions.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was organised into three sections; section A had questions for those who sell e-books today, section B had questions for the booksellers who do not provide e-books at present, and finally section C had common questions for both groups. The reason for dividing the questions into three parts was that the questions could be more specific in regard to the booksellers’ experience of e-books.

There were eleven questions in Section A and they dealt with why the booksellers provide e-books to their customers, how they market e-books, and who are their suppliers of e-books, for example publishers and aggregators. Do they sell reading devices, do customers ask about e-books, who asks for e-books, will e-books sales increase over the next five years and how have e-books affected your business? Questions regarding how e-book sales will affect your future sales and a question about the competition between e-books and printed books were included.
There were six questions in Section B and they dealt with why the bookseller did not sell e-books, whether they get questions about e-books from your customers, and if e-book sales will increase or decrease in the next five years. Other questions dealt with if the development of e-books had affected their business, or will it affect their business in the future, and finally about the competition between printed books and e-books.

In Section C, there were three questions that dealt with Amazon’s possible presence in the Swedish book market, the role of the bookshop in the future, and activities in the bookshop.

**How the study was conducted**

A stratified random sampling of the population was made by selecting respondents from different geographical and organisational settings. It was important to strive for a representative sample, in this case booksellers from all over Sweden, respondents from bookshop chains, but also independent and online booksellers. If this was achieved, the collected result could easily be generalised to a larger population of booksellers. However, Bryman (2012) argues that sample bias can never completely be eliminated and is always more or less present in the choice of respondents and collected data.

The online service SurveyMonkey™ was used for the survey and the bookseller respondents were given the choice to either use the online service or fill in a paper version of the questionnaire. The answers in the paper questionnaire were entered manually into the online survey by the author of this thesis, after which the paper version was destroyed.

In spring 2014, the pilot survey was sent to 25 booksellers by e-mail with a request to answer the self-completion questionnaire online on SurveyMonkey™. Two reminders were sent out via e-mail and in total nine responses were received. The low response rate was a concern as the booksellers’ interest in e-books clearly was lacking; still the decision was made to go ahead with the survey hoping that the booksellers would supply sufficient data.

In the main survey, an additional 127 booksellers were included after a small number of intended respondents were not reachable at the given address. The potential respondents received e-mails with the link to the questionnaire
embedded and one reminder was sent out via e-mail a few weeks later. After the final date had passed, a paper questionnaire was sent out by post to those booksellers who had not filled in the online survey. An additional reminder via e-mail was finally sent out.

Altogether, in the pilot and main survey, 152 booksellers received the survey, of which 48 responded, which gives a response rate of 31.6 per cent. 35 booksellers chose to fill in the online questionnaire and 13 sent in the paper questionnaire.

At the start of the thesis work, the intention was to conduct two bookseller surveys some years apart. It was assumed that booksellers would have an interest in this study as e-books affect their business. In hindsight, the low response rate could be due to the fact that few physical bookshops sell e-books and therefore may have little interest in the survey questions and this study. The previous assumption of booksellers’ interest in participating in this study and e-books proved to be wrong. Therefore, the second survey was cancelled and interviews with booksellers conducted instead.

**Data analysis**

Excel was used for the statistical data analysis and the data is presented in contingency tables in the thesis. No other statistical analysis software was used for the analysis. Splitting the bookseller questionnaire into those who sell and those who do not sell e-books made it possible to compare the two groups’ answers about e-books and the market. One example is how they view the future of e-book sales depending on if they sell e-books or not at the time of responding to the survey questions.

The responses to the open-ended survey questions were analysed using a thematic analysis in order to examine the empirical data. The empirical data was organised into themes and subthemes when necessary. The overview of the themes made it easier to analyse the data and to answer the research questions. Several subsequent readings were carried out and quotes from the respondents were put under its theme-heading, after which the example quote was given a description and a code. See Table 4 for an example of how the thematic analysis was done.
Interviews

For the interviews, there were two selection procedures. First, some major actors were chosen, that is, two aggregators, two subscription services and two online booksellers were selected for interviews. Aggregators and subscription services had not been included in the survey. Secondly, a stratified random sampling was done for physical bookshops. The sample frame were the lists of members in one bookshop chain and from two independent bookshop consortia. Furthermore, one specialised bookshop was included because they were in the process of starting to sell e-books, and as was previously found in the survey, there are not that many physical bookshops that sell e-books. In the selection process, special attention was paid to trying to select respondents evenly distributed throughout Sweden by dividing them into different strata, that is booksellers from the north, middle and south Sweden. Altogether eleven physical bookshops were interviewed.

In total, seventeen commercial actors were interviewed. The respondents were either owners or managing directors of the company or managers or staff responsible for e-books.

Design of the interview guides

The questionnaire was used to get a general overview of the Swedish e-book market and the respondents’ opinions on their position at present and in the near future. With the aid of the respondents’ questionnaire answers, and with a focus on the research questions, interview guides were made. The interview guides for the different respondents had many similar questions but they were altered slightly to suit the specific respondent group; for instance, it was already known that the aggregators, online booksellers and subscription services sold or licensed e-books, so there was no need to ask if they sold e-books or not.

The semi-structured interviews with the booksellers required four different interview guides: one for online booksellers (see Appendix 4), physical bookshops (see Appendix 5), aggregators (see Appendix 6) and subscription services (see Appendix 7). The questions were mostly the same or similar but as the respondents had different business models and strategies in the market, some questions had to be different. The first question in all the interview
guides was about presenting their business. Only physical bookshops were asked if they sell e-books or not, as all other respondents were known e-book providers. There were questions about the role of the booksellers now and in the future, problems and opportunities, the potential of the e-book sales, and about collaborators and customers etc. For more details see the different interview guides in the Appendices.

How the study was conducted

In autumn 2015, spring 2016 and spring 2017, semi-structured interviews with booksellers took place. The first contact with possible respondents was made by phone and in some cases by e-mail. The interviews took place in my office, in the respondents’ offices, by phone, or online by using Skype or Adobe Connect. Meeting the respondents face-to-face was the preferred method, but the phone was the most convenient way as respondents all over the country was included. Adobe Connect, an online meeting program, gave the opportunity of more interaction as the researcher and the respondent could see each other. However, using these services is more time-consuming and more of an effort for the respondent. There were also some issues with recording of the interviews in Adobe Connect, and the use of that program for interviews was terminated.

The face-to-face interviews were done with one aggregator, both online booksellers, and one physical bookshop. Adobe Connect was used for one aggregator and the rest of the interviews were done over the phone. The interviews were all recorded and later transcribed verbatim in Swedish. The respondents were offered to read the transcripts and check for accuracy.

The survey and interviews questions and answers were all in Swedish but the quotes used in this thesis have been translated by the author into English.

Data analysis

For the analysis of the interviews a thematic analysis was conducted, (see Table 4) and the process was the same as described in the section Public library study and Data analysis. The point of the analysis is not only to show the apparent content but also to disclose “meanings that lie underneath the
superficial content” (Bryman, 2012, p. 290). In the analysis process, a close reading of the transcripts of the interviews was carried out in order to get to know the material well. This was essential as it is quite easy to lose sight of the context of what is being said when coding the data.

A theme is identified through close reading of the data and it is an iterative process consulting the data, the research focus and the theory. The themes concerned; provision of e-books, positions of actors, advantages, difficulties strategies of the actors as well as necessities and suppressions of e-books (the themes can be found under the section Public library survey and Data analysis). Subthemes found in the interview data were for example economic issues, supply and customer demand and relations with libraries.

**Reliability and validity**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data collection and statistical analysis and thematic analysis were used for the data analysis. To achieve reliability, the used methods should be described clearly and concisely (Bryman, 2012) so that the study can be replicated. The transparency of the research process is achieved by describing how the respondents have been chosen, how the questionnaires and interview guides have been formed and finally, how the data analysis was performed. Furthermore, the data collection instruments, questionnaires and interview guides, are easy to replicate and can be found in the appendix.

Bias can be introduced during the entire process in the forming of the research questions, during the interview, by the researcher’s tone of voice or reaction to answers and thus affecting further responses (Wildemuth, 2009), and finally in the data analysis. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2014), objectivity in the case of qualitative data analysis relates to reliable knowledge that is free from the researcher’s personal bias. Pickard (2013) argues that avoiding subjectivity in the analysis of data can be difficult to achieve, but if the researcher is aware of it, she may compensate for it when necessary. In this thesis, the trustworthiness and credibility of the research was achieved by reflecting on the analysis process and possible prejudices of the researcher throughout the analysis. The analysis and interpretation of the data was done
through the lens of social constructivism and with it follows the assumption that reality is a social construct (Berger & Luckman, 1966). The validity of the study is achieved if there is consistency between the empirical data and the conclusions drawn from it. Validity is also achieved by careful coding of the qualitative data, and in this thesis the data was coded in a structured manner, moving between the data and the coding scheme (see Table 4).

In both survey studies, a good sample of the population has been achieved. As such, it could be argued that the quantitative part of the study is generalizable. From a constructivist approach, it may be more interesting to speak of transferability (Howell, 2013). Both the methods used in this study, and the findings, could potentially be transferred to other small language book markets.

**Limitations of the research design**

Looking at the validity of the data collection method, the choice of methods can be discussed. Perhaps it would have been better to only use one data collection method as it has been time-consuming doing surveys with two groups of actors and interviews with one group. These methods complement each other but were perhaps too extensive for this study. In the surveys, the public library response rate was almost twice as high as that of the booksellers and the questionnaire data was rich and detailed. The difference between the two responding groups of actors was clearly due to that public libraries had an interest in the e-book question and physical bookshops did not.

The low response rate in the bookseller survey meant that it was not as useful in answering the research questions as the public library survey. The choice to do a stratified random sampling of bookseller respondents and a census survey with the public libraries has also meant that it is difficult to compare the results. By doing semi-structured interviews with the booksellers, some of the differences have been overcome, as the interviews have helped in presenting a fuller picture of the bookselling actors. The empirical data collected have thus been relevant to achieving a valid result as it has, in a satisfactory manner, helped in addressing the research problem and answering the research questions.
Some interviews were face-to-face and others were telephone interviews, based on convenience; however, those that were done in person were usually longer than the telephone ones, which of course may also affect the outcome. The fact that the research was undertaken by a doctoral student from Library and Information Science could potentially have affected the interview respondents and the way they viewed the outcomes of this research. One respondent made excuses for a sensitive library-related example presented during the interview; others made constant references to libraries and their importance. Had the researcher come from a business or economy faculty, perhaps the responses would have been slightly different and with another focus.

Representativeness is not fully achieved in the bookseller survey, mainly because of the low response rate, but by adding interviews, the situation has been rectified to some extent. In the survey, online and physical bookshops were the respondents. The bookseller group is more varied, and in the interviews more actors were included, that is to say, subscription services and aggregators. More in depth answers were also achieved with online and physical bookshops compared to the replies in the survey. Saturation is achieved with the interview respondents as the physical bookshops’ answers are similar and confirm their points of view. The aggregators, subscription services and online booksellers are fewer than physical bookshops and all of the major actors were interviewed.

In the public library census survey, representativeness was attempted as all municipalities of Sweden were included in the sampling. However, as will be further explained in Chapter 6, North Sweden was less represented as fewer replies came from the public libraries in Norrland. Big cities were represented one hundred per cent and the large and medium sized were sufficiently represented (79 and 67 per cent). The small municipalities’ replies were fifty-two per cent and this is thus significantly lower than the other municipality responses.
Ethical considerations

The research is carried out in accordance with the Good Research Practice, the guidelines issued by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011).

Care was taken in order to protect the confidentiality of the respondents and involved organisations, especially with regard to data of sensitive personal or business nature. Each respondent in the public library survey was assigned an individual number so that it was possible to track who had answered and where they were located in Sweden. In the booksellers’ survey, most added their address or disclosed who they were in their answers. Information on respondents’ addresses and individual numbers were only needed to keep track of responses and were removed as soon as it was no longer needed for the thesis work.

The Swedish e-book market is fairly small, with a few, large and dominant actors, of which several were interviewed for this thesis. It was therefore discussed with the respondents that some of the organisations’ names could be used in connection with the presentation of the data in the thesis, but that the name of the individual representatives of the organisations would not be disclosed. However, in the end it was decided that no proper names would be used and all organisations would be given a pseudonym, for instance Subscription service A and Bookshop 1.

An informed consent form was sent to all respondents before or after the interview took place. Before the interview session started, the content of the consent form was explained, for instance that the respondents’ participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation in the interview at any point. All respondents have signed and sent back the informed consent form. The recorded interviews, transcripts and the questionnaire data are stored in a file storage service provided by the University of Borås.
6 Public libraries and e-book lending

In this chapter, the empirical data from the public library survey from 2016 is presented and analysed. The survey questions are both quantitative and qualitative, closed and open-ended. The respondents’ statements were categorised into different themes, which have emerged in the coding and analysis process, and which were thereafter interpreted and analysed. The chapter starts off with the provision of e-books in public libraries and a quantitative analysis of the municipality size compared with three other variables, that is price cap on e-book loans, budget for procurement of e-books, and number of e-book loans.

A presentation of the respondents’ statements follows, structured in the following order: first, the provision of e-books and then the advantages and the difficulties e-books offer the actors. The theoretical concepts previously discussed, namely the supervening social necessity and suppression of radical potential (Winston, 1998) enabling or constraining the e-books on the Swedish e-book market, and Bourdieu’s (1996) concepts of position, disposition and capitals, that is the economic, cultural, social and symbolic capitals of the actors in the literary field, guide the analysis of the respondents’ answers as it has informed the structure of the chapter, together with strategies used by the actors in order to strengthen their position and capital as either planned or emergent (Mintzberg, 2003).

Public library respondents

In the public library survey, 181 of 290 public libraries replied (62.4 per cent), and as can be seen in Table 5, 88 respondents came from the region of Götaland, 67 respondents from Svealand and 26 from Norrland. The overall
response rate was 62.4 per cent and split up per region; the response rate is 63 per cent for Götaland, 70 per cent for Svealand and 48 per cent for Norrland. The division of size of municipalities comes from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions\textsuperscript{18} (2011) and SCB Statistics Sweden\textsuperscript{19}. The respondents were public libraries in four big city municipalities with a population of more than 200,000, 34 large municipalities with a population up to 200,000, 73 medium-sized municipalities with a population of up to 50,000 and 70 small municipalities with a population up to 15,000. Thus, the response rate for big city municipalities was 100 per cent, for large municipalities it was 79 per cent, for medium-sized municipalities it was 67 per cent and for small municipalities it was 52 per cent.

The response rate of 100 per cent for the big city municipalities was of course easy to achieve in this particular case, as there were only four respondents in that group. Large and medium-sized municipalities’ response rate was also good with 79 per cent for the first and 67 per cent for the second. Small municipalities had a lower response rate of 48 per cent. The reason for this underrepresentation of small municipalities could be that they lack the staff resources of a larger municipality and had no possibility to fill in such an extensive survey, or that a larger neighbouring public library is in fact coordinating e-book provision to the smaller municipalities and they may therefore not have sufficient information to fill in the survey.

The response analysis shows that the North of Sweden (Norrland) had a lower response rate with fewer respondents (48 per cent) than non-respondents (52 per cent). It is also clear that small municipalities had a lower response rate (52 per cent) than other municipalities. However, the respondents from the different regions and municipalities are still well represented and the conclusion made is that the results apply to and are valid for all public libraries in Sweden.

\textsuperscript{18} Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting - SKL
\textsuperscript{19} SCB Statistiska centralbyrån
Table 5: Shows the spread of responding public libraries as well as the non-respondents, size of municipality and region of Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Respondents and municipality size</th>
<th>Missing respondents</th>
<th>Response rate region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big city</td>
<td>Big city</td>
<td>88 of 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Göteborg (South Sweden)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>39</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88 of 140</td>
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<td>63%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67 of 96</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svealand (Middle Sweden)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>26 of 54</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-64 Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>-109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total missing</td>
<td>Big city 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large -9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium -36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small -64 Total -109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response rate municipality</td>
<td>Big city 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large 79%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium 67%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small 52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provision of e-books in public libraries

The Library Act of 2014 (SFS 2013: 801) states that public libraries should provide books in all formats. It was therefore assumed that all public libraries provided e-books as part of their service but this turned out to be wrong, and
as a result, the opportunity to find out how many provide e-books had been missed in the survey. Thus, a hands-on approach was the solution and each of the 290 main public libraries’ websites was visited to verify whether or not they provided e-books. It turned out that there were only two public libraries that did not provide e-books at the time of the study\textsuperscript{20}. In October 2017, 99.3 per cent of the public libraries in Sweden provided e-books to their library users. However, there were two or three public libraries that had just recently started to offer the e-book service.

Public libraries differ in size and available budgets (economic capital) and position in the community (social and cultural capital). Public libraries in big city and large municipalities ought to be less significant in the local community as the competition from other service providers is higher, while the public libraries in the medium-sized and small municipalities are much more visible in the communities with less competition. The different conditions of public libraries in Sweden in regard to the size of the municipality, size of budget for e-books and restrictions of e-book lending should be reflected in the dispositions and position of the distributing actors.

**Budgets for e-books**

In the survey, 98 of the 181 responding public libraries state that they allocate between one and ten per cent of their total media budget on e-books, and 25 respondents allocate between 11 and 30 per cent. There are four respondents that allocate at the very top end of the budget, i.e. between 21 and 30 per cent. Note that those four public libraries represent all four municipality sizes. Big cities have a larger budget for their media purchases as can be seen in the National library of Sweden’s statistics (National Library of Sweden, 2018). However, looking at the numbers in Table 6, municipality size does not appear to relate to budget size for e-books. Three of the four big city municipalities appear in the two higher categories of the budget allocation (11-20 and 21-30 per cent) and the fourth in the lower half, that is, six to ten per cent.

Perhaps one would also expect to find the large municipalities in the top half of the procurement budget, but the large municipalities are mostly found in the lower half of the budget categories. The majority placed in the 6 to 10 per

\textsuperscript{20} Since then one of them has started to provide e-books (November, 2018)
cent of budget allocation category, but with a few municipalities placing both higher and lower. The medium-sized municipalities are also mainly placed in the lower half of the categories, and again the majority belongs to the 6 to 10 per cent category, but it is interesting to see that eleven respondents also appear in the higher category between 11 and 20 per cent, and one in the highest category. The small municipalities’ budgets are evenly spread in the lower half of the budget categories, but also with four placed in the 11 to 20 per cent category and one in the highest category of 21 to 30 per cent.

In short, we can see that the big city municipalities have more representation in the top half of the budget categories and that the three others, large, medium and small municipalities, have higher representation in the lower half of the budget categories. Most of the respondents are satisfied with the size of their budget and 79 per cent of them state that their budget is sufficient to meet the demand of e-books from library users. However, 21 per cent claim that their budget is insufficient to meet the demand.

Table 6: Public library allocated procurement budget and municipality size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of library municipality</th>
<th>E-book procurement budget (per cent of total media budget)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big city</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large municipality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small municipality</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values**: procurement budget –58

**Comment**: This is the allocated budget but not necessarily all is used up

Public libraries have several limitations in place for e-book provision in order not to exceed their budget on e-books. One limitation is related to the number of loans per user a week, the most common restriction being two loans a week for each user. Another limitation is the price cap on each e-book loan from Axiell Media’s platform. In order to be able to lend out expensive new e-books that cost significantly more than older e-books, the public libraries must set their price caps high.
In Table 7, it is clear that the majority of the responding public libraries (77 per cent) have chosen to set their price cap between 20 and 30 SEK. One would expect that the big city municipalities with their large budgets would have no price limit on e-book loans or at least a high one, but three of the four big city municipalities have a price cap of 20 or 30 SEK. The fourth big city municipality did not reply to this particular question. Moreover, one large, two medium-sized and one small municipality have a price cap in the range of 101–200 SEK. Sixteen of the respondents say that they have a differentiated price cap with 30 SEK for the publishers included in the SKL-agreement, and 20 SEK for the other publishers. Twelve respondents state that they normally have a limitation of 20 to 30 SEK but, in some cases, they make exceptions for popular books and allow a higher price per loan. This is done mainly in order to keep down the queue on popular printed titles which are in demand, but it also helps increase e-book lending and use up the budget if the number of e-book loans are few.

**Demand for e-books in public libraries**

In Table 8, public libraries and the size of the served community are compared with e-book lending as a percentage of their total lending. Two respondents claim that e-book lending makes up less than 0.1 percent of their total book lending. On the other end of the scale, two big city public libraries have 6.0 and 6.2 per cent e-book lending. The majority, however – about two thirds of the respondents – say that they have between 0.1 and 2.0 per cent e-book lending, and about one third have more than 2.0 per cent. All big city
municipalities are in the top half of the categories, meaning with more than two per cent e-book loans of their total book lending. This means that public libraries placed in big city municipalities lend out at the top end of e-book lending.

E-book lending in public libraries in larger municipalities is evenly distributed between the categories with 13 in the lower half and 14 in the top half of the e-book lending categories (see Table 8). The reason can be that large municipalities are diverse in size as some have about 50,000 inhabitants and others are close to 200,000 inhabitants. The size of the municipality affects the income from taxes and thus the budget available for public libraries.

**Table 8:** Public library e-book lending and municipality size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of library municipality</th>
<th>E-book lending (per cent of total loans)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.1-1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big city</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large municipality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small municipality</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values:** e-book lending -54.

**Comment:** In the budget and the price cap categories, the respondents were free to fill in the exact number. In the e-book lending category, they were given alternatives: 0.1-1, 1.1-2, 2.1-3 and more than three per cent; here, they could also choose to fill in a comment box, with a more accurate number for their e-book lending. It was, therefore, necessary to add a 3.1-6.2 per cent alternative in the table.

As previously presented, 21 of the responding 26 large municipalities used less than 10 per cent of their total media budget on e-books (see Table 6). Twenty-five of the responding 30 large municipalities also had a lower price cap with 20-30 SEK restrictions on e-book loans (see Table 7). The medium-sized and the small municipalities are mainly represented in the lower half of the categories but still have some representation in the top half of e-book lending. Not only the size of the municipality but also budget size and other restrictions affect the number of books being lent out.
Fisher’s exact test was used to see if there was any statistical significance between the size of the municipality and the three variables, procurement budget, price cap on e-book lending and size of e-book lending. A significant correlation was found between municipality size and e-book lending ($p = 0.001026$). Thus, the number of municipality inhabitants appears to affect the number of e-book loans in public libraries. However, there was no significant correlation between municipality size and size of procurement budget, nor between municipality size and price cap on e-book lending. The budget and price cap are not necessarily affected by the size of the municipality but may perhaps be a strategy by the public libraries in order to keep down the number of e-book loans.

The number of e-books downloaded during 2015 varies considerably throughout the country. The lowest number in the survey was 25 downloads and the highest almost 294,000. Not surprisingly the first was at a small municipality and the second at a big city municipality. It clearly shows that e-book provision is unevenly distributed in Swedish public libraries.

**Table 9: Number of e-book downloads and municipality size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality size</th>
<th>Number of downloads</th>
<th>1-1000</th>
<th>1001-5000</th>
<th>5,001-10,000</th>
<th>10,001-30,000</th>
<th>94,000-294,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big city</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values:** -70

Table 9 shows the number of downloads in relation to municipality size. Twenty-five medium and small responding public libraries had less than 1,000 downloads during 2015. The majority had between 1,001 and 5,000 downloads, 17 had between 5,001 and 10,000, eight respondents had between 10,001 and 30,000 downloads. There is a large jump after the 30,000 mark as three big city municipalities had approximately 94,000, 108,000 and 294,000 downloads during 2015.
Sources of e-books

All respondents use the e-book platform Elib as their supplier of e-books and thus Axiell Media dominates the provision of e-books to public libraries in Sweden. Thirty-nine respondents state that they also use free e-book sources for the provision of e-books. Eleven respondents use other suppliers such as Ebsco, Overdrive, Mediajukeboxen and Natur & Kultur. To borrow e-books through Mediajukeboxen, the user is required to go to the public library and download the e-book.

Two different licenses are available for the provision of e-books from Axiell Media; a pay-per-loan license and an advance-payment license for a given number of loans. The most common is the pay-per loan license, which is used by 79 per cent of the respondents. Only one per cent have the pay-in-advance license and eight per cent have a combination of the two. There is no limitation to how many readers can borrow an e-book at the same time. The position of public libraries is affected by the monopoly of Axiell Media in the Swedish e-book market. One respondent argues that:

The monopoly of Axiell Media/Elib is stopping technical and user-friendly solutions.

The respondents think that Elib’s model for e-book lending from 2014 has several advantages compared to the previous model, but also some disadvantages. On the positive side is that the platform is responsive, modern and easy to administer. The respondents appreciate being able to have a fixed-rate on e-books most of the time but also to be able to add a few more expensive and popular titles to their collection when necessary. That makes it easier to regulate supply and cost. No waiting period for the release of new books and a wider selection of e-books are also seen as positive. Collection management has become easier, according to one public library respondent:

It has become easier to form a collection and easier to do the culling. There is no deferred period for titles which come from the publishers who follow SKL’s agreement.

On the negative side, it has become difficult to manage the e-book collection and there are not enough e-book titles, especially for children. It is also considered problematic that public libraries do not own the e-books as they do with printed books and that the quality of the titles on offer is sometimes
low. Eighty-four respondents are concerned about the unpredictability of the price setting and the high prices of e-books:

Many titles are unreasonably expensive and it is difficult to predict the price changes on them. To have an attractive collection of e-books becomes too expensive for public libraries. There are big differences between what the different municipalities choose to offer to their public library users.

It is Elib that has the monopoly on titles. We get titles we do not want and cannot select quality [titles].

The divided opinions of the respondents show that some are quite satisfied with Axiell Media as a provider of e-books to public libraries but others are dissatisfied with the monopoly of one aggregator. The struggle for social and cultural capital is evident in the statements as some would prefer to own the e-books and be in control of selection and management of e-books. The public librarian respondents consider it important to be able to select quality titles and provide titles their library users want. There are tensions related to the strategic positioning of public libraries in their communities and in the book market.

**Access to e-books in public libraries**

The responding public libraries do not, as a rule, have a policy for e-books. Only ten per cent of the respondents (19 of 177) answered that they have a policy, and only two make their policy available on their websites.

In the questionnaire, 74 per cent state that they make library e-books accessible through their catalogues. It was not asked specifically, but it is likely that some of them use Axiell Media’s eHub, which is a means of integrating Elib’s e-books with the libraries’ search system, thereby enabling the library user to access e-books through the catalogue. In line with this, 26 per cent say that they do not display available e-books in their catalogues and several provide a link from their website to Elib’s e-book portal for the library visitors to use. According to the respondents, there are advantages to having e-books in the library catalogue, which can then be used to access all books. The respondents claim that if e-books are not integrated in the catalogue, users do not see the e-book collection at all:
When the library users look for books in our catalogue, they forget to also look for books at Elib. One can lose many readers this way as they don’t find the e-books.

Flexibility in the choice of titles and medium is requested and the ideal situation is described by one respondent:

When purchasing a printed book, it would be good to also be able to choose to have it as an e-book in the library catalogue. Maybe even to be able to buy only e-books from certain publishers, in a format that is easy to lend out.

Only a deliberate search through Elib’s website enables users to find the e-book collection of a particular library, but that requires intentional use of a link from the library’s website, to Elib. Public libraries use different sources for acquiring e-book cataloguing data and many will use more than one for this purpose (see Table 10). One hundred and twenty respondents filled in how they access catalogue data; the respondents could fill in all relevant responses.

**Table 10:** How public libraries access catalogue data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Per cent use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From BTJ</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From e-book supplier</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Libris</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create own catalogue posts</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values:** Respondents -61

The most popular among the sources of catalogue data is the service of BTJ that supplies catalogue descriptions to BURK (the company’s own bibliographic database for Swedish public libraries) and LIBRIS (the Swedish national union catalogue). The second most-used catalogue entries are provided by e-book suppliers. LIBRIS itself is a source but only a minority of public libraries produce their own catalogue entries for e-books.
Advantages of e-book provision in public libraries

The internal and external factors that positively influence the actors related to public distribution of e-books are investigated in this section. Such factors are the opportunities e-books provide and strengths of public libraries helping in adopting the e-book and increasing its use. Both are presented within the main topics emerging from the empirical data.

Mission and role of a public library

The majority of public libraries find it necessary to have e-books in their collection, partly because they want to be relevant for the library users and provide modern reading formats, but also because it is part of their mission. Public libraries’ general view is that they should provide e-books and other media formats to their users and thus clearly state their strategic position in this question, perhaps in an attempt to mediate their position in the literary field.

We must have the same media as e-books, printed books, audio books (both CD and mp3) and as talking books.

There are two quite opposite views concerning the provision of printed books versus e-books. Of the 142 respondents, 42 argue that it is important to increase the collection and titles of e-books. They consider it essential to increase the e-book collection in order to safeguard public libraries’ role in the future. It is a way for public libraries to continue to be relevant to the public by following society’s overall progression. Fifty-six respondents see the two formats as equally important and 23 respondents cannot make a choice between them. These respondents say that public libraries should offer the different media that are used in society and they cannot see that there is any difference between offering printed books or e-books.

Yes, it is important to increase the e-book collection and it is important to back printed books. If I have to choose, I am more on the side of printed books.
Twenty-one of the respondents consider it equally, if not more, important to maintain the high standard of the printed book collection as printed books are more popular with the library users, as:

At present, the printed book is without any competition the more important format for the majority of library users.

There are strategic differences in the public library respondents’ statements as some want the e-book collection to increase, but at the same time need the budget to increase in order for that to happen. Others prefer the printed book and claim that this is what the library users want. The problem here, as one respondent said, is that the demand is dependent on the number of available titles, which means that as long as there are few titles that may interest the library users, the demand will not increase. It is also evident that some respondents try to increase and succeed in increasing the interest in e-books, while others do not see any reason in doing this:

As long as there are no signals that the demand would be bigger with another selection, it is not really a question for us. The selection must also be put in relation to the cost and who we are here for. A public library that is here for everyone cannot, for example, support specific interests in too large an extent. The printed books are also a reason to visit the library, which we of course want.

The cultural capital public libraries possess is expressed in terms of their importance as a cultural and democratic institution in their communities, as they provide access to information, computers and the Internet. The provision of literature in different formats is also considered one of the fundamental tasks they have. The respondents argue that it is really not an option to exclude e-books from the collection. Some refer to the Library Act (SFS 2013: 801) and the public libraries’ mission as a democratic institution open for all.

It is a question of democracy and freedom of speech. Social equalisation. Digital participation. Everyone cannot find free resources online.

It is a democratic issue. Public libraries should offer free access to everyone, regardless of format.

The advantages that e-books offer public libraries and their users are several, as can be seen in Table 11. To offer e-books is considered as a good service to library users and it “boosts the public libraries’ image as modern and up-
to-date”. The unlimited number of simultaneous users per e-book is a clear advantage according to the statements of the respondents; that library users have access to them around the clock is also considered an advantage. These advantages help strengthen public libraries’ social capital. Other, less important advantages are that e-books require no physical handling, which saves time for the librarians and that they do not take up any library space.

Table 11: Advantages of e-books to public libraries and their users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>To a small extent</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>To a very large extent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited no. of users per book</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books do not take up any physical space in the library</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books do not have to be handled physically so it saves time</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library users have access to them when the library is closed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing values: Questions 1 and 2, –17, Questions 3 and 4, –16 respondents.

When discussing the role of the public libraries, there is evident a fear of losing social relevance and position in the literary field, perhaps best seen in the opinion respondents express that public libraries should be major actors in the e-book market and lead the way and be cutting edge in regard to new technology.

Public libraries follow the development and offer modern technology in order to provide books.
Public libraries see that they have many strengths in regard to e-book provision and the most common answer in the survey is that e-books are free of charge for the library user and that is a strong argument in favour of public libraries.

**Demand for a convenient format**

The incentives pushing the increased use of e-book lending in public libraries are first and foremost the readers’ need and want of the e-book format. Some people prefer e-books because they are more convenient to use in certain situations and others because they give them the option to continue reading.

Different formats make it possible for readers with different needs to find a format that suits them best. E-books is one example of an accessible format as they can be used to increase the size of the text and they are easy to get hold of for those who cannot for different reasons get to a library.

The importance of the different factors driving the demand for e-books can be seen in Table 12. The respondents could choose the degree of importance for each statement offered and also add any factors they thought were significant. Twenty respondents added responses and some of the identified factors were that e-books made queueing for popular titles redundant and that they are free of charge in public libraries.

According to the respondents, the main factors driving the demand for e-books are the users’ need for a convenient format (very significant 56 per cent) and the availability to reading devices (very significant 53 per cent). The easy access to collections online is also considered important (quite significant 44 per cent) and the potential of the technology to adapt text size etc. (quite significant 52 per cent). The publishers’ marketing of e-books is considered less significant (50 per cent) as are the manufacturers of e-readers pushing new technology (42 per cent).
Table 12: The main factors driving the demand for e-books

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Not significant</th>
<th>Less significant</th>
<th>Quite significant</th>
<th>Very significant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The readers’ need for a portable, useful format</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access to collections online</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing from the publishers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The access to reading devices/ e-readers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers of e-readers push new technology</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The potential of the technology to adapt text size etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing values: Question 1 –18, Question 2 –19, Question 3 –20, Question 4 –19, Question 5 –23, Question 6 –20

The convenience of e-book loans for library user is considered to be an important incentive in favour of e-books. Two respondent state that:

Those who try to borrow and read an e-book are often very satisfied and they are happy to continue [to read e-books].

E-book readers are not that many but those who use the service are faithful to the medium.

Major advantages of e-books are the flexibility and accessibility. In a digital society, many people expect to have access to everything straightaway, something which speaks for the accessible format of e-books. Printed books entail that library users have to go to the physical public library to borrow and
return books, while e-books can be accessed anywhere as well as outside the opening hours of the public library. Library users can have reading material around the clock, whenever and wherever they wish.

I think it is a must, in order for public libraries to exist in the future, to increase the access to digital media, as they are accessible around the clock, even outside the library walls.

To be able to borrow books at any time and place – in the holiday home, at night etc. The accessibility! Even on long trips and visits abroad.

Increase of visibility and scope of usage of public library is adding to the social capital, so it is relevant to reach the users.

**Reaching the users**

Providing e-books as part of its service makes public libraries relevant to its users and also help them reach groups that are not coming to the public library at present. Five respondents state that the e-book service is attracting new readers to the public library.

Advantages yes, new target groups are reached. You have room for more e-books on your reading device going on holiday, etc. It is very flexible, and many carry their mobile phones with them all the time and now they can use it in more ways. /.../ I think it is possible to make young people interested in reading; they say ‘I don’t read books,’ but at the same time they sit there and browse through their phones.

New user groups that might be reached are those that do not see the need to use public library services normally. One of these groups of people is, according to the respondents, the economically strong and technologically savvy users that perhaps do not use the library regularly. It is, however, important to note that there is no study backing these assumptions of e-books attracting new user groups, rather it is the perception of the librarians. This could also be a case of librarians’ making strategic statements in order to establish the importance of e-books in public libraries. E-books require access to technology, both hardware and software, in order to read them, and most people in Sweden have access to computers, smartphones and tablet
computers (Bergström et. al., 2017). The respondents claim that this group of e-book users expects to find e-books in public libraries.

It even gives people with more resources, for example economical and educational, that do not even need the public library services, an attractive offer which makes them positive supporters of the public library as a resource in society.

The respondents state that others who benefit from using e-books are elderly library users. These users may have been frequent readers of printed books, but now experience problems with the size of the text as their eyesight has deteriorated. They can now continue to read with the help of e-books as they offer the option to increase text size and the contrast between text and background.

I also have a weak spot for the elderly who have been reading printed books all their lives but now it doesn’t work anymore, and I am really happy when I can continue to give them reading experiences with the help of audio books and e-books.

This statement is also connected to the democracy and equality issues previously presented.

**Availability of e-books**

The selection of e-books is often discussed by the respondents in different questions in the survey. The respondents agree that it is important that new titles are available as e-books in public libraries for several reasons. Providing only older titles would prevent readers who only read e-books from accessing new titles. New titles are also more expensive to buy and this can be an obstacle for some readers preventing them from buying e-books. Library users who only have access to older titles may be lost to the public library because of dissatisfaction with the quality of the library collection.

No, it must be new e-books. For library users who don’t read printed books but only e-books, what we have on offer is crucial.

The respondents consider the reduced waiting time on popular book titles as another benefit that e-books offer.
… [B]ooks that have a long waiting list, it is available as an e-book, so everyone can borrow it. It leads to shorter waiting time.

Five respondents stress that equal access should also include those who live in rural areas and have a long way to travel to the nearest public library, which is not the case today as:

…[L]ibrary users access to e-books is decided by where they live.

Other perceived internal organisational strengths are that staff can aid and support library users who are unaccustomed to the technology. Public libraries stand for a quality control, according to some respondents, and they can give suggestions of good literature to read without regard to the format.

E-books themselves offer a strong position for public libraries as they are an important complement to the physical collection of printed books. Some older titles that are removed both from the book shelves and storage, and not available to buy anymore, can be available as e-books. It is considered a strength that the public libraries can continue to provide a service to library users no matter where they are in their life. One respondent sums up some of the important features with e-books in public libraries:

Freely available and free of charge, and it becomes a natural part of the public library’s provision of literature, without regard to the format. A supply of different formats makes it possible for users with different needs to find the format that suits them best. E-books are in an accessible format and can work as a large letter format, and they are available for those who cannot for various reasons go to the public library anymore.

The cultural relevance and significance are increased by these concerns and the immediacy of provision of cultural items can help strengthen the cultural relevance of a public library.

**Difficulties of e-book provision in public libraries**

In this section, the thesis looks at the problems caused by e-books and the different barriers constraining the e-book from growing in the Swedish public
libraries and thus threatening other actors in the literary field. Some of these suppressants are the internal weaknesses of the public libraries that inhibit their possibilities to provide the e-book service to the library users. Both are presented within the main topics emerging from the empirical data.

**Restricted resources**

The most common statement of the public library respondents concerns economic questions, i.e. lack of funding and the expense of providing e-books. This means that public libraries have restrictions on e-book lending, for example, on how many each library user may borrow at a time (see Table 13) and how much each loan is allowed to cost (see Table 7). There might be even harsher restrictions applied if the demand increases.

> We are forced to have restrictions in regards to the loans so that the costs won’t skyrocket, even though there is potential for e-books.

> Because we have a cost limit per book, it means that we cannot offer the whole range. Neither can we offer all new titles until after some months.

In Table 13, the restriction on the number of loans a week per users and municipality size is displayed. There were 168 of 181 respondents who answered the question, but as there are different rules in different public libraries – for example, some have the restrictions per week and others per month or 28 days – in order to be able to compare the numbers, the only responses that will be used in this table have restrictions per week, so the number of respondents are 139.

There are three medium and small municipality public libraries that allow six or seven e-book loans per week, but two loans per week is by far the most common number, and three loans is the second most common. Unless you are a prolific reader who reads more than two or three books per week, the restriction of e-book loans does not seem to be that harsh. There are no apparent differences between the restrictions compared to public library municipality size.
Table 13: Restriction on number of e-book loans a week per user

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality size</th>
<th>Number of e-book loans allowed per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big city</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing values: – 42

The restrictions are individual to each public library and mean that access to e-books differs between public libraries in different parts of the country. Thus, there is an unequal provision of e-books, as well as printed books, at public libraries in Sweden. This is due to several factors, in some cases geographical and in others financial or to do with a lack of other resources. The general lack of funding is a suppressant for e-book provision, as well as how the funding is divided among the different media provided in public libraries. One respondent claims that managers lack the will to redistribute the funding from other areas, like staff, to e-books.

The problem is to make management and staff realise that resources need to be redistributed from staff to e-books. This is not popular and weak management therefore chose to keep the staff that do not have any reasonable work to perform and not offer e-books to the extent that they could, and blame the publishers and that it is their price setting that is the problem.

However, the main criticism is towards what one respondent calls “the inhumane price setting” of e-books from the publishers, that statement is agreed on by several other public library respondents.

The publishers’ price setting kills the public libraries’ e-book lending. We get a diluted service that provide us with old manuals, books of old, uninteresting titles and sometimes a lot of SOUs [official governmental reports].

The actors’ economic capital influence the increase of social capital, and in terms of its division to reach more important goals for management (retaining staff) and securing their own internal positions. The lack of sufficient economic resources and technological skills of the public libraries but also the library users and the availability of a critical mass of interesting e-book titles.
can affect the preference for e-books and as a result the need for the e-book service.

**User preferences**

One significant suppressant for e-books is the readers’ preference for the printed book; this is a serious problem for the e-book. It is also clear that some of the public librarians themselves prefer the printed book and they claim that library users would “rather read printed books – they want to hold a real book” (see Table 14).

We have thought that more would start to read e-books but the majority still want to read printed books. Many also read different formats in different contexts. I think we have to back both the printed format and e-books in the future.

It is clear that the public library respondents see the library users’ preference for printed books (see Table 15). One perceived suppressant for the e-book is that the technology is difficult to use for those who are not accustomed to using it. There are several steps that need to be taken before library users can start reading e-books, such as registration at Adobe ID to get the app and DRM. The e-book user also needs to have access to a reading device of some sort, which requires the user to learn how to use it.

One public librarian explained that this is enough to put people off using e-books, and had also noted that it was especially a hindrance for older people. The suppressant for e-books are several, for instance, those who do not succeed with all the practical and technical things with e-books the first time around, once they have done it, there are no problems anymore.

With older persons, we often have to start with asking if they have an e-mail; if they don’t, we have to fix it, download the app, fix Adobe ID. There are many steps before they can start to borrow e-books, and then they start rolling their eyes and think that this is not for them. So, you have to choose your words carefully, speak plainly and support them the whole way. This is how easy it is once you get started! It is a very long start up time but after that it becomes easier.
Another suppressant is that people read fewer books and especially young people use other means of entertainment more than books.

We are moving towards a digital world but at the same time young people read less. They use other channels to entertain themselves or to find information.

The lack of users’ enthusiasm for e-books and preference for other media and content affect the library strategies.

**Lack of control and resistance to change**

Public libraries claim to have less control of their collection of e-books than they do of printed books. Some suggest it is the fault of the supplier and others blame lack of time for the task. The respondents claim that it is time-consuming to sort through all the unwanted material they get from Elib. Responding public libraries say that they do not do traditional selection work in regard to e-books; instead, they receive everything that Elib has at the public library’s price range. This means that they have to deselect those e-book titles they do not want.

Cataloguing and selection work is time-consuming in relation to the size of the e-book collection and lending.

Thus, the quality of e-books in the collection is not the same as that of printed books where the librarians make an active choice of which titles they want in the collection. Finally, it is a problem that the public libraries do not own the e-books but are only licensing them, which, according to the respondents, leads to their having very little control over their digital collection.

This passivity and lack of action also affects how the e-book is dealt with internally, as some staff want to keep things as they are and find it difficult to change the way they work. E-books lead to work routines’ having to change:

The staff have to learn new things and change their work. Some want to and like it - others do not want to and resist it.

According to five respondents, there is a general lack of will to work with e-books. The potential of the e-book is being suppressed by public librarians.
It feels like e-books are a ‘non-question’ at public libraries. Something we should not work with, which is strange as that is the direction the development is going.

Several statements are along the same lines and the respondents suggest that e-books always come second to printed books in the everyday running and decision-making in public libraries.

By tradition, printed books are favoured, but it is time to try to change the attitude and consider e-books as an equal medium and not just a complement.

One issue identified by the respondents are technical problems, like access and downloading of e-books. Technical difficulties can put many readers off from reading e-books, according to the respondents, and some would even go so far as to say that some staff members are uncomfortable with getting questions about e-books. Part of it is that they have no interest in learning anything about it, but mainly they feel uneasy because they do not understand the technology. As a result, the inabilities of some of the staff cause problems as they cannot solve the problems because they lack the technical skills in order to help the readers in a satisfactory manner.

The technology can be difficult. There can be problems downloading the app. If you are a beginner using the technology you may not understand the instructions. A large part of the library staff are not interested in the technology and cannot help even if they wanted to.

Surprisingly few respondents, only 16, consider DRM\textsuperscript{21} problematic, as it means that the users have to hand out personal information to a third party when registering to use the Adobe software.

Library users’ complaints as reported by the respondents can be seen in Table 14. The respondents could select how often the complaint occurred and they also had the opportunity to add other complaints in their answers. Eight respondents took the opportunity to add their own complaints, of which one was a technical problem with the system, one concerned the difficulties with finding titles, and six were about the lending restrictions imposed by the library.

\textsuperscript{21} Digital Rights Management
Table 14: Complaints from library users about the e-book service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Quite often</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of e-books</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with use</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing values: Question 1 -62, Question 2 -63, Question 3 -60, Question 4 -60
Comment: Technical problems can be with reading device, systems, downloading

The selection of titles is sometimes an issue but the quality of e-books is hardly ever a problem for the users. Difficulties with use of e-books is a problem and technical problems are recurring complaints from users, according to the respondents.

According to the respondents, the most significant obstacles constraining the increase of e-book lending in public libraries (see Table 15 – quite significant and very significant) are the cost of e-book lending (85 per cent), lack of national system for e-book lending (74 per cent), readers’ preference for printed books (73 per cent) and inadequate resources to meet the demand (71 per cent). Not as significant are the lack of e-books in Swedish (53 per cent), cost of reading devices (35 per cent) and publishers’ lack of marketing of e-books (28 per cent).
Table 15: The main obstacles constraining increased e-book lending at public libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>障碍</th>
<th>Not significant</th>
<th>Less significant</th>
<th>Quite significant</th>
<th>Very significant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>读者阅读偏好</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>电子书籍短缺</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>阅读设备成本</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>电子书籍借阅成本</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出版商缺乏电子书籍推广</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>国家电子书籍借阅系统缺乏</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>资源不足以满足需求</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

缺失值: 问卷1-4，16，5-18，6-16，7-17

There are strategies that help in securing an actor a certain position in the literary field but there are also circumstances that weaken this position and the actors sometimes appear to lack strategies to counteract these circumstances. This may mean that e-books despite all their advantages are not the central item for securing public libraries’ positions in the literary field.
**Diminishing quality of service**

The lack of control and restricted resources result in the diminishing quality of collections and services. The respondents are critical of the books on offer and how publishers and Elib handle their supply of e-books. The main arguments are that the titles are old and not interesting, as well as the charges for titles that can be found for free on different Internet sources.

The social capital of public libraries is affected by the restrictions on e-book provision and use imposed by the libraries. These limitations are the number of loans per user and the price cap on each e-book loan, and they are suppressing an increased use of e-books in public libraries. Users’ attitudes to and perception of public libraries are affected by their predetermined expectations about what public libraries’ services are supposed to be.

> Well yes! We live in a digital world where our visitors have expectations about accessibility on e-books specifically. The limitations we are forced to impose are, for the most part, completely incomprehensible for most of our library users.

Public libraries’ perception that there are not enough titles are blamed on the publishers, as they do not turn all their printed books into e-books. The reasons for this can be several; for example, the expense of turning older printed books into e-books, and some respondents claim that the publishers are afraid they will lose money on e-books.

> There is a lot of fear in connection with e-books in Sweden, and not being able to make money on them. The large publishers and suppliers are stopping the growth.

The perceived fears of not making money can be suppressing not only library provision but also the e-book market. One respondent claims that the focus on how expensive e-books are for public libraries is not accurate as there are only a small number of e-books that cost more than 30 SEK per loan. The real problem is the lack of e-book titles.

> The major problem is not that some titles are expensive but that most books are not made available as e-books. For example, only about 500 titles of about 20,000 cost over 30 SEK in Elib’s range of e-books in May 2016.
The statement above is interesting, as it is true that only three per cent of e-book titles cost more than 30 SEK per loan, but they are usually the new, popular titles that the library users want. In November 2018, 1,334 of 43,899 e-book titles at Elib cost 31 SEK or more per loan; the highest price was 999 SEK. However, almost 44,000 titles can hardly be considered few; even though there were fewer titles in 2016 when this study was done, it was still around 30,000. The issue of complaining about too few titles may actually really be about the fact that public libraries cannot afford the new titles and therefore feel that there are not enough titles.

Another issue is the availability of e-books in the library catalogue and 46 of the responding 145 public libraries (26 per cent) state that they have catalogue posts of their e-books in the catalogue. Those public libraries that do not have catalogue posts of e-books usually let their library users search for e-books in the specific e-library section of the library website or click on a link to go to Elib’s portal. It is a problem area for public libraries as it makes it more difficult for new potential readers to find e-books. Catalogue posts for e-books are provided by several actors (see Table 10), but several of the respondents are disappointed with the services of those providers.

Catalogue posts we get from Libris. They are outrageously badly done. Not many things are right in those posts.

Public libraries usually market their books and activities so that the public will find their way to the library. E-book services also need marketing, as one respondent argues:

All media needs marketing, /…/ but we have not created good routines for it.

One of the public libraries’ perceived weakness is the lack of marketing of e-books, by themselves and publishers, but one respondent questions the need to market e-books.

Funny question, marketing of e-books? We do not market e-books at all in Norrland, but perhaps we should?

Other respondents realise that they should advertise their e-books better but cannot because their budget does not allow e-book loans to increase.

We consider it as a problem that we cannot market e-books any more than we do as it would bust our budget.
In some statements, it is clear that they believe the only reason there is an e-book market at all is due to public libraries’ marketing efforts.

The fact that there is an e-book market in Sweden at all depends on the public libraries marketing of e-books.

According to some respondents it is the titles and the content, not the medium, which is advertised. This might be a strategy by public libraries claiming that it does not really matter if it is an e-book or a printed book, as they market the titles.

**Issues of competition**

Public libraries cannot offer the same supply of e-books as the commercial actors but, at the same time, they are dependent on commercial actors for their provision of e-books. Most public libraries cannot offer new titles of e-books due to the cost of lending, so it is clear that one of the main threats to public library lending of e-books is the cost of such loans. The price is considered high, especially, as some respondents point out, that it is only an electronic file, and public libraries are charged for each loan.

The cost is higher per loan in comparison with a printed book, as printed books can be lent out many times for one purchase cost only.

One of the statements shows that commercial actors and especially subscription services are considered serious competitors to public libraries in the Swedish e-book market. Loss of social capital and position in the literary field is at stake here.

We lose e-book readers to the commercial suppliers, it is inexpensive and easy today. Maybe the libraries have bit off their own tail, in this case, with their ‘free of charge principle’. It is evident that library users are prepared to pay a small sum for a good service.

Although most respondents consider it necessary that public libraries provide e-books, one respondent sees it as a problem, and suggests that libraries should be more restrictive so the commercial e-book market has a chance to grow.
I think [public libraries] need more restrictive rules in order not to be a too big threat to the established market.

Others think that there is room for all actors as they provide a complementary service for e-book readers.

The commercial market and the public libraries complement each other today. The commercial actors offer easier access to an e-book service that is tied to their own stock.

Public library respondents are dealing with the tensions that occur in trying to achieve an e-book system that works for all actors, but they cannot see that there is any solution in sight. The positioning of public libraries in the field is evident in one respondent’s remark:

At present, the market and the public libraries appear to have different entry points to the solution to achieve an optimal e-book system.

There is a perceived lack of good agreements between public libraries and the commercial actors. An issue holding it back, according to the respondents, is the lack of competition between commercial actors serving public libraries as there is only one major supplier for e-books in Swedish. At the time of this data collection, Axiell Media has no, or at least very little, competition in providing e-books to public libraries.

There could preferably be more suppliers, and then maybe public libraries could push down the prices and have better terms.

The competition will probably increase when public libraries start to use Overdrive’s service of provision of e-books and Axiell Media and Overdrive will be in direct competition.

Public libraries’ effort in regards to positioning themselves as social and cultural institutions compared to publishers can be seen in one respondent’s dissatisfaction with Axiell Media/Elib’s lenience towards publishers in their e-book provision to public libraries.

Elib has chosen not to put any demands on the publishers. /…/ Everything is still as before, completely on the terms of the publishers.
The major publishers own 30 per cent of Elib and this could explain why Axiell Media is eager to cooperate with the publishers, but does not make clear why they are not meeting the requirements of one of their largest customers, public libraries, which of course is normal practice in business.

Elib is generally not interested in meeting any of the demands of the public libraries; this is why new suppliers are called for.

These issues of competition spill over to a more general discussion of relations with and expectations of different actors in the next section.

**Relations with other actors**

Most tension, as has been shown already, can be found in the dealings with publishers and Axiell Media. The responding public libraries are quite harsh in their judgment of publishers’ efforts in regard to e-books. Furthermore, the ability of publishers to think of new ways of dealing with things is criticised, and some even say that the publishers are being difficult.

The publishers must dare to think new and stop being afraid of e-books.

Publishers are preventing the development of e-books.

The statements of the public library respondents show that at the moment, their trust in publishers in this question is quite low. Some even claim that publishers want to restrict e-book lending.

Publishers and e-book suppliers have an interest in limiting the public libraries’ access to e-books, in the belief that it will lead to them being able to sell more on the open market.

There is an apparent struggle between public libraries and publishers over mutual assets in the literary field, in this case the economic and social capital derived from e-books. For publishers, it is a question of control over their asset and the revenue they can gain from it. However, according to the respondents, the public libraries are, to this day, the main source of that revenue.

The publishers’ income through commercial assets is negligibly small in comparison with incomes that come from e-book lending at libraries.
As non-commercial actors, public libraries depend on funding from local politicians who distribute municipal taxes and they are concerned that politicians are unaware of the everyday challenges of public libraries. This can be due to a lack of marketing of the services of public libraries and visibility compared to other pressing issues local politicians have to find funding for.

The politicians are ignorant about the changes that public libraries must implement, and do not dare, or do not understand that they must support that change.

The government politicians are also requested to make decisions in regard to prices on e-book lending. The social capital and the position the public libraries have in their local communities must be supported by the politicians on a national level. The respondent think that printed books and e-books need to be treated the same.

We are rather angry at the slack attitude to e-books that our politicians have. The skewed price setting, which gain profit from public library funding, and makes us have a mediocre collection which gives us no way to satisfy our users’ wishes. We want a much stronger steering from our politicians at a national level, where guiding principles put price caps on e-books and where e-books will have the same status as ordinary books.

Some of the relations with other actors are related to the passivity of public libraries themselves. The public libraries have some perceived internal organisational problems, as they have not been as active in solving the e-book question.

Public libraries have been too passive, waiting for someone else to do something.

The responding librarians are dissatisfied with their colleagues’ disinterest in e-books. Some state that one part of the problem is that the management and library staff do not always want to work to find a solution. Managers are deemed to lack knowledge and courage to make the decisions that are necessary in regard to the funding of e-books.

The will, courage, knowledge and competence among library managers are wanting.
The respondents argue that the National Library of Sweden is an important actor for the public libraries and should have a more active role in assisting public libraries in their endeavour to provide e-books to the public. Then public libraries could speak with a unified voice towards the publishers and Axiell Media, which they believe would strengthen public libraries position.

The National Library of Sweden’s role could be more active. As it is now, it is SKL that drives the question for the public libraries.

There are several statements containing resentment towards the National Library of Sweden and in its perceived disinterest and reluctance to play any role in public libraries’ affairs. Here, it appears that public libraries consider that they lack cultural capital compared to academic libraries.

Does the National Library of Sweden really care about public libraries, which are not as prestigious as research and specialist libraries?

At present – [the National Library of Swedens’s role is] non-existent. It is the only authority that can drive these questions and they have so far only referred to that it is not their role.

It is also argued that the Swedish Library Association is pushing its own agenda rather than working towards practical solutions for public libraries.

The Swedish Library Association has had a negative impact due to their political position-taking instead of working for solutions.

The actors’ allies are those who are regarded as having possibility to help in maintaining and winning good position in the literary field. The competitors are the ones who are necessary, as publishers, for public libraries’ existence, can displace public libraries, for instance by only providing their production to commercial distributors.

Summary

In 2016, a census survey was conducted with the 290 main Swedish public libraries, and 181 (62.4 per cent) of them answered the questionnaire. The response analysis showed that the region of North Sweden (Norrland) and small municipalities had the lowest response rate but it was still around 50 per
cent, which is a satisfactory level. The size and location of the municipalities are variables that seem to be meaningfully related to some e-book management and use issues. Municipality size was compared to three variables: price cap for e-book loans, procurement budget for e-books, number of e-book loans and a significant correlation was found between municipality size and e-book lending.

E-books are an important service for public libraries and the respondents believe that it makes the public library relevant to its community. The use of e-books in public libraries is still small, between 0.1-6.2 per cent, but the respondents consider it important that they can provide e-books for reasons of democracy, relevance to the community and equal access for their users. This mission is constrained by the market and public finances, as each e-book loan is costly for the public library and the prices set by the publishers are in many cases considered too high. Many public libraries, therefore, have restrictions on e-book loans; the most common is a price cap of 20 or 30 SEK and two loans per user a week.

Axiell Media is, at this point in time, the only provider of e-books to Swedish public libraries. There is some dissatisfaction regarding their e-book service even though many argue that it has improved with the new model in use since 2014. One of the major changes is that publishers now have no restrictions in the price setting, which before 2014 was a fixed price of 20 SEK per e-book loan, and now is anything between 5 to 999 SEK. However, only three per cent of e-books cost more than 30 SEK per loan, but they are usually the popular, new titles. Many public libraries prefer SKL’s fixed price model in which each loan costs between 13-30 SEK.

To strengthen their position, the respondents see the advantages of having a common strategy for the agreements of e-book provision between the publishers and public libraries. The National Library of Sweden is considered the most appropriate actor to protect public libraries’ interests regarding e-books and to coordinate common efforts in regard to agreements etc., but is not doing enough, according to some respondents. Public libraries acknowledge that booksellers offer a better service in providing digital books and the new e-book providers offer serious competition to public libraries. The increase of e-book loans and sales are dependent on the consumers’ and users’ interest in the product. Readers’ preference for printed books, and in some cases librarians’ outspoken support of printed books, is perhaps the most
significant suppressant for e-book use. Another is a lack of titles, according to the respondents, preventing library users from reading e-books. E-books are considered good to use in certain contexts and by certain users, for instance when travelling or for people with impaired visibility. The accessibility and convenience of e-books are often mentioned as a strength. However, the marketing of these advantages or the access to e-books through public libraries is not in perceived as a possible option by the respondents.
In this chapter, the research findings from the bookseller survey and interviews will be presented and analysed. Quotes from the survey and interviews are presented together, but in the survey the individual respondents are not identified, while in the interviews each respondent’s quotes are presented with a pseudonym. The respondents in the survey study were online booksellers and physical bookshops; additional respondents, namely, aggregators and subscription services, were added in the interview study. As previously explained in the introductory chapter’s review of concepts and definitions, the concept booksellers includes all bookselling respondents in this thesis.

The theories of Bourdieu, Mintzberg and Winston help in structuring the text and asserting the meaning of the data. In the first part of this chapter, there is a presentation of the respondents. Then a presentation of booksellers’ provision and sales of e-books, followed by statements by the respondents concerning the advantages, strengths and the supervening social necessities (Winston, 1998) of e-books, as well as the problems, tensions and suppressions of radical potential (ibid.). These represent the external and internal factors, revealed in the questionnaire and interviews, affecting the distributing actors. The concepts of actors’ positions, dispositions and capitals in the literary field were used in constructing the topics of: the situation of booksellers, issues of supply and demand, and relations of the actors (Bourdieu, 1996). The actors’ emergent and planned strategies are uncovered and these strategies are applied in order to benefit the organisation by strengthening their social, cultural and economic capital and thus their position in the field (Mintzberg, 2003).
Bookseller respondents

Survey respondents

The Swedish Booksellers Association members’ registry was the sample frame for the bookseller respondents in the survey. In the sampling of possible respondents, more were selected from Götaland and Svealand because there were more respondents available to choose from in those regions. The responses in Götaland and Svealand were fairly evenly distributed, but only a few from Norrland responded. The Stockholm area (Svealand) had the most respondents of all. There were mostly respondents from a bookshop chain, but also from a few independent bookshops and one online bookseller.

In 2014, after a stratified random sampling was done, 152 of approximately 300 possible respondents received a survey, of which 48 answered. The response rate was 31.6 per cent and the percentage of those who responded in the survey was under 34 per cent in each region of Sweden. The low response rate means that bias may be introduced in the survey data, but as can be seen in Table 16 evenly distributed sample of the population has been achieved.

### Table 16: Bookseller survey respondents and non-respondents in regions of Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Missing respondents</th>
<th>Response rate region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Götaland (South Sweden)</td>
<td>Online bookseller 0</td>
<td>Total -43</td>
<td>22 of 65 33.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bookshop chain 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svealand (Middle Sweden)</td>
<td>Online bookseller 1</td>
<td>Total -48</td>
<td>21 of 69 30.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bookshop chain 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrland (North Sweden)</td>
<td>Online bookseller 0</td>
<td>Total -13</td>
<td>5 of 18 27.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bookshop chain 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview respondents

In order to increase the empirical data and also include other bookselling actors, interviews were conducted with 17 booksellers, of which eleven were representatives of physical bookshops and six major distributing actors; two online booksellers, two subscription services and two aggregators.

Table 17: Bookseller interview respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Götaland (South Sweden)</td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 1</strong> - is situated in a small town, member of a large chain of bookshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 2</strong> - is situated in a large town, member of a large chain of bookshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 8</strong> - is situated in a big city, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 9</strong> - is situated in a small town, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 10</strong> - is situated in a small town, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 11</strong> – is a specialist bookshop focusing on a specific genre of literature, and situated in a big city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Aggregator A</strong> – is situated in a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Aggregator B</strong> – is situated in a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subscription service A</strong> – is situated in a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subscription service B</strong> – is situated in a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Online bookseller A</strong> – is situated in a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Online bookseller B</strong> – is situated in a big city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 6</strong> – is situated in a medium-sized town, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 7</strong> is situated in a small town, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svealand (Middle Sweden)</td>
<td>8 respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 3</strong> - is situated in a large town, member of a large chain of bookshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 4</strong> - is situated in a medium-sized town, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bookshop 5</strong> - is situated in a small town, member of an independent bookshop consortium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrland (North Sweden)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong> 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The major actors were all placed in Stockholm, and the physical bookshops were mainly selected from outside the Stockholm area. Three of the physical bookshop respondents came from Norrland, and two from Svealand, and six from Götaland. The interview study was done during an extended period of time during autumn 2015 and spring 2017.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the 17 respondents in the interview study pseudonyms were used. The respondents are Aggregator A and B, Subscription service A and B, and Online bookseller A and B, and the physical bookshops are called Bookshop 1-11.

Situation of booksellers and sales of e-books

Most of the respondents in the survey and interviews do not provide e-books to their customers. Of the 48 survey respondents and the 17 interview respondents only 12 sell e-books. Of these 12, six are physical bookshops, two are online booksellers, two are subscription services, and two are aggregators who licence e-books to other booksellers and public libraries. The following section introduces how different booksellers regard their place in the market, the reasons they sell or do not sell e-books, and their expectations of the future.

Booksellers’ situation

The role of the booksellers in the Swedish book market as well as their position is partly due to collaboration with other actors. One of the main concerns of the booksellers is their positions in the book market, which they define by claiming connections with other actors. One respondent points out that they have several publishers as collaborators and business partners, of which some have a high status.

Our key business partners…yes well partly the large publishers and the publishers with ‘cred’, literary credibility, they are important. For instance, this group who are part of the Independent, Leopard, Ordfront, Erzats etc., and
the large publishers. As we wish to be able to offer as many books as possible, if any of the large publishers would stop providing their books through us, then that would be very unfortunate (Aggregator A).

The respondents are a diverse group of actors selling books as their main merchandise, and sometimes e-books too, but e-books are only a small part of their total sale of books. The booksellers who sell e-books are pleased with the provision of e-books through the large aggregator and express that it works well, which indicates that the aggregator is respected by its commercial customers. Publishers in Sweden usually make their own books into e-books but some use other service providers for this. The next step for the publisher is to either upload the e-book to one of the retailers’ platforms directly or to use the services of an aggregator who provides retailers and libraries with e-books. In autumn 2018, Aggregator A had approximately 44,000 e-books and they provide both public libraries and retailers with e-books. Aggregator A confirmed that about 100,000 e-books were lent out via their service to public libraries every month in 2015. However, sales through their service to retailers was slightly higher, according to the representative of the aggregator, but the exact figure could not be specified.

In libraries, I know exactly how much it is, on average this year [2015] 106,000 e-book loans a month, from all … in Finland, Sweden and in all our libraries [Public libraries and one academic library].

The responding aggregators describe their situation in the book market as good and digital books offer them the chance to provide high quality technical solutions (Aggregator B), and provide an infrastructure and a leading, cutting-edge technology (Aggregator A). There will always be a need for aggregator services even though there probably will be more companies offering similar services in the near future. One aggregator suggests that their strength is that they are not specialised towards only the commercial side of the market but also provide the non-commercial actors with e-books (Aggregator A).

We must provide services that everyone wants to use. If it only suits the publishers, then no one on the other side wants it, and if it only suits retailers and public libraries, then publishers will not provide any e-books (Aggregator A).

The aggregators claim that they have a good position in the literary field as strong actors in the provision of e-books.
Physical bookshops are used to a changing market and competition from different retailers in the past; for example, from book clubs and online booksellers. Still, eight of the eleven interviewed physical bookshops are positive about their future as booksellers as their businesses are doing well. Three of the eleven say that there is no money in the bookselling business as they are struggling financially. One is in the process of selling their bookshop. However, it appears to depend on where they are situated; for example, having a university nearby means more customers. The tough situation for some physical bookshop in staying in business has led to them having had to diversify their business.

You need many legs to stand on. It is hard to live off only selling books. You need to have many complementary products and for us, it has worked really well … that we can offer a bit of this and that (Bookshop 7).

Two of the responding bookshops situated in small towns have quite opposing situations, whereas Bookshop 6 mainly sells books, and Bookshop 7, apart from selling books and the customary office supplies, also sells gifts and kitchen utensils. Bookshop 6 considers their cultural capital to be significant by explaining that they are an important cultural institution for their local community while Bookshop 7 does what they have to do to survive and sell “a bit of this and that”. However, eight of the 11 interviewed bookshops are happy with their stable situation in the Swedish book market:

There is no panic in the day to day running of the bookshop (Bookshop 5).

Physical bookshops have adopted a strategy to collaborate with their competitors when it serves a purpose and will strengthen their position in the literary field. Two of the bookshop respondents compare their business with that of the public library in terms of cultural capital. They see themselves as closely affiliated with the public library as a cultural institution and a cultural meeting place.

We are somewhat of a cultural institution. We collaborate with the Friends of the library. The public library is across the road (Bookshop 6).

There are bookshops with higher status than others and they are mentioned with respect by other actors in the literary field. The reasons can be several, for example where they are situated – big city or a small town – if they have been in business for a long time, or that they can attract famous authors that
come to their bookshop for book signings and talks. These things and others appear to give them high cultural and symbolic capital as well as a favourable position in the field. Statements from respondents show the high status of some of the bookshops:

Hedengrens in Stockholm … an old classic bookshop (Bookshop 1).

The bookshop has been here since 1843. It has been in the family since 1885 (Bookshop 3).

All responding physical bookshops say that they fill an important function in their local communities, which is an indication of how they position themselves in the literary field. They find it essential for local bookshop to make books and reading available to people, especially children, and talking about books and giving advice on what is available is their fundamental task. One bookshop respondent talked about the role of bookshops in the past when the bookseller together with other upstanding people stood for the spreading of culture in the communities:

I think that bookshops should continue to have that role. It is important to have access to books physically; it is utterly a question of democracy. The access to the free exchange of information, opinions and democratic values, reading for children and so on, it is incredibly important. I think it is important that there are bookshops all over Sweden (Bookshop 6).

One responding physical bookshop contrasts their role with online booksellers that cannot perform the essential task of talking about books with their customers.

Online booksellers are mail order shops where they deliver books in the cheapest way possible. It has nothing to do with the core values that the physical bookshop stands for (Bookshop 6).

The present situation on the market and the understanding of their roles affect how booksellers see their future in e-book selling.

Future of e-book selling

In order for e-books to compete with printed books, the respondents suggest that e-books need to stop replicating printed books, and the price for e-books
need to go down. Nevertheless, most predict that e-books, even in their present form, will remain and grow in the market in the future. The interview respondents, Online booksellers A and B had between two to three per cent of e-books sales of their total sales in 2016. In a few months, Online bookseller A reported an increase in sales of e-books of almost 100 per cent, albeit from a very low level.

As can be seen in Table 18, the answers were divided between those who sold e-books (5 respondents) and those who did not sell e-books (41 respondents) at the time of answering the survey. One respondent from each group did not answer the question.

Table 18: Future increase in e-book sale (Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased sale of e-books</th>
<th>Sell e-books</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within the next year</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within the next 2-3 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, within the next 5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, it will not increase</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values:** increase in e-book sales -2.

The majority of survey respondents believe that e-book sales will increase within the next five years. However, eight of the respondents think that e-book sales will not increase at all. Among those who currently sell e-books, three believe that sales will increase within the next two to five years, but none of them believe it will increase within the next year. Among those that do not sell e-books at present, we can see that six believe that sales will increase within a year, and that 24 believe it will increase within the next two to five years. Five state that they do not know what will happen to e-book sales. It appears that both those who sell e-books and those who do not, are positive to a future increase in e-book sales, and this is confirmed in the interview study.

Most of the survey respondents do not believe that e-books will affect their total sale of books in the future, as can be seen in Table 19. They believe that
their total sales will increase or stay the same as it is now. However, 17 respondents state that total sales will go down, but more respondents are positive towards the effects of e-books on their total sales.

**Table 19:** Booksellers’ prediction about e-books, effect on total sales in the future (Survey)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-books effect on future total sale</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales will increase</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales will stay the same</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales will decrease</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values:** e-books’ effect on total sales -5

It is unclear if more physical bookshops will sell e-books in the future, but in the questionnaire, several believe that they will sell both formats, while others believe that only online booksellers will sell e-books, as can be seen in Table 20. It is interesting to note that 12 of the respondents believe that the role of physical bookshops will diminish if e-book sales increase.

**Table 20:** How the respondents view the future of the bookshop (Survey)

**Comment:** multiple choice question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer choices</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical bookshops will sell both printed books and e-books</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books will be sold directly from publishers and authors to readers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical bookshops’ role will probably diminish as sales of e-books will increase</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only online booksellers will sell e-books</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missing values:** -6

Three physical bookshops state that they have had the opportunity to start selling e-books through their bookshop chain or consortium but that they decided against it. One physical bookshop tried to sell e-books when their
bookshop chain made a drive for it, but stopped because there was no demand from the customers.

We built a whole section for [e-books] but then it came to nothing, so we said that it is better if we use that space for ordinary books (Bookshop 2).

The e-book is not new on the market, but it is only lately that sales and lending numbers have increased slowly. It can still take time before it becomes accepted and catches on for a more widespread use.

Yes, when it comes to innovations; that is, if we talk about the e-book as an innovation, even if it has been here for fifty years, if you look at it historically, the time it takes for it to break through is underestimated. You would think it will go really quickly and the effect long term is underestimated. I think we are in the middle of it now, so I don’t think we have a clue what the impact will be (Aggregator A).

E-books are considered to be an important product for aggregators, online booksellers and subscription services. However, several conditions need to be fulfilled before digital books will be more widely spread on the Swedish book market. According to a respondent, there need to be changes in the book sector and more attractive business models so that the producers and retailers are willing to commit to and engage in digital books (Aggregator B). The possibilities that e-books offer the commercial actors are many, but not all are prepared to fully engage in these opportunities until the market has matured.

The respondents’ view of future development influences how strategies are explained.

**Strategies for e-book selling**

The booksellers’ explanations of their strategies are usually based on their understanding of their situation and future developments. Economic capital is essential for commercial actors in the field and one of their strategies is to maintain that they must make money on e-books or otherwise they will not sell or license them. The respondents see the opportunity for the book market to grow and expand because of digital books and, at the moment at least, the subscription services appear to work to increase their sales of e-books. They
are satisfied with their business model and their place in the chain of distributing e-books and audio books.

The respondents consider it important to promote and support future reading as e-books offer something new (Aggregator A). Furthermore, the signals they get from the market at the moment are that more people are reading again (Bookshop 1) and some see the opportunity to switch their customers to digital reading, as they believe it will increase in the near future (Online bookseller A). The statements of the online booksellers show that they perceive their strengths in regard to e-books as significant. First and foremost, they are already digital, and when shopping in their online shops, customers can choose if they want to buy digital or printed books. Online shoppers have become accustomed to having access to a large stock of products and are so familiar with online shopping that they now prefer it. (Online bookseller A).

One respondent argues that media reporting has made people think that e-books are a massive problem for physical bookshops, but in reality, e-books are insignificant in Sweden. Since the growth of sales and use have increased slowly, it is not a problem for physical bookshop that primarily sells printed books. One respondent claims to have been more concerned about e-books five years ago, but believes that those who now prefer e-books probably already use them. Today, physical bookshops are more worried about audio books than e-books, as they have grown quickly in use.

Sure, there are some customers who say that they have started to only read [e-books] but I also feel that audio books have taken over the worry that e-books caused some years ago. Now it [audio books] has taken over and it is a clear social trend that people listen [to books] (Bookshop 5).

Subscription service providers’ main service is to supply audio books to their customers, even though they have fewer audio books than e-books in their service. The main device for consuming digital books in their service is the smartphone and thus their customer prefers listening to books rather than reading books, as this device is best suited for listening (Subscription service B). At the moment, the e-book market is just starting to increase, and one respondent sees the chance for any actor to drive the digital book market forward and believes that it will be one of the subscription services that will push the market forward within the next few years (Subscription service B).
One respondent’s main drive is to expand the overall market and not to take from other distributing channels. Instead, their aim is to find new customers and create a sustainable market. Their mission from their owner, a large publisher, was to get insight into new customer behaviour and understand consumers of digital books. As at the moment there are only assumptions about reading behaviour of the customers, the Subscription service B as a publisher’s initiative has a goal to explore it rather than grow and “become as large as possible.”

The online actors see the opportunities with the e-book market expanding but physical bookshops are not as interested in providing e-books, but one respondent states that if the e-book sales take off it is important that physical bookshops sell e-books as well.

I think it is very important as it concerns our survival (Bookshop 1).

The other reasons they give for providing e-books are that there is an interest in the product from their customers and that they have well-functioning routines for e-books. The main reasons for not providing e-books are the lack of demand from the customers and lack of technical resources, as well as no contractual agreements with publishers.

A specialist bookshop started to sell e-books in 2016 as their customers were interested in the product and it gave them the opportunity to provide more books in their genres.

First and foremost because we want to be a complete bookshop in our genres and up until recently e-books have been very much spoken about and many have been very interested. At the moment, audio books have a popularity boost and we have the opportunity to add both [to our website] (Bookshop 11).

The respondent (Bookshop 11) was not worried about e-books’ not being profitable for them, because when they updated their website, it made it possible for them to start selling e-books and audio books without any additional cost implications. Booksellers’ actions towards expansion of e-book sales are closely connected to their situation on the market: the ones that are relying on online technologies for book sales and those in niche areas where the readers demand is strong are moving into e-book sales more boldly than those who do not feel the customer pressure or technology drive. Next these reported actions are looked at in more detail.
Exploiting the possibilities

In this section, we look at the possibilities that the booksellers see in the e-book for themselves and for other actors. Some of these possibilities are related to strength of the booksellers, others to the opportunities emerging from the nature and development of e-books. Both are presented within the main topics emerging from the empirical data.

Increasing supply and the nature of an e-book

The social necessities of e-books, as far as booksellers see, are that e-books offer a complementary format to printed books. E-books offer accessibility that the printed book does not. For customers, who are more or less used to get instant gratification nowadays when looking for entertainment, such as film and television programmes through Netflix or music through Spotify, e-books are now also immediately available when customers want them. E-books seem to suit our modern way of life where there is no room for physical possessions.

Apart from the price, [e-books] are accessible, they take up no space. That is what we hear our older customers say, that the bookcase is full. Today’s flats don’t even have walls where you can have bookcases. There are both the physical obstacles and that we are more digitalised, so I am surprised that the market has not become larger (Bookshop 2).

Aggregator A – who is dependent on e-books in their business – is trying to strengthen their position by convincing publishers to make printed books, and perhaps especially backlist books, into e-books. Reluctant publishers are persuaded as old titles may get a new lease of life and can bring renewed incomes. This will strengthen the aggregators’ economic capital and position in the literary field.

One [aim] is to get as many books as possible, that feels very important, and then we need to cooperate with the publishers extensively. /…/ Because, here we have a business where the ‘long tail’ really applies and there is a tremendous amount that is not digitised (Aggregator A).
In order for digital reading to increase, the respondents argue that more titles need to be made into e-books. For new books, this is easy, as they are made into digital files to begin with, but it is more difficult to make an older book into a digital book as it means scanning the pages. However, the advantage for the publishers lies in the backlist titles.

From a publisher’s perspective, the challenge is to make available as many books as possible, as there is a large capital tied to the backlist. That is the primary challenge at the moment, to scale up and make as much as possible available, as cheaply and as quickly as possible. That is a major challenge (Subscription service A).

E-books have some advantages compared to printed books and some examples are accessibility and instant delivery.

Yes, there are concrete things such as the e-book is always accessible. You cannot keep a shop open 24/7 … online bookshops can of course be open 24/7 but that doesn’t mean that you get your book instantly. That is the big difference and we can see that e-books sell quite well during big holidays. /…/ The buying pattern is quite different [e-books compared to printed books] and the advantage is that you get them [e-books] straightaway (Online bookseller B).

Online booksellers’ advantage is that they are never closed and the opportunity to buy books online is always possible; printed books still take some time to reach the customer while e-books have the advantage of being delivered instantly. The smaller bookshops cannot exploit this advantage readily without proper investment in technology and know-how and rely on other advantages of books to remain in business.

**Increasing consumption and changing customers’ habits**

None of the 17 interview respondents believe that e-books have reached their full potential. Digital reading will increase and they are waiting for “the explosion”, when suddenly more will start using e-books. One respondent wanted to find out why customers had not taken to reading e-books as with printed books and through market polls, they found out that reading for pleasure is both habitual and emotional and tied to the printed book. However, they have seen an opportunity for their growth in these findings:
The reasons customers talked about why they don’t dare trying so many e-books are because they associate reading for pleasure and relaxation to a physical book and the e-book feels more mechanic to people. There are not as many emotional things connected to it [the e-book] as there is to a normal book, which is very positively charged. /…/ That is why the book trade needs to be better at handling this by lifting up good stories, not only this is a book, but rather this is an important story, it is a strong story, this is something for this person, and talk about the content as such and, instead of just saying this is a book (Subscription service B).

Everyone expected that young and technologically savvy persons, who already consume all their entertainment digitally, would be the most likely customer for this new way of reading. However, several respondents talk about the older generation as a major reader of e-books – someone who has been a reader of printed books all their lives and now cannot read printed books comfortably anymore due to poor eyesight. E-books are therefore making it possible for them to continue reading as e-books offer the opportunity to increase the size of the text. Instead of only focusing on finding new groups of readers, e-books are extending the time of reading for certain groups.

The general viewpoint of the respondents seems to be that increasing the overall consumption of e-books is a good idea and therefore the more actors who sell e-books the better, including physical bookshops (Online bookseller A). The strategy of the online booksellers appear to be to make more people read, they see that there are opportunities to increase the reading numbers as many in the population have never tried reading an e-book. If consumers can see e-books as a complement to printed books, suitable in different situations, it will help increase consumption (Online bookseller B). At the same time, the online booksellers argue that it is not vital for them that e-book sales increase; it is more important that people continue to read. This may be a way of increasing their cultural capital to argue for the importance of reading. Furthermore, their strength is that they sell both printed and digital books, thus as long as people continue to buy books, they will have no problems. One physical bookshop argues that readers of printed books and e-books are often said to be the same people so it is important to sell both formats (Bookshop 4).
According to one respondent, digital books have led to a change in customer behaviour in the subscription service, as new titles are not as essential when it comes to customers’ decision to read a specific book, compared to buying one in a bookshop.

One thing we have noticed in this type of service is that the newness value is not as important to the customer. If you look at a regular month, 50 per cent of the books that the customers read or listen to are more than a year old. Because there is no price tag on the books [as they are already paid for in the monthly fee], the customer doesn’t lose anything by reading an old book as well as a new book (Subscription service B).

When an author publishes a new book, this leads to the authors’ other titles being read as well. Thus, a book can live much longer in this type of service (Subscription service B). A book can live indefinitely if it is a good book, and the respondents claim that instead of only publishing new books, they can focus on making the titles in their catalogue relevant for their customers again. In order to get this effect on the backlist, they need new books, but the availability of new titles is usually delayed by the publishers by a couple of months.

Marketing is vital for all businesses and one online bookseller considered their marketing campaigns to be one of their strengths. They give their customers good offers and activate them as well as possessing good knowledge of what they want to buy (Online bookseller B). Physical bookshops also work with marketing and they have activities to increase the bookshop’s visibility in the community, for example book signings by authors and author presentations. Three of the physical bookshops collaborate with the local public library in such activities.

The responding physical bookshops have a high regard for their customers. One respondent, a small bookshop in a big city, describes their customer as particularly interested and knowledgeable about literature. In their bookshop, they reckon they have more titles than the large bookshop chain, but not as many copies of each title. They position their bookshop by stating that they have more diversity than the large bookshop chain (Bookshop 8). They are claiming a high cultural capital, concerning their role in the community, their culturally aware customers and the quality of literature they provide.
The cultural capital and position of physical bookshops in their local communities are significant and six of the eleven interviewed physical bookshops state that their customers are vocal supporters of the bookshop and find it valuable to have a bookshop in their town. The customers like to come to the bookshop and talk to the staff to get inspiration and advice and look at the physical books and hold them in their hands (Bookshop 2). If the customers know what they want they can buy the book cheaper from an online bookseller, but they prefer to buy it from a physical bookshop as it is more personal and offers a nicer shopping experience (Bookshop 8).

Not all people have the time, energy or will to sit and order online. It is the simplicity of [the physical bookshop] and to be able to get the book straightaway, /…/ but most of all to meet a person who can give advice to the customers (Bookshop 4).

One of the interviewed physical bookshops does not consider it important for e-books to be sold in physical bookshops:

No, that is my personal opinion. I like traditional books very much, which are beautifully designed, with a nice font, bound and have a design on the cover. I think that has a value too (Bookshop 2).

The respondents’ dispositions and positions are visible here between the printed book and the e-book, towards the customer and in relation to other actors in the literary field. One physical bookshop interview respondent hopes that e-book sales will not increase. He also thinks that there are plenty of e-books available on the Swedish book market and is happy if they remain at two – three per cent of the total book sales. However, one survey respondent argues that the arrival of a new format for reading is good for the readers.

This debate tends to suffer from a traditional industry focus. As a bookseller, I am naturally concerned about the developments that risk my income, but as a consumer and lover of literature this development towards more accessibility and new formats is fantastic! One should be careful letting trade people with self-interest be heard more than the consumer. The written word will make it perfectly fine without today’s publisher and bookseller structure (Survey).

There is a clear contrast between the online booksellers who exploit e-books and see the reasons for this and the physical bookshops that rely on printed books and their own specific features that are attractive to customers. The two groups of actors aim for different positions in the literary field and in both
cases, these positions secure certain economic and cultural capital, but differently, and this may perhaps be a feature of an unsaturated market.

**Positioning in a growing, competitive market**

As previously discussed, the respondents believe that the Swedish e-book market is unsaturated as it still has potential to grow. But there needs to be an actor who is prepared to drive the market forward; one online bookseller argues that a strong commercial actor like Amazon could be the actor who will increase the market share of e-books. There is some apprehension as to what will happen if Amazon increases its presence in the Swedish book market, but one online bookseller and one aggregator have a positive view and believe that it will lead to increased sale of e-books. They believe that Amazon’s entry into Sweden would further strengthen the book market, as their investment would lead to growth in online bookselling. Online sales of printed books would also be strengthened:

Today there are between 40 to 50 per cent online sale of books, which is the most penetrated market of all. If Amazon came, it would probably grow to 60 to 70 per cent (Online bookseller A).

The above statement shows that printed books are more valuable to online booksellers than e-books are, while an aggregator suggests that e-books would go up from two per cent to five per cent in one year if a strong actor like Amazon entered the Swedish book market (Aggregator B).

The respondents state that public libraries may be the largest providers at the moment but that they are not marketing e-books enough to expand the market. One respondent believes that the commercial part will grow larger, even though public libraries probably will continue to be the largest actor and some readers will continue to go to them for free e-book lending. The respondent still hopes that some readers will prefer their subscription service (Subscription service B). Moreover, as long as the market is growing, it is not a question of harsh competition between the actors as there is still room for the market shares to increase.

As long as a market is growing, and it is not about taking customers from another actor, then there is always room for more than one actor. If anything, it is good for the market if there is more than one actor out there. We saw the
opportunity to jump in and help drive the market so that it grows even more (Subscription service B).

At this point, there is room for all actors as long as the market can increase, but it is still important to have a competitive edge in relation to the other actors. This point of view expressed by commercial actors and publishers that as long as there is room for the market to grow it is not a problem, which is in contrast to the reality that e-books are part of the general book market and there is no separate market share for e-books.

For subscription services, e-books may not be the main service that they are trying to sell to customers, but still they consider themselves as competitors to public libraries.

Customers are prepared to pay for a service if you do it well enough, offer a good enough service, a large enough catalogue, then people are prepared to pay (Subscription service A).

They are confident that customers will choose them over public libraries. The quality of the service is seen as a competitive advantage by the actor and also as a strategy to strengthen their position. There are strategies for securing positions and different types of capital and these strategies are not only about exploiting the possibilities, but also about countering problems.

**Dealing with the problems**

In this section, we look at the problems that the booksellers perceive as related to e-books. Some of these problems arise from the weaknesses of the booksellers; others emerge as the threats in their environment. Both are presented within the main topics emerging from the empirical data.

**Economic issues**

The price of e-books is by far the most discussed topic by the respondents. Four commercial respondents argue that the publishers set the e-book prices too high. There are several factors that affect the price setting of e-books and
one that is mentioned by the booksellers is the VAT. One respondent suggests that:

The differentiated VAT per definition means that an e-book will be more expensive than a printed book. It is not logical (Online bookseller A).

The respondents claim that the publishers’ prices on e-books are problematic in many different ways. Aggregator A finds it hard to adapt to the publishers’ business models for e-books. The online booksellers believe that the varied price setting that the publishers apply to new e-books makes no sense to the customers. The online booksellers wish that publishers would try new price points for e-books and release them at the same time as the printed hardback books. The price of the e-book must be lowered to match the paper book when that is released (Online bookseller A and B). There is also some concern about the lack of a profit margin for the booksellers. The e-book will never be sold in physical bookshops unless there is some profit in selling e-books (Bookshop 7 and 8).

Economics, that the investment will pay for itself, that there is a market for it and that our customers change their behaviour. I don’t quite know the economical prerequisite but if they are in place then there is no obstacle (Bookshop 10).

Another part concerns free access to digital products online. Several respondents discuss the problem that the Internet has brought, namely that digital products are expected to be free of charge.

It is strange that it should cost nothing because it is digital. Someone has worked with the content for a long time, and it should cost something (Bookshop 8).

The question is really not that it will be free of charge, but rather who pays for it and is there any profit in it. One respondent is not worried about the shift from analogue to digital and what it will mean for their business. The respondent is not concerned how they will be paid in the future, as there will be different ways to charge for their services.

Digital distribution will be free of charge; it will cost nothing to access digital files, that is how the digital revolution will look. Systems that simplify and make it possible to exist on the digital market, that is where I look positively
regarding the future, but if we talk about e-book distribution it moves more towards being a commodity (Aggregator B).

It is a strategic positioning by the aggregator to argue that it is not the distributor nor the customer who will pay for the e-book in the future but rather that someone else will pay through advertisements or sponsoring. In contrast to this the actors also question why digital books should be available for free as there is work put into its production and distribution. The more serious consequences of different positions in the literary field is presented next.

**Mediators and disintermediation**

The Swedish book market is changing, businesses are bought and sold, bookshops are closing and new actors are entering the market because of digital books. Several of the actors are trying to find their footing in the new landscape and position themselves. One of the major concerns is that of disintermediation, when e-books are sold directly from publishers or authors to readers. The booksellers argue that the producers’ involvement in the sale and distribution of e-books will lead to distorted competition in the retail chain. One respondent foresees a future in which everyone is dealing with everyone if the mediators disappear from the distribution chain.

Our position as intermediary serving publishers, retailers and libraries is changing. The positions are moving. Publishers are moving forward in the chain and want to deliver directly to retailers and want to leave us out. In the same way, others are moving backwards in the chain and want to talk directly to the publishers (Aggregator A).

In the survey, 14 of 42 booksellers believed that e-books will be sold directly from publishers or authors to readers (see Table 20). The distributing actors are concerned about this development and they argue that:

We would prefer the retail value chain to look the same so that we have a role to fill, but we cannot be naive and think that everything will stay the same forever (Online bookseller A).

When I talk to other shop owners and explain that our suppliers sell past us directly to the customer, then they don’t believe that I am telling the truth, they
think I am pulling their leg, because they cannot imagine it, but that is the reality we live in (Bookshop 3).

According to one physical bookshop respondent, there are some publishers that hold on to their principles and support bookshops. On the other hand, the publishers have no incentive to drive the e-book market, as it is uncertain what happens when they release a digital product. They can lose control of the product and as the Swedish book market has vertical structures, the effect on the publishers would be major if their retailers had to close down. According to one aggregator, they are concerned that e-books are too elusive and thus the physical bookshops are not likely sell e-books as well.

That is what happens if e-books get a hold. It is highly unlikely that the same actors who sell printed books will be successful in selling e-books (Aggregator B).

Monopoly and dominance of some actors in the book market are seen as problematic issues. Aggregator B’s irritation towards Aggregator A is obvious as the first considers the monopolistic position that the second has, as a major concern. One survey respondent is concerned about concentration of ownership in the Swedish book market, which leads to the dominance of a few large media companies.

The market dominance of a few media companies threatens the diversity in the cultural sector at large but the book industry in particular. The producers’ involvement in the sale and distribution of e-books will lead to distorted competition in the retail chain (survey).

The statements above and below show that there is a convergence of social and economic capital and negotiations or struggle for market positions in the literary field. Comparing the online booksellers’ situation with that of the physical bookshops, one of the respondents cannot see that the physical bookshop would want their customers to sit at home downloading e-books. Physical bookshops have no reason to sell e-books as their business model is built on getting the customers into their bookshop.

As their business entails getting people to their physical bookshops … and if they start selling digital books, then customers do not have to go to the shop and perhaps buy a notebook as well. Even if we sell a digital book, the customers can still buy a physical book or a notebook from us. Our [shopping] experience is already digital (Online bookseller A).
There are physical bookshop respondents who agree with the online booksellers and argue that it is easier and cheaper for the customer to buy e-books and reading devices online rather than going to a physical bookshop (Bookshop 9).

The disintermediation of mediators can be done by excluding booksellers through direct sales from a publisher to a customer, eliminating physical bookshops not only from e-book sales, but possibly from bookselling if e-books prevail. Next the issues of supply and demand will help to clarify this threat of disintermediation.

**Issues of supply and customer demand**

Several respondents argue that more e-book titles are necessary for the market to have a chance to grow. Aggregator A is trying to convince the publishers to release their titles as e-books, but it has proved to be difficult, especially with the smaller, more prestigious publishers. They have tried to make them publish some Nobel Prize winning authors as there is a high interest in those books. The aggregators claim that the small publishers do not see the need for e-books even if it does mean reaching a larger audience, and some of them have even stopped publishing e-books altogether. According to the aggregator, the large publishing houses are more willing to publish e-books. For Aggregator A, it is important to increase the number of e-book titles so they have more books to offer their customers. Aggregator B claims that it is not at all important in what format people prefer to read books:

> We have no strategies. We are not so interested really in how books are sold, it is not why we exist, if people want to read on a tablet computer, or as a physical book, or listen to an audio book. We are rather indifferent to that, there is no intrinsic value in that for us, to drive e-book sales (Aggregator B).

Less reading is mentioned as a major threat to books and e-books and the distributing actors. One problem discussed by a respondent is that printed books will not be read more in the future than they are today due to competition from social media, computer games and apps pulling young people’s attention away from reading books.

> Many in the book industry who think strategically and ahead see that the competition is not between the publishers any more but with other media
consumption. To keep the readers and find new ways is a must for the book industry, if they want to continue to flourish (Online bookseller A).

The printed book is perhaps the e-book’s greatest opponent as it is something customers and booksellers are used to. The ease of access to e-books compared to printed books can be discussed and physical bookshop respondents argue that printed books are also accessible. The reasons the respondents give are that the customer does not have to handle any complicated technology but can buy the book in a bookshop and can start reading it without any use of extra devices. Some respondents make humorous remarks about the advantages of printed books, such as “the batteries never run out in my printed book” (Bookshop 9). Furthermore, printed books with a beautiful binding and cover and quality titles give status to their owners. They can be left out for others to see in the bookcase or on a table and thus display the good taste and cultural capital of the owner of the book. This is not possible with e-books, as they lack these cultural markers of high-quality paper, binding and cover, and furthermore cannot be displayed for others to see. Thus, e-books’ social and cultural capital are not significant.

You don’t brag to your friends, check out my hard drive, I have all these e-books (Online bookseller A).

For a physical bookshop who is used to handling printed books, it is a huge leap to start to supply something that requires technical skills, so they would need someone to help them with those things and then it has to be profitable. Most physical bookshops claim to lack technical knowledge and this is stopping them from selling e-books. To start selling e-books, they would have to work with technology that is unfamiliar to them and become an online bookseller and compete with the likes of Adlibris. Even if the responding physical bookshops had the technical skills, there are no systems available to them for selling e-books.

The e-book has nothing to do with physical bookshops. The physical bookshop is a place, a physical place for meetings between the bookseller, customer and the paper books. The e-book doesn’t need any of those ingredients. /…/ It is not meaningful to engage in e-book sales in the physical bookshops. It doesn’t give us anything, we don’t get the customers in, we don’t make any money on it, no! (Bookshop 6).
Physical bookshops acknowledge that they do not make an effort with e-books as their customers do not expressively ask for them. However, if customers demand e-books, they will have to start selling e-books. One respondent has adopted an emergent strategy of waiting and seeing if the interest in e-books and demand from customers will increase or decrease. The strategy is to see where the wind blows:

Of course, we have to keep a finger up [in the air] and see where the winds are blowing. We must survive too, and if the e-book will have a big breakthrough, like in for example USA, we must also tag along [and start selling e-books] (Bookshop 2).

One interesting aspect that one respondent mentions is the digital fatigue of readers. People are tired of sitting in front of a screen all day at work and then coming home and sitting in front of a screen using social media.

Many say that ’no, I prefer printed books because I spend so much time online and besides it is nice to rest from it (Online bookseller B).

One respondent recognises this behaviour in herself as she enjoys getting a break from the computer screen and reading a paper book (Bookshop 2). In the bookseller survey, one respondent argues that:

The threat of e-books is overrated; one thing is to download music but books are preferably read on paper (Survey).

One respondent argues that the consumption of books is a slow pastime while film and music are faster formats, so perhaps the digital formats suit them better. Every time there is a new medium, the death of the printed book has been proclaimed, but so far, every shift in technology has helped books (Bookshop 3).

The positioning amongst booksellers in the commercial distribution is not the only issue, because the struggles between the actors is also relating to the strong public distribution system through public libraries that affects the strategies of the commercial distributors.
Relations with libraries

Public libraries are problematic for the commercial actors as they provide e-books free of charge to people who could be potential buyers of e-books instead; that is a major issue. The commercial actors’ job is to convince the customer that it is worth paying for e-books. The two aggregators’ views on public libraries are quite the opposite of one another, one appears to be negative and the other positive. One of them talks about all the difficulties they face with public libraries and how dissatisfied they are with the so-called SKL-agreement, in which six publishers have agreed to a more predictable model with set prices for e-book lending in public libraries. It is, of course, competing with the model that Aggregator A offers.

SKL have one way of handling it, to offer libraries what they want… so they can predict the cost. The SKL-agreement is not adapted to the publishing business at all or the digital book /.../ Somehow, they have tried to squeeze in a predictable model on a phenomenon where it doesn’t work (Aggregator A).

The aggregator’s position is not quite clear by the statement as they host the e-book titles included in the SKL-agreement on their platform. The publishers in the agreement as well as the public libraries, who pay less for the e-books, are pleased with the arrangement. For Aggregator A, it appears to be about a loss of capital, social and economic, and that their position in the field is shifting as they are no longer the only ones offering a model for e-book lending. This strong, non-commercial actor, SKL, threatens the position of established commercial actors, publishers and aggregators, though it does not provide any books at all.

Sometimes also the customers are causing problems for Aggregator A, who argues that they have the whole picture and sometimes know better than the customer which solution is best.

Sometimes I feel that we know best and that can sometimes be a bit difficult to communicate in a good way to the customer. ‘Well, maybe that isn’t such a good idea’. I have one good example of that from the library world that can be a little sensitive to talk about, that is catalogue posts. It becomes a detour when the digital book is squeezed into a system which is meant for physical books’ purchase and acquisition, when the digital book is more like a service and an ongoing flow of books. Books come and books are withdrawn, there is a swiftness (Aggregator A).
One respondent argues that there is an inherent complexity in “the e-book question”, and there is a need to look outside Sweden and see what they do in other countries. The respondent suggests that perhaps we have not found the best solution yet, and that the legislation might need to change so that library users will have to pay for e-books (Subscription service A). Public libraries have not got enough funding to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the Library Act and provide all citizens with all their digital reading (Subscription service A). Aggregator A argues that the municipalities give the public libraries a budget which has its limitations and it will mean that:

Public libraries will always think that it is too expensive (Aggregator A).

Again, this is part of the positioning of the actors involved, as the situation described can apply to printed book lending in public libraries as well; the question can be asked as to why are they suddenly concerned about it unless there is fear of a loss of position and economic capital. There is an opposition between the prices that publishers put on e-books and public libraries’ expectation that it should be affordable. The respondent admits that some of the prices are too high, and questions whether publishers are aware of what they are doing when entering the price for the e-book on the platform:

Sometimes there are silly prices, and perhaps the publishers do not even understand what they are filling in (Aggregator A).

The new Elib lending model has led to reduced levels of e-book lending in public libraries and one respondent claims that it is mainly the fault of public libraries but also the effect of competitors that offer better web solutions.

We can actually see that the loans are going down with the new model and that depends, for example, on the freedom of choice, that it is easier to connect to new web solutions and the public libraries web solutions are not … there is a theory to why the loans have gone down … it is quite hard to find books and to find inspiration (Aggregator A).

It is actually the providers of e-books, publishers and Aggregator A, that have achieved their goal of higher prices for e-book lending; public libraries’ lack of inspirational information about e-book titles are only partly to blame. Aggregator B, who has no position or capital to lose in relation to public libraries, argues that public libraries are significant to our society.
Libraries are terribly important. They have funding, and how they use the funding is of no consequence as long as it leads to people reading books /.../
We don’t understand the publishers. We can see that the libraries will be their only marketplace in the future that they will have any sort of control over, and it is a blessing for publishers that libraries exist, that’s how we regard libraries (Aggregator B).

The positioning of commercial actors against public libraries in competitive terms is quite interesting as previously it had been claimed that commercial actors offer better services. The two online booksellers and the two subscription services in this study say the same things; that public libraries are their toughest competitor and that it is hard to compete with free e-books. Furthermore, they claim that there is a difference between lending an old printed book from the library and lending a digital file; the e-book will keep the same high quality even after many people have borrowed it. Meanwhile, in their statements, it is clear that printed books have a higher value compared to digital e-book files, such as when the customers buy a printed book they can keep it in their bookshelf; but if they borrow a printed book they have to take it back to the library. They also argue that an e-book is not as important or valuable to keep after it has been read so it is easier to return to the library.

There are commercial actors who have more collaborative strategies in regard to public libraries and consider their role in society as essential. They claim that public libraries offer a good service for those who cannot afford to buy books or e-books and they also point out the democratic aspect.

Libraries lending out e-books for free is a fine service to society but for us who have commercial interests in e-books, it hits our business model really hard if it is too easy to borrow the books for free (Online bookseller A).

The responding subscription services suggest that public libraries’ strong position in the book market is due to the fact that no large retailers have gone all-in with e-books. Furthermore, Sweden is unique when it comes to public libraries and the ‘bildung idea’\(^\text{22}\), that everyone should have access to everything. The online booksellers are concerned about e-book lending in public libraries and argue that it cannot be compared to the lending of printed books. Lending of printed books requires the reader to go to the library to get

\(^{22}\) Bildung idea refers to the formation and education of people.
the book while e-books are just a few seconds away online. One respondent claims that:

It is just as easy to borrow a digital book, as it is to buy a digital book online (Online bookseller A).

The respondents are trying to find ways to make the customer choose them before public libraries as their provider of e-book titles.

For we who are trying to sell e-books, it is necessary to find the advantages to be able to motivate the customer why they should pay for the digital file (Online bookseller B).

The rules, or the doxa, of the literary field are broken by the e-book as it changes what is already agreed upon by the actors. One physical bookshop is concerned that public libraries are prepared to break the rules of the symbiosis of bookshops and libraries because of digital lending. This symbiosis means that books are available straightaway in bookshops and at public libraries the book is available without cost but there might be some waiting time because there are others already borrowing it. One respondent tries to explain the situation using a metaphor.

Again, we have a difference from the hardware store, the hardware dealer asks me how can you have your products at the public library? People borrow spanners and screwdrivers and you think that is ok? We, at the bookshop, are a bit more broad-minded and the more that is screwed and chiselled, the more is sold at the bookshop. More sales in the bookshop give more loans at the public library and vice versa (Bookshop 3).

One bookseller likes the new Elib agreement for e-book lending with differentiated prices on new and old e-books as it gives the booksellers a chance to sell the new titles.

Most physical bookshops in the interview study have a positive view on public libraries and some collaborate with them. One bookshop claims that there is a good cooperation between them and the public library and that they work together on author talks and sometimes library reading groups at the public library (Bookshop 1). Another argues that the bookshop’s role as well as the public library’s role is important for the local community (Bookshop 9). Moreover, one does not see that there is any difference between lending out printed books or e-books at public libraries.
Reading people come to us, too, and without public libraries we wouldn’t be here (Bookshops 11).

One respondent is concerned that public libraries are “digging their own grave” (Bookshop 6), because why would anyone go to the public library if they can borrow their books online. The public library will lose its function as a meeting place and perhaps then it will be questioned if public libraries are necessary. The respondent suggests that:

Perhaps it will be sufficient to have one large, gigantic national [digital] library where everyone can borrow their books (Bookshop 6).

The strategy of opposing public libraries is evident in some commercial actors as they claim that the suppressant holding back the increase of e-book sales is the public libraries’ strong position in the e-book market. They claim that as long as public libraries dominate the market, they will stop it from growing commercially, as their customers can borrow e-books from public libraries without any cost.

It is hard to compete with free e-books from libraries (Online bookseller B).

It is evident that this is an attempt to question public libraries’ strong position in the market and perhaps point out, as they see it, the unfairness of the situation. The commercial actors’ ambiguous opinions about public libraries, where aggregators and physical bookshops have dual opinions and online booksellers and subscription services have a single opinion. The first two actors are in a more vulnerable position; one being dependent on e-books and the other not selling e-books, and the next two actors are more versatile with stronger positions in the literary field. The strategies these actors need to employ in order to maintain their own position in relation to public libraries are either to compete or to collaborate and adjust to public libraries.

The relation between the commercial actors and public libraries are more contentious than the relations between the commercial actors themselves.

**Relations with other commercial actors**

Apart from the public library, some mention that actors offering the same or similar service as they are also competitors. An online bookseller mentions
subscription services as rivals, but as they mainly offer backlist books, he is not too concerned. If the customer wants a new e-book, they have to buy it, he claims. All physical bookshops consider online booksellers and subscription services as their greatest competitors. One example is that of physical audio books (CDs) that used to sell really well in bookshops and then everything changed with the subscription services.

Storytel came along and our sales have plummeted and now I only sell a few audio books (Bookshop 1).

Subscription services for e-books are just as problematic; customers can read an unlimited number of books for a low price. One respondent finds it difficult to motivate the customers to go to the physical bookshop for a digital product.

To find the motive for the customer to take the detour to the physical bookshop the get the product [e-book] when you can get it straight into the phone (Bookshop 3).

The online actors offer tough competition and the margins on books are lower compared to before (Bookshop 4).

One aggregator is upset that Elib has a monopoly on the provision of e-books to public libraries. They have the power by controlling the competitive situation. Aggregator B started and built a competing service, Atingo, together with Axiell Media, for the provision of e-books to public libraries, but then the working relationship with Axiell Media soured.

To make a long story short, they [Axiell Media] went behind our backs and bought Elib. Then they closed down Atingo and had a monopoly again. So that is where we are today (Aggregator B).

The new online services are disrupting the established situation and both the new entrants and established actors are cautious about driving the market for others.

**No one is driving the market**

Several also argue that no one is driving the market, and by that they mean that no commercial actor is pushing the market forward. Even if public libraries are major actors right now, they have no commercial aspirations and
are therefore not trying to develop the market. Amazon is seen both as a potential driver (see earlier in this chapter) of the e-book market and as a possible threat to some respondents. In the survey, 13 respondents suggest that Amazon’s possible entry into the Swedish book market will lead to lower sales in bookshops. However, one interview respondent believes that it is mainly a threat to online booksellers, but he is concerned that Amazon can reduce the prices on printed books, too, and that would affect physical bookshops as well (Bookshop 1). Two respondents point out that there is no actor who is prepared to use enough resources to kick-start the Swedish e-book market by providing simple accessible reading device, like Amazon has done in the USA.

That is the problem that no one is driving the market forward. We aren’t supposed to drive it, it is not our role in the market. But there is no Amazon, no Tolino, there is no one driving the market except the libraries. As long as that is the case, the market won’t grow. The only ones driving the market are the libraries (Aggregator B).

According to one respondent, the e-book market is deflated and no one is prepared to go all in; everyone is waiting for someone else to do something (Subscription service A). A few years ago, there was more enthusiasm and more actors trying to put in some effort, for example when Adlibris launched their new e-reader, Letto Frontlight, and there was a Digital stage at the Gothenburg Book Fair.

**Summary**

In 2014, a stratified random sampling was done and 152 physical bookshops and online booksellers was supplied with an online survey. In total, 48 respondents answered and the response rate was 31.6 per cent. During autumn 2015 until spring 2017, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 booksellers.

In the data, the booksellers express a wide range of opinions and attitudes, but the most frequent is the concern about e-books’ impact on their own future and relations with other actors, especially in regards to public libraries and to some extent publishers. The commercial actors who are selling or licencing
e-books have seen a slow but steady rise in sales of e-books the last few years. However, what is considered to be holding back the e-book growth is the lack of e-book titles and marketing of the format.

The bookseller group is varied in many ways: their business model, their disposition and outlook. Some have sound economic capital and others do not. They have good relations with and collaborate with other booksellers and in some cases public libraries, which makes for strong social capital. Some physical bookshops consider themselves as important cultural institutions and providers of cultural and democratic values. Printed books are preferred by physical bookshops and they do not want sales of e-books to increase. Some argue that books are best in print and that the digital format works best for film and music.

Interestingly enough, the two aggregators have completely opposite views about e-books and the book market. This can perhaps be explained by their different positions in the literary field. One is dependent on e-books as it is their only merchandise and the other sell both printed books and digital books. Disintermediation of the booksellers in the position between the publishers and book buyers is a concern to some of the commercial actors. One respondent claims that the diversity in the book industry is threatened by the vertical integration of a few large media companies. One aggregator’s position as the main intermediary of e-books between publishers and booksellers gives it a strong position in the book market, but may also put it more at risk of disintermediation.

For booksellers, the competition comes from other commercial actors and public libraries. Free e-book lending in public libraries is especially problematic as the ease of access, ease of return and retained quality after frequent use, of e-books surpass that of the printed book. It is hard for the booksellers to find the arguments to convince customers that e-books are worth paying for. One motivation for the booksellers is that e-books offer another source of income and are a complementary format to printed books. The backlist titles are seen as an important resource for the commercial actors and they do not require large investments like new titles do.

As previously discussed, the respondents have claimed that the dominant position of public libraries in the e-book market is stopping the market from growing, and that at this point in time, there is no commercial actor prepared
to drive the e-book market forward. The publishers are ambivalent and do not want to lose control of their digital books. There is a lack of e-book titles and once the number of titles increases, then the demand from customers may increase too. At the moment, the customers’ interest in e-books is not enough for it to be a viable business for physical bookshops. The quality of the technology is stopping the growth of e-book reading and sales and so is the lack of technical skills on the side of both the provider and the customer.

The price of e-books is high according to several respondents, and the right price is the price customers are prepared to pay. It is important to find the right level of price in order for the market to grow. One problem the respondents argue is that people have become accustomed to getting access to things on the Internet for free and therefore expect digital products to be free. The customers’ preference for the printed book is a major suppressant for the e-book and so are the other sources of entertainment that are competing for customers’ time.
8 Discussion

In this chapter, the findings of this thesis, presented in Chapter 6 and 7, will be discussed together with the theory and previous research. The aim of the thesis is to explore the distributing actors in the Swedish literary field, in their positions, dispositions and strategies, as well as the social necessities and suppression of potential enabling or constraining e-books establishment in the Swedish book market.

In the first part of the chapter, the public libraries’ and booksellers’ positions and dispositions in the Swedish literary field will be discussed. In the second part, the strategies of the actors found in the empirical data will be discussed. In the third and final part, the discussion will be about the social necessities and suppression of potential put in place by the actors in order to enable or constrain the e-books’ establishment in the Swedish book market.

Positions and dispositions in the literary field

In order to be able to discuss the development of the e-book in Sweden, a few fundamental concepts need to be introduced. A field is a system of social positions in which various actors develop power relations and struggle for dominance (Bourdieu, 1996, 1993a, 1983). The actors try to position themselves as favourably as possible in order to be able to influence the assets in the field. Habitus is a system of dispositions that guide the actors in how to behave in specific situations (Bourdieu, 1996, 1993a, 1983), and it is essential for power distribution as it consists of the actors’ assets, including different kinds of capital. The actors’ disposition influences their behaviour in different contexts and how they react to or perceive their social surroundings. Bourdieu (1993a, 1983) states that habitus reflects and reproduces the conditions of the
In a field, there are actors that are more powerful than others, and they usually possess more of the capital that is considered significant in that field.

Public libraries’ position in the literary field is considered strong as they are influential and large buyers of e-books and printed books. The Swedish Publishers’ Association has estimated that public libraries have 85-90 per cent of the e-book market (Steiner, 2015a; Nyberg et al., 2013). The statement is unclear as to exactly what they mean by it; whether they mean that public libraries are publishers’ largest e-book customer or that public libraries as distributors have 90 per cent of the consumer e-book market. By claiming that public libraries have up to 90 per cent of the e-book market, the publishers create a narrative where they may point at the public libraries as the ones stopping e-book sales from increasing, as they control the market. In a report, the Swedish Publishers’ Association argues that the free provision of e-books in public libraries is the reason for the small commercial market for e-books (Svedjedal, 2012). Swedish publishing researchers also state that the dominance of public libraries in the e-book market is stopping the commercial side from growing (Steiner, 2015a; Nyberg et al., 2013). It is apparent that the Swedish Publishers’ Association has been successful in spreading this narrative, because most commercial respondents in this study seem to consider public libraries as the largest providers of e-books. However, one respondent, the major aggregator in Sweden, states that the commercial side of their business-to-business provision of e-books is larger than their provision to public libraries. Furthermore, not all e-books are provided through the aggregator; some are sent directly from the publisher to the online bookseller or subscription service, so it appears that e-book sales through commercial channels must be even more substantial. Such narratives about market shares and complaints about who is blocking the market can be seen as part of the positioning of the actors in the literary field.

This study shows that in the bookseller’s group, the online booksellers sell both e-books and printed books, which makes them less vulnerable to changes in the market. In contrast to this, most physical bookshops do not sell e-books; only six of the physical bookshop respondents in the survey and interview studies sell e-books. Thus, online booksellers and physical bookshops are not dependent on e-books as they mainly sell printed books. Even so, their outlooks are quite different, as online booksellers seem to want the e-book market to grow as they would benefit from it, while physical bookshops prefer if it stays at the level where it is now. It is possible to argue that there is no
natural connection between physical bookshops or public libraries and digital books as they do not require a physical space. Furthermore, it is part of the physical bookshops’ business model to make customers come to their shop, as they can make more profit off a customer who comes to look for a book but also buys additional items.

Public libraries have the features of both the online booksellers and physical bookshops as they have the digital services offered online but also want their users come to the physical library, to take part in other activities in the physical library space.

Looking at the economic incentive for the different actors, it becomes clear that only one actor, Aggregator A, depends on e-books for their continuing business venture, so their position in the literary field is precarious. The other commercial actors are more dependent on either printed books or audio books, and for public libraries, e-book loans seem to be an ineffective business compared to printed book loans, so the motivation for lending e-books, must be other than financial. What the new deal with Overdrive to deliver e-books to public libraries in Sweden (Laxgård, 2018a) will mean for Aggregator A and the public libraries will be interesting to see over the coming year.

The dissatisfaction regarding public library lending seems to be solely tied to e-books and not printed books. The commercial actors argue that lending out printed books is not the same as lending out e-books, as the latter can be lent out numerous times without loss of quality, and they can be lent out simultaneously to many readers, while a printed book wears out in the end and can only be lent out to one person at a time. These statements appear to be a pretext to the real reason for the commercial actors’ discontent, as e-book lending in public libraries is still low and the primary lending consists of printed books. A possible explanation concerns economics and the loss of control of digital books, as they are elusive, and the fear of ending up where the music industry is today with only digital music to sell and no physical product.

Public libraries are sometimes considered important for the growth of the e-book market and for increasing the revenue of the commercial actors by introducing and accustoming library users to e-book reading (Wilson, 2016; Kovac, 2008). However, in the Swedish book market, the most significant tensions concerning e-books are economic, and both public libraries and
booksellers agree that prices for consumer e-books need to find a better level for the market for e-books to increase. Statistics show how the prices affect the sales; as prices go up, sales go down (Wikberg, 2016, 2015; Maceviciute et al, 2015). In this present study, one aggregator says that the commercial actors see that digital technologies will offer little profit in the future as there is a possibility that they will be provided for free for readers. Thus, the public libraries are one of the few channels through which publishers will be able to charge for e-book provision.

The Internet and the free availability of e-books may have led some people to be reluctant to pay for e-books (Steiner, 2015a; Maxim & Maxim, 2012). Others argue that free availability may be good for the book industry, as more readers are reached and, in some cases, readers will buy the book they have found for free online (Söderlund, 2009). Part of this business model of free is that someone else will pay, usually through advertisements, so that the customer can get free products (Anderson, 2008). This is in line with what one aggregator suggests, namely that digital files will be provided free of charge in the future and that the book industry’s income will come from something other than the consumers. This can also be seen in previous literature; Anderson (2008) argues that the Internet is a competitive market and anything that is affiliated with Web technology means that it, sooner or later, will be free of charge for the consumers (ibid.). At the moment, there are other trends, for example in copyright and regulations of digitised market that contradict this development. How this will affect the aggregators and subscription services that are dependent on digital books if their product becomes free is uncertain; either they adapt or they disappear.

It has also been suggested by respondents that publishers have shown little interest in e-books, and perhaps it has to do with what is mentioned above, the business model of free. At the same time, it appears that the subscription services that are affiliated with publishers claim that the publishers are working hard to produce more e-books. According to Anderson (2006), the digitisation of the book market has made it easier for small and independent actors to make use of the long tail, but it seems that large publishers too, at the moment, are increasing their e-book production of backlist books.

The findings in this study show that public libraries are divided as to which format is more important for the library collection, e-books or printed books. Physical bookshop respondents prefer to sell printed books and do not see that
it is an alternative for them to sell e-books at this point in time. Yet there is one exception, as one independent, specialist bookshop has started to sell e-books as their customers are interested in buying digital books. Online booksellers sell e-books, but printed books are significantly more important for their business, while aggregators and subscription services only provide digital books and are not likely to start selling printed books. The similarities found in the disposition of the public libraries and the physical bookshops is that the printed format is still preferred by them and by their users/customers.

**Positioning of new entrants in the literary field**

Technological change in the book market has brought new roles and new actors (Steiner, 2015a; Waldfogel & Reimers, 2015; Wilson, 2013). In the digital publishing communication circuit by Ray Murray and Squires (2013), it is suggested that some activities are performed by new actors but in some cases the actors or activities have disappeared altogether. Several of the bookselling actors are concerned that their role as mediators of books will disappear if the publishers and authors decide to leave them out of the distribution chain. The risk will be greater if e-book sales grow significantly and new actors enter the market looking for a position and change the doxa, the rules of the field. Subscription services are new entrants into the book market due to the emergence of digital books and a telling example of position-takings can be seen in the changing position of Storytel. The subscription service was a newcomer in the Swedish book market some fifteen years ago, and they were dependent on publishers for getting access to audio books and e-books. Then a few years ago, they bought some publishers, and now they have strengthened their position by being more self-sufficient. Their symbolic capital appears to be growing as their business volumes increase.

This study shows that the commercial actors would prefer that their position in the literary field stay the same and that no other actor fulfils their role or takes their market shares. The actors are quite closely tied together in the Swedish e-book market through cooperation and concentration of ownership. The problems caused by a vertically integrated market lead to issues of interdependence between booksellers and producers, monopoly, and lack of competition (Rimm, 2014). The risk of disintermediation is discussed by some researchers (Steiner, 2015a; Clark & Phillips, 2014; Thompson, 2012; Kovac, 2012) but in a vertically integrated book market like the Swedish one, there is
very little risk as the actors are co-dependent through ownership ties. Producers are not prepared to risk the booksellers’ position in the distribution chain and the booksellers have faith in the producers’ need for their services.

Aggregator A, as the mediator of e-books between the publishers and booksellers and public libraries, could potentially be at risk of disintermediation. The findings in this study show that publishers are already selling e-books past them directly to subscription services and online booksellers that are part of their company. Public libraries could also be at risk as the producers see them as competitors disrupting the commercial e-book market. However, it is not likely that the Swedish publishers will go the same way as some American publishers have done and stop providing libraries with e-books (Walters, 2013).

The conflicting expectations of the actors also affects the attitudes about the possible entrance of an actor like Amazon in the Swedish market, which is considered with both apprehension and expectation. The difficulties Amazon would mean for a small market like Sweden is pointed out by Braet (2012) who is concerned about the effect that multi-national companies have on publishing in small countries. The findings of this study differ as some respondents argue that Amazon could be the strong actor needed to kick-start the Swedish e-book market, which would be positive for the other commercial actors as well.

The distributing actors’ different capitals depend on their position but also their disposition in the field. The actors’ competitive position in the field is decided by the social and economic capital they possess, but symbolic capital such as prestige, recognition and respect is given by the other actors in the field (Thompson, 2012).

**Economic capital**

E-book sales only make up a few per cent of the total income of book sales for publishers as print book sales are substantially larger. Even major providers of e-books like public libraries still play a small part in the book market, but their economic capital is made stronger by their significant provision of printed books to library users. Public libraries have limited economic resources yet are required to provide all media formats to the public.
and some public libraries lack sufficient funding for the service. Most public libraries want to provide e-books so that they can continue to be relevant to the library users and some librarians are torn between the fact that they should provide e-books but do not want to. Many of the responding public librarians prefer printed books, as do most library users. As previously discussed, there are some major points of struggle causing tension between public libraries and publishers; one being the price of e-book lending and the other being e-book titles, as public libraries require new titles for lending but publishers prefers their booksellers to sell them first for a few months before public libraries can have them. According to some respondents, the publishers hold back digital books so the other sales channels are not disturbed by higher prices on new titles.

There is a need for cooperation and consensus in the field and for an agreement between public libraries and publishers, similar to that for printed books, which would strengthen the social capital of the actors involved. If the problem is not resolved, it may very well be as Joint (2010) suggests: that the solution to a working e-book business model will be found outside the traditional publishers and booksellers.

Public libraries feel that they are competing with commercial actors, who are constantly increasing their customer base. It is not clear by their statements if this tension comes from the commercial actors’ offering a better service, as it cannot be due to economic factors. Public libraries are not making money on their services; on the contrary, fewer e-book loans would be financially beneficial for public libraries.

This study shows that politicians both on a local and national level have not understood what is needed of them in order to rectify the situation for public libraries. Public libraries are under pressure as they must provide literature in all media formats (Library Act, SFS 2013: 801), but as the statements of the respondents show, there are budgets that are underfinanced, and there is no room for supplying e-books without restrictions. Public library respondents claim that there is a lack of funding for e-books from the local politicians, even though only 21 per cent state in the survey that the funding is insufficient to meet the demands of the users and 79 per cent say that the funding is enough to cover the demand of the users.
Booksellers being a vastly varied group of actors in the literary field means that it is difficult to place them all in the same position or claim that they have similar capitals. If we look at physical bookshops, it is clear that they also are quite different from one another, as some have strong financial resources and others struggle. This usually depends on their location in Sweden and the support or lack thereof from the local community. The other booksellers – aggregators, subscription services and online booksellers – all sell or licence e-books, business-to-business or directly to the consumers. These actors all appear to have a strong economic capital and also social capital as most of them are affiliated with publishers. Online booksellers’ strongest capital is economic as they have large market shares of book sales. E-books are only a few per cent of their total sales and are yet to become truly significant for their business.

In this study, some public library respondents consider the commercial actors’ service to be better compared to the public library service, and some express that they understand that e-book user choose the commercial services instead of public library services as they offer a more user-friendly interface. Thus, public libraries are losing their social capital by not providing a user-friendly service. The booksellers agree that the commercial service provision is better than that of the public library and they also suggest that the readers are prepared to pay for a good service. Several respondents see the different services as complementary to one another, filling different needs for the users. They observe that some e-book readers prefer the public library service and others prefer to buy or subscribe to e-books from the commercial suppliers, and there should be enough space for all actors in the book market.

Social, cultural and symbolic capital

In the digital society, the role of the public library as a physical and social meeting place has become more significant (Aabø, 2005). Public libraries are maintaining their democratic role in society by making available information and spreading democratic values, as well as their role as a social space in the local community. According to Svedjedal (2012), there is a clear indication that public libraries have a significant position in the Swedish literary field as the national cultural policies view is that they are beneficial for the book market.
The problem with e-books is that public libraries experience a lack of control over the digital collection, as they do not own e-books but rather license them. This means that e-books can suddenly be removed from the collection by the provider and this leaves the public libraries without the ability to provide a quality service of e-book titles to the readers. Furthermore, public libraries will lose their whole digital collection as soon as they stop paying for the provision (Walters, 2013; Chiarizio, 2013; Armstrong, 2008).

For some physical bookshops, it is important to position themselves close to public libraries as cultural institutions. The social capital are the connections that some say they have with public libraries, and the cooperation they have within either the bookshop chain or the consortium they belong to. Physical bookshops are also cultural institutions fulfilling the same task of cultural provision as public libraries: providing their customers with literature.

It is clear that library users are used to and expect to find e-books in public libraries, but customers do not expect to find e-books in physical bookshops. Public libraries and bookshops share the same clientele, as book buyers are also book borrowers (Höglund, 2012). These different perceptions of customer needs in these two closely related institutions may be explained by the fact that public libraries see themselves as progressive institutions regarding new technology and bookshops are more conservative.

The symbolic capital is fundamental for the power distribution in the field (Thompson, 2012), and public libraries are important actors and have solid positions as cultural and democratic institutions in the Swedish society, both in their own opinion and in that of other actors in this study. Previous literature shows that people in general have good opinions of public libraries and they are considered a trustworthy institution (Höglund, 2012). However, there is a certain tension within the commercial actors’ group regarding public libraries’ role showing that it is a complex question because, on the one hand, booksellers want people to have equal access to culture and books but, on the other hand, they have a business to run. It is interesting that this tension has occurred with the emergence of e-books and does not include printed books, as several bookselling respondents state that the lending of printed books is not causing the same problems as e-books lending.

The tensions and struggles of the actors can be seen in the strategies they use in order to keep or find a better position in the field.
Strategies in the literary field

The distributing actors adopt different strategies to cope with the tensions caused by the actors’ struggle over positions in the literary field. The actors’ strategies can be developed through identifying internal organisational strengths and weaknesses, and external environmental threats and opportunities (Mintzberg & Lampel, 2003). The different kinds of strategies identified are either intentional strategies that are planned ahead or emergent strategies that are not consciously intended (Mintzberg, 2003). Moreover, strategies can be used to mediate between the organisation and its position in the environment (ibid.).

The identified strategies in the empirical data are economic, collaborative, inclusion, wait and see and competitive.

Economic strategies

The economic strategies found are tied to the actors’ struggles for position and capitals in the Swedish literary field, especially economic and symbolic capital. These struggles can also be evident when there are changes in the field, for example when a new actor enters the field/market and the doxa is challenged by the new entrants.

Prices of e-book loans cause the actors to use different strategies in order to prove their point. Petrén and Mattsson (2014) state that publishers want to make more revenue on e-book loans, so the cost of e-book loans, especially on new titles, have increased with several hundred per cent since 2014 when the new Elib model for library loans appeared. Several statements in this study also show concern about the high prices and what it means for e-lending in public libraries. The strategy of public libraries appears to be to budget for more e-books than are sometimes lent out, just to make sure that there is enough funds to cover e-book lending during the year. Public libraries pay more than the consumer for an e-book (Lloret Romero, 2011) and these high prices act as an effective deterrent as most public libraries struggle to afford lending out large numbers of e-books, according to the public library respondents. In fact, the prices are so effective that publishers do not need to
have an embargo on new titles anymore but can make them available to the public libraries without any restrictions other than the high price.

Before 2014 and the new Elib model for e-book lending, the price per e-book loan was 20 SEK, and neither the publishers nor the public libraries were satisfied with the price. Since the new Elib model with free price setting on e-book loans, most public libraries strategically have a restriction on the e-books’ price of between 20 to 30 SEK. This in order to support the SKL agreement that has fixed prices on e-book loans between 13 to 30 SEK. The interesting point here is that previously, before 2014, 20 SEK was considered too expensive by the public libraries, while now up to 30 SEK is acceptable. It is also clear that the Swedish Library Association (2012) and public libraries have been successful in their strategies in making known to the general public through newspaper articles and advertisements that e-book lending is a costly affair for public libraries.

Only three per cent of the e-books in the aggregators’ service cost more than 30 SEK, but they are usually the new and popular titles that the library users want to read and thus the public libraries wish to provide them. Publishers who want to restrict e-book lending in public libraries and are aware of public libraries’ price cap level of 30 SEK, can strategically add a few SEK, up to 33 or 34 SEK, just above the restriction level.

The digital libraries of Stockholm and Malmö have urged public libraries to support the SKL agreement with fixed prices for e-book loan by not lending e-books that are more expensive for libraries than the average price that is the essence of the agreement, which is 20 SEK per loan (Petrén & Mattsson, 2014). It appears that several of the responding public libraries follow this request and have different price caps on the two agreements: 30 SEK for SKL and 20 SEK for the Elib.

In the discussion on e-book prices, another strategy by the online booksellers and subscription services is to claim that public libraries pay too little for e-book lending and that it is affecting their businesses, although the publishers are free to decide the price themselves and it is not likely that booksellers pay more for an e-book than public libraries do. One subscription service respondent argues that e-books cannot continue to be free of charge in public libraries and suggests that library users should start paying for the service at public libraries. This is an interesting notion as it would entail changes in the
Library Act and in the role of the public libraries. Several commercial actors say that it is hard to compete with free provision of e-books in public libraries and it is affecting their business model. The ratio between book loans and sales is often referred to as an indicator of the level of competition that publishers and booksellers face (see for example Svedjedal, 2012, p. 6). It is argued that there are eight loans for every sale of e-books but for printed books the proportion is one to one (Prop. 2013/14:3, p. 16-17). However, Maceviciute (2016) found that the ratio between e-book and printed book lending in 2015 was evenly distributed, as there were 1.2 e-book loans to one sale. It would therefore seem that e-book lending is not impinging too much on e-book sales.

Next, the thesis will present strategies that are used by the actors to cope with tensions and other situations organisations meet in their competitive environments (Mintzberg, 2003). In forming a strategy, an organisation has to find the fit “between internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities” (Mintzberg & Lampel, 2003, p. 23).

**Collaborative strategies**

Economic strategies manifest themselves in collaborative tensions and the competitiveness of the actors. The collaborative tensions in the field can be found between the different actors but also within the organisations.

Public libraries are dissatisfied with the services of commercial actors, mostly in regards to the supply of e-books from the major aggregator and publishers. The titles are old and uninteresting, and titles that can be found in free Internet resources are included. The aggregator’s service provision to public libraries is poor but the public libraries believe that publishers receive a better service, perhaps because they are partly owned by publishers. One general problem that is also seen in US libraries is the difficulty in integrating e-books into the normal workflow of the library, in regard to acquisition and catalogue management (Walters, 2013). The response from the major aggregator is that it is not possible to squeeze in e-book posts into the catalogues of public libraries as it is made for the inclusion of catalogue posts for printed books. Again, this seems to have been an expression of strategy by talking about public libraries as old fashioned and wanting everything to be the same as before. Obviously, it was not that hard to achieve, as can be seen in the
increasing number of available catalogue posts of e-books in public library catalogues lately. This is important for public libraries as they are supposed to stand for reliable, constant and quality access to information and books.

In this study, tension has also been found between the non-commercial actors, for example; Libris’s catalogue posts for e-books are considered lacking in quality, and the Swedish Library Association is considered not working towards a solution but is instead taking a strong political position. While the National Library of Sweden and their perceived lack of interest in solving the e-book situation for public libraries cause the most tension. There is also tension found within the public library organisations that concerns the lack of interest in e-books from colleagues and managers. The expressed wish is that managers make the necessary decisions concerning e-books that would support and perhaps make it possible to increase e-book lending in public libraries.

Most physical bookshops do not sell e-books so they are not too concerned about the competition from other e-book sellers. But when it comes to printed books, they have competition from online booksellers, and for audio books the subscription services have taken almost all their business. One physical bookshop is concerned that public libraries are prepared to break the agreement of coexisting happily with physical bookshops by providing e-books, which means that the previous order regarding the provision of books between public libraries and physical bookshops is altered. This means that physical bookshops are therefore affected by e-book provision even though they do not sell them. However, it is unclear if this affects the physical bookshops much, as most public libraries have restrictions on the more expensive, new e-books titles, thus giving booksellers the time to sell them first. It is still interesting to find that there seems to be some kind of agreement or working relationship between physical bookshops and public libraries in regard to printed books; perhaps there will be a similar agreement in regard to e-books. However, nine of the eleven interviewed physical bookshops do not see public libraries as competitors but rather as cultural institution allies and they cooperate in some cases.

There was no indication of this in earlier literature, but in this study, it is clear that nearly all distributing actors see each other as competitors; however, according to one subscription service, the growing market for digital books means that they can co-exist, not taking customers from one another. In this
study, the respondents believe that the main competition that is causing problems comes from other media pulling potential readers away from books. This is corroborated by Dimmick (2003), who argues that e-books versus printed books is not the problem, as the formats complement each other and are used in different situations.

Inclusion strategies

Public libraries position themselves as inclusive organisations offering all people in the municipality access to cultural experiences and information. From this position there is an emphasis on equal access to information and culture as important for democracy and inclusion in society. By educating and supporting persons who are not skilled users of technology, as well as offering digital services, such as Internet access, e-books, audio books and tech support, thus the library helps to make users more confident about technology now and in the future. Thus, public libraries position themselves as public services closing the gap of the digital divide between those who have access to technology and those who do not (Aabø, 2005).

Public library services are free of charge, and this includes e-book lending, which means that everyone, no matter their economic situation, has access to e-books. Public librarians consider it essential that they can provide new e-book titles, as readers who only read e-books should also have access to new books and not only have access to backlist books. New e-books are available for purchase from online booksellers but new e-book titles are more expensive to buy and this can be an obstacle for some readers, thus preventing them from buying e-books. Subscription services view the importance of the provision of new e-books titles differently from the public libraries, as will be discussed further on (see competitive strategies). However, while it was not indicated in previous research, in this study both commercial actors and public libraries find that one important strategy is to provide backlist books and out of stock books as e-books.

For public libraries, one strategy is to offer e-books to all library users in their municipality, perhaps largely because it is required of them. E-books make it possible for the elderly or others with visual impairments or disabilities to continue to enjoy reading. E-books are therefore found to be an important complement to printed books. Martindale et al. (2014) also found in their
study that e-books were used as a supplement to printed books, not as a substitute, and that e-book readers also borrow printed books.

**Wait and see strategies**

In general, most public libraries have been passive in dealing with the problems concerning e-book provision, waiting for someone else to sort it out for them. Public librarians wish that the managers had been more active in solving the e-book question and understanding the need to redistribute the media budget from printed books to e-books. In this study, in the statistical analysis of the data, it is clear that a larger part of the media budget is allocated for e-book lending compared to what is actually lent out. This is evidence that e-book lending is costly for the public libraries compared to the lending of printed books.

In this study, it is stated that not all public librarians are keen to learn the skills to support new e-book users, but rather avoid advising them that a book title is available as an e-book. The National Library of Sweden are blamed for not wanting to help public libraries achieve better agreements with the publishers (see further in Competitive strategies).

A strategy, which one public library employs, is to not provide e-books at all and thus it is a strategic move to indicate that they have not got the financial means to provide e-books and that they need more funding.

One commercial actor claims to have no strategies concerning e-books and no interest in driving the e-book market forward. Other commercial actors have also been passive in their dealing with e-books, and publishers are even accused of not wanting the e-book market to grow. All the commercial actors appear to be waiting for some commercial actor who will come along to kick-start the Swedish e-book market. It is also implied that subscription services, as new entrants on the market, may come up with some new business models that will help e-books increase in market shares. Physical bookshops’ current strategy is to wait and see what happens with e-books, but if the sales increase, they will have to start selling e-books. Their strategies in this case are emergent, taking things as they come and then adapting.
At a first glance, there seem to be no similarities in the strategies between the public libraries and booksellers, but one can notice that neither of them encourages the use of e-books. Public libraries lack funding to provide e-books in large numbers and some booksellers do not want e-books to disturb the normal sales of books. Several public libraries do not market their e-books as that could lead to increased demand from the library users, which many public libraries cannot afford.

**Competitive strategies**

In order to reach the goal of safeguarding the future, several actors find it important to be relevant for their customers and users. The actors use several strategies to achieve this goal and one strategy identified in the data is to provide library users with what they want and booksellers do this by profiling the consumers. For public libraries, new technology and new media may be the way forward, but also mainly offering printed books, as that is their users’ preferred format for reading.

Public libraries offer a wide array of different services and that is what users have come to expect. Public library services need to be convenient to use and the library users must need them and be positive towards them as well as be aware of them in order to use them (Choy, 2010). These factors can, of course, be individual to every library user. However, in this study, the respondents suggest that e-book provision offers a chance for public libraries to continue to be relevant in society and for the library users. To ensure the use of e-books in the future, the e-book service in public libraries must become easier to use and there is a need to increase the standard of the service. The provision of e-books through public libraries is not at the same standard as that of the booksellers, and the reason may be that commercial actors have more economic and technical resources to provide the service to their customers. The actors get many of their e-books through the same aggregator as public libraries. However, commercial actors have their own websites and apps for their customers to use and this is perhaps where the difference is between the two actors’ services.

Public libraries are also asking for action from the National Library of Sweden regarding solving problems with agreements, more suppliers and platforms etc. More e-book suppliers to public libraries entails competition that
inevitably leads to lower prices and better terms for the buyer. Several suggest that the National Library should provide public libraries with a common national strategy for e-books and a publishers’ agreement that would regulate the level of prices. In the first draft of the report *A National library strategy*, it is suggested that the National Library of Sweden be responsible for a national digital service (National Library of Sweden, 2018).

According to some researchers, public libraries compete on the book market for customers using models from the business world because some municipalities use visitor and lending statistics for deciding the level of funding (Hansson, 2012; Svedjedal, 2012). Sen (2006) argues that these market-oriented strategies could help public libraries deal with the changes in the library sector.

The commercial actors see the opportunity to support reading for the future as e-books offer new ways of reading. The booksellers’ strategy of profiling the customers, by finding out as much as they can about their present and potential customers, is done in order to increase their sales. Their strategy also includes avoiding disrupting other commercial actors in the e-book market by taking their customers, and instead finding new ways of increasing digital reading and increasing the market share. The subscription services usually have to wait for new titles, and they use this to their advantage and make the older titles relevant and interesting to their customers by promoting them in different ways. Subscription services have found their place in the distribution chain and in the literary field. Perhaps the public libraries’ presumption, that library users require new e-books titles, is wrong.

Several of the commercial actors have one important strategy, to increase the number of e-book titles, and it seems that they have been successful as the number of e-book titles available through the aggregator has grown substantially, between 2016 and 2018 (Elib’s platform). The subscription services, both of which have close ties to publishers, consider it an important strategic move to increase e-book titles from older books, as a lot of money is tied to the backlist books. Perhaps this is a business model that the publishers find interesting as it means that old titles will get a new life being licensed as e-books through subscription services. This would mean that all retailers will have their own niche in order not to disturb other actors in the book market.
Competitive prices for e-books is another strategy in order to increase reading numbers. The right price for e-books would increase the consumption of e-books, as we have seen in statistics from Swedish Publishers’ Association and Swedish Booksellers’ Association. The right price is one that consumers are prepared to pay for e-books, but the problem is that vertically integrated book markets, like the Swedish one, leads to high and distorted prices on e-books (Rimm, 2014; Svedjedal, 2012).

Physical bookshops have several strategies for printed books, not e-books; for instance, marketing on social media is very beneficial for the sale of books, but also essential is having a wide selection of titles. Other marketing strategies are about having a presence and participating in the community with, for instance, book talks, so the customers find it important to come to the bookshop. Marketing campaigns are also an essential component for the online booksellers’ strategies to reach new customers. They have noticed that it is especially important to have many attractive campaigns for e-books, for instance, through social media, newsletters, and short-term price cuts on e-books to increase sales.

Technology improvement is a strategy that continues to be important, for instance to use ePub 3 format and provide a high-quality reading device as the reading experience will improve (Benhamou, 2015; Anthony, 2012). It is also essential to continue to develop the e-book format by enhancing the reading experience with links, sound and video.

The strategies of some actors sometimes both enables and hinders the increase of e-books sales and lending at the same time. The identified strategies of the actors show that there is not a great threat of changing the established relations and the doxa of the Swedish literary field. The newcomers, such as subscription services are still operating in the unsaturated e-book market and only threaten physical bookshops. The established actors are passively waiting for further development and just try to safeguard their positions. On the other hand, there is quite a significant expression of discontent with the situation by most of the actors and expectations that new commercial actors might introduce positive changes to drive the market as, e.g., Amazon, or fears that, e.g., SKL as a strong political actor will disrupt the existing balance and order. The first changes on the established situation are introduced by the main aggregator with the changed model of e-lending, the subscription service with
its aggressive acquisition strategy and the SKL by bringing a competitor to the established aggregator into the library e-book market.

In the next section, the supervening social necessity and suppression of the radical potential of e-books will be discussed.

Necessity and suppression of the e-book

There are supervening social necessity and suppression of radical potential helping to either adopt or suppress the e-book from growing in the book market (Winston, 1998). By looking at the tension between social necessities and suppressions of potential of e-books, it is possible to disclose why e-book use has not increased more (ibid.) in the Swedish book market. Some actors are at the same time both enabling and stopping the increased use of e-books through their actions.

The supervening social necessity

The most significant supervening social necessity of e-books are the same as for other products, that is to say, customer demand. However, books are not only a product but works of literary art (Kurschus, 2013, O’Connor, 2010; Howsam, 2006) and e-books have the added complication in that they are a service and the customer a licence holder (Chiarizio, 2013). This study shows the importance of the customer/user request for the e-book service as a main motivation for its provision through the distributing actors. Public librarians are required to provide reading material in all formats to the library users according to the Library Act (SFS 2013: 801). The bookseller group is more diverse and their customers can be another company or the user/reader. The incentive for booksellers is also to find a suitable niche exploiting this new product.

There are several reasons for readers’ wanting to read e-books. It is convenient as they are provided directly without having to go to a shop or library, there is no queueing for e-books as they are available immediately, and finally, the automatic return of library e-books is convenient for the user. Thus, instant gratification is a motivation for use (Pulh et al., 2008) but also portability as
a reading device can house the user’s entire collection of e-books, which means that it is possible to have many choices of books when commuting or traveling. For public libraries, one incentive is that e-books facilitate a continued reading experience for the older reader and those with visual impairment, as it is possible to adjust the text size and the contrast of text and screen to suit the user. However, the main incentive is that e-books offers the public library the chance to shorten their queues to popular titles by lending out e-books to the library users. Digital products offer the possibility of being freely available to any person anywhere and the product can be accessed simultaneously by several persons. All groups of actors mention that e-books offer accessibility and flexibility to the user as they are accessible any time and any place. It gives the public libraries and booksellers the ability to provide reading material to their users outside of opening hours.

However, publishers are using old business models on a new technology, and by this making the e-book less flexible than the printed book (Kovac, 2008, p. 49). Those with commercial interest in the products put up different barriers in order to safeguard their profit, for example, by selling e-reading devices with proprietary formats for e-books.

Digital books could potentially be more convenient for people who live farther away from libraries and bookshops as it gives them easy access to reading material. This has been proven wrong as it is clear from the public library survey that it is the big city municipalities that have the highest e-book lending, so living far away from a public library is not a motivation for e-book use. Steiner (2015a) suggests that certain genres sell better as e-books, which is corroborated by one online bookseller who has noticed that the preferred genres for e-books are crime and romance.

As an innovative digital product with many advantages, the e-book itself is an important motivation for the commercial respondents. It was indicated in previous research and corroborated in the findings of this thesis that a high-quality e-book reader for the Swedish market could be an incentive to increase both sales and digital reading in general (Benhamou, 2015; Anthony, 2012; Steiner, 2015a). However, the two e-readers adapted for the Swedish market, Adlibris’ Letto Frontlight and Storytel’s Storytel Reader, are both low budget models with a price of just under 1000 SEK, while Amazon’s Kindle, which can be bought in several different models and price ranges, has proved to be attractive to the consumers. The reading devices are usually tied to the
company that sells them. Storytel Reader requires the customer to have a subscription to Storytel and it is not possible to borrow e-books from libraries. On Letto Frontlight, it is possible to read e-books borrowed from the public library, but not from other subscription services. Kindle has a proprietary format used by Amazon but it has become quite easy to convert epub files to the Kindle format AZW. The reading experience on e-readers has improved and is now similar to that of reading a printed book.

Booksellers’ reasons for providing e-books can be the revenue and for maintaining a competitive edge, for example in relation to Amazon and other international providers. Public libraries do it as it is their legal obligation but also a mission to provide literature and information in different media formats. A motivation for commercial actors is that e-books offer an opportunity to make money on backlist books again, according to commercial respondent, and this is a motivation for the publishers who stand to gain the most from it.

Even if an innovation has plenty of social necessities that help to push it forward, there are inevitably suppressants that have the potential to stop the growth of the innovation in the market and disrupt the social necessities that are already in place (Winston, 1998).

The suppression of radical potential

The main suppression for e-book use are perceived to be the same for both actors, and the most significant is the readers’ preference for the printed book (Bergström et al., 2017) but also the librarians and booksellers’ preference for the printed book. People’s digital fatigue is also lifted as a real hindrance to the increase of e-book reading. The suppression of radical potential (Winston, 1998) will vary among different actors surrounding the e-book. In some cases, the price of the e-book can be an incentive and in others a hindrance; examples of the latter are the high cost for public libraries to lend out e-books and the high purchase prices of consumer e-books for customers.

The findings in this study corroborate earlier studies which show that new technology can be a suppression of potential if it fails to meet the expectations and the needs of the user (Joint, 2010). The expectation that a new device will improve the user experience and therefore difficulties with usage, but also a limited choice of e-book titles, can potentially prevent users from continuing
or even starting to use e-books (Martindale, et al., 2014; Rabina & Peet, 2014). The reasons for slow growth of e-book shares in the Swedish book market presented by researchers are confirmed by most respondents in this study; the reading devices’ poor quality, high prices on e-books, several formats and copyright issues, but also the lack of e-book titles (Benhamou, 2015; Hesmondhalgh, 2013).

The Swedish Publishers’ Association has presented three issues that need to be changed before the e-book market can thrive in Sweden, and they are: lower VAT, regulation of e-book lending, and copyright conditions must be maintained (Nyberg et al., 2013). According to several commercial respondents, the e-book’s higher VAT compared to the lower one for printed books in the Swedish book market is a suppressant. Baron (2015) argues that it is causing problems for the European e-book market as readers buy e-books outside Europe to a lower price. However, Lundblad (2015) is of a different opinion, and argues that the lower VAT on printed books has not led to any positive effects on the Swedish book market, therefore questioning why there would be any effect on e-books. The six per cent VAT on printed books has in the longer term not made any real difference in prices for books (ibid.). The EU finance ministers have recently agreed to lower the VAT to six per cent on digital books.

The regulation of e-book lending in public libraries would help the commercial market, according to the Swedish Publishers’ Association. It is unclear what sort of regulations they would like to see and how these could be applied. There are already embargos on access to e-books applied by the publishers (Svedjedal, 2012) and restrictions on e-book lending applied by the public libraries due to the high prices. To maintain copyright so that the publishers see it is worthwhile investing in e-books is one of the major problems, as they see it. Digital books are harder to control as they can easily be reproduced and it is hard to see any immediate solution other than to continue using DRM. However, e-book technology offers many opportunities, such as the potential of unrestricted access to information, but the commercial actors’ economic goals are at odds with these possibilities (Walters, 2013).

Publishers restrict e-book provision in public libraries through high prices on new e-book titles for e-book lending. Subscription services’ access to new e-book titles is delayed usually for a couple of months, but this is not seen as a
problem by the responding subscription services. These measures of delaying access to e-books for some retailers and public libraries are in place so that e-books can be sold on the open market before being lent out at public libraries (Walters, 2013; Svedjedal, 2012). Therefore, public libraries and Aggregator B consider the publishers to be the main suppressant on the e-book market.

Public libraries’ restriction on e-book lending is an important barrier constraining e-book reading from increasing, as was shown in the case study of Holmstedt and Topelius (2015). When all restrictions were removed from the public library in the study, e-book lending increased in the first month by over 200 per cent. That justifies the fears of commercial actors with regard to free e-book lending: that without restrictions it would get out of hand. Some responding commercial actors find that it is hard to compete with free e-book lending and, according to them, the public libraries are the main suppressant for the e-book market’s growth.

The lack of marketing of e-books from both commercial and non-commercial actors is considered problematic. If the users are not aware of the service, they will not use it. There was no indication of this in earlier literature, but it is clear in this study that physical bookshops do not want the market to grow. Even the actors who want the e-book market to increase are not doing enough marketing efforts, according to some. The book trade actors are responsible for the failure of e-books in the Swedish book market, according to Borg and Snickars (2016). Actors outside traditional publishing may be the ones to finally drive the e-book forward (Bergström et al., 2017), for example the subscription services, which would thrive if e-book reading increased.

In this study, it is found that some actors are enabling and/or constraining the e-book at the same time; for instance, publishers are enabling the use of e-books as they are increasing the number of e-book titles and also making backlist into e-books, but they are constraining the market by keeping the prices up. Public libraries are enabling e-books by lending them free of charge to public library users but at the same time trying to keep the lending numbers down by restricting the allowed number of e-books per user a week.
9 Conclusion

In this final chapter, the conclusions and key points of the research questions will be presented, as well as this work’s contributions, limitations and suggestions for further research. The problem identified in the introductory chapter was that digitisation of the production, distribution and reading of books on the Swedish book market affects the distributing actors; for example, new actors have emerged and compete for position in the literary field. There is also the risk of disintermediation when new actors take over the roles of old ones. Booksellers and public libraries could potentially lose their position as distributors of e-books to readers in the Swedish e-book market.

The following questions guided the research:

1. How do the distributing actors perceive the effects of e-books on their positions and dispositions in the literary field?
2. What strategies are employed by distributing actors to cope with changes and negotiate their positions in the literary field?
3. What are the supervening social necessities and suppressions of radical potential of e-books in the Swedish book market?

Three empirical studies were undertaken in order to address the aim and research questions: a survey with public libraries, a survey with online booksellers and physical bookshops, and an interview study with aggregators, subscription services, online booksellers and physical bookshops. The following three sections will address the major findings, one research question at the time.
Actors’ positions, dispositions and capitals in the literary field

The first research question concerns what the booksellers and public libraries see as affecting their positions and dispositions in the literary field.

Changes in the Swedish book market have affected the distributing actors in the past and the arrival of the e-book is no exception. Digital technology changes the conditions for different actors in the book market (Lundblad, 2016). It affects how books are made, distributed, marketed, priced and also how people read. In this study, the perceived effects on the positions and dispositions of the actors in the literary field are, in some cases, small. It appears not to have affected the physical bookshops to any large extent and the main reasons for that are that they are not involved in selling e-books, and moreover that the Swedish e-book market is still insignificant compared to the wider print book market, so any effect would be small. Physical bookshops have been affected considerably more by other changes in the book market in the past: for instance, free prices on books, lower VAT on printed books, and new competitors, such as book clubs and online booksellers. This despite there being cultural policy measures in place to balance out the negative effects of the market, such as loss of diversity due to consolidation (Kurschus, 2013). The threat lately to physical bookshop are that subscription services have more or less completely taken over the sales of audio books.

The Internet and digital products have brought changes in consumer behaviour, for instance how people access information and books. The arrival of online booksellers has led to a wider supply of book titles that can be accessed by readers (Steiner, 2015a). Access to cheap or free e-books online has led to consumers’ wariness of paying too much for e-books (Borg & Snickars, 2016; Steiner, 2015a; Maxim & Maxim, 2012). The high prices of e-books are therefore considered problematic not only by the consumers but also by the commercial actors in this study. Some respondents have said that the right price is what a customer is prepared to pay and that the value of an e-book is much closer to a paperback than a hardback book. The effect on the new entrants – aggregators and subscription services and the online booksellers – is mostly positive as they are able to expand their business model and increase the market shares. However, if there are any changes with e-books prices, decline in growth, or new competition, it is likely to affect these actors more. For example, the monopolistic situation of one aggregator...
is about to change as Overdrive is going to deliver e-books to Swedish public libraries as well and the dominant aggregator’s position in the field will certainly have to change because of this.

From several commercial actors’ point of view, public libraries are causing tension in the field by lending out e-books for free, thus disrupting the booksellers’ business model. Public libraries’ grievances are directed towards the publishers’ high prices for e-book lending and Elib for their poor service to public libraries. Moreover, public libraries’ economic management has been affected as well as the relationship between publishers and libraries (Lloret Romero, 2011). There is also tension within the public library organisation as some librarians are dissatisfied with the National Library of Sweden and its disinterest in the complex problems public libraries have with e-books.

The risk of disintermediation is discussed by the commercial actors but it does not appear to be caused by digital books, but rather by publishers’ leaving the distribution part of the book selling chain and instead selling directly to the customers. This, however, cannot be seen as a real threat in a vertically integrated book market like the Swedish one.

**Strategies in the literary field**

The second research question deals with the strategies of booksellers and public libraries in order to cope with changes and negotiate their positions in the literary field. Several strategies are applied in order to cope with changes and positioning among the actors in the field, and the strategies are: economic, collaborative, inclusion, wait and see, and competitive.

E-books in public libraries is an ideological question in which several actors, especially the trade organisations, take a standpoint for or against e-books in public libraries. The issue is further complicated by the Swedish Library Act (SFS 2013: 801) that states that public libraries should provide access to reading materials in all formats. Unfortunately, public libraries’ wish to fulfil their mission of providing literature in all formats to all users, clashes with the commercial actors’ wish to sell e-books; but for some bookseller respondents, the equal access to books provided by public libraries is important as long as it does not interfere with their business models.
An important strategy for both public libraries and booksellers is to increase the number of e-book titles available to their users and customers, and the only way forward is to convince the publishers to make new titles and the backlist into e-books. Publishers will only commit to e-books if there is money in the venture, which leads to the most important issue of all: economics. Physical bookshops find that the profit margins are too low on e-books and are not interested in selling them, as customers are not going to buy e-books if they are too expensive, but if the prices are reduced, more customers buy e-books; this is the logic of the market. Online booksellers are aware of this and are hoping for a better strategy for the price setting of e-books from the publishers.

Public libraries are dissatisfied with the high cost of lending e-books, but there are only a few that cost more than 30 SEK; though, those more expensive titles comprise only three percent but, unfortunately, they are of interest to the public libraries to be able to offer to their users as well as they usually are the new and popular titles. Several public libraries have an intentional strategy of not allowing e-books to cost more than 20 to 30 SEK for each loan. A suggested future strategy to overcome the inequality of provision of e-books in different municipalities is to have one national digital library that provide all library users with digital books. This would mean that all people in Sweden have equal access to e-books (National Library of Sweden, 2018).

Both the public libraries and booksellers are quite passive and not interested in pushing for changes and increasing the market for e-books, hoping for someone else to take the lead. For public libraries, an actor offering a collective approach and unified voice is requested. For commercial actors, an actor who is prepared to take the financial risk to kick-start the e-book market in Sweden is needed. It is implied that perhaps one of the new actors will drive the market forward by investing in reading devices like Amazon’s Kindle.

As both investigated groups of actors share a common interest in increasing the number of readers and extent of reading in different circumstances, both should benefit from finding ways of encouraging the interest of the public in e-books, thus opening new ways of reading to more people and pushing down the costs and prices of e-books. Both groups would benefit from understanding each other’s survival strategies and learning from each other.
This may help in harmonising their interests, as competition is not inherent in their relationship.

**Necessity and suppression of e-books**

The third questions addresses the social necessities and suppression of potential that affect the distributing actors in the Swedish e-book market. The distributing actors agree that the most significant necessity for e-books is that the consumers want the product. E-books are not seen as a substitute for but as complement to the printed book in different situations and for different people. However, consumers’ preference for the printed book is a significant suppression for e-books and, according to Kovac (2008), the reasons for the enduring preference are mainly cultural as the codex stands for cultural continuity in Western countries. Another important issue is the digital fatigue of readers who prefer to leave the screen behind when reading for pleasure.

The actors mostly agree what is pushing and holding back e-books in the Swedish book market, but there are some differences in opinions on who is causing the suppression of potential, some state that it is the publishers and others that it is the public libraries. This study has found, that there are actors who both suppress the potential and create the supervening social necessity of e-books, in society in general and for themselves, at the same time. For example, public libraries are enabling e-books by lending them free of charge to the library users and supporting them by providing technical support, on the other hand public libraries offer several restriction in e-book lending to keep down the cost. Publishers have been increasing the number of available e-book titles in the last few years but at the same time have not been able to find the right price that will make consumers increase their buying of e-books at the same rate. The fast growth of audio book use through the subscription services may have hampered the growth of e-book use, but now, one subscription service is selling an e-reader that will allow for use of both e-books and audio books.
Contributions

This thesis has illustrated the situation of booksellers and public libraries in the small language market of Sweden. The study reveals tensions among the actors and the strategies they use in order to negotiate their positions in the literary field in this particular time of change. There are social necessities and suppressions of potential that both enable and hinder e-books’ expansion in the Swedish book market – sometimes put in place by the distributing actors.

The study has demonstrated that the effects of e-books on public libraries are, so far, small, but the tensions and struggles among the publishers, booksellers and public libraries are more extensive. If e-book lending increases significantly the economic management of public libraries will continue to be under pressure and the budget will need to be redistributed to better suit the consumption patterns of library users, which are not yet seen as changing significantly, so can be passively observed rather than stimulated. Furthermore, new strategies need to be developed in order to maintain public libraries’ positions as a cultural institution in the Swedish literary field. Thus, the empirical contribution is relevant for library and information science as changes in how information can be disseminated, and subsequent changes in public libraries themselves, are of interest for the field of library and information science.

Furthermore, the data also demonstrated that in the diverse group of booksellers, online booksellers and physical bookshops depend primarily on printed books while aggregators and subscription services rely mainly upon digital books. Thus, their outlook and strategies for e-books, now and in the future, will continue to be disparate. It is also clear that the positions of the commercial actors are more uncertain than that of public libraries, as a new aggregator and a subscription service are moving their positions forward in the e-book market.

The theoretical and methodological contributions of this study is the original combination of Bourdieu (1996), Mintzberg (2003) and Winston (1998), that has allowed this thesis to relate the emerging strategies of public libraries and booksellers to the acquisition of different types of capital and struggles for positions in the literary field, that create new social necessities and forms of suppressions of radical potential.
Limitations and future research

The time for data collection was spread out over three years, the first in 2014 and the last in 2017. This is, of course, not ideal, as the respondents’ views and situations in the environment could have changed considerably during this time. On the other hand, it can be useful to be able to follow the changes in the market as during this time there were some major changes and there continued to be interesting developments during the time of writing this text.

There is a risk that the respondents in the surveys and interviews may be those who have strong opinions about e-books in the Swedish book market. The ones who declined to participate in the study could be those who do not have an interest in this research and/or do not provide e-books in their bookshops or libraries. The respondents’ answers could therefore be skewed and a fuller picture could have been obtained had the response rate been higher in both surveys. However, I believe that the data are varied and full of details and that the respondents represent the whole group of actors. The respondents come from all over Sweden, big cities and small municipalities, large public libraries and small, as well as booksellers from large chains and independent bookshops.

The emergent design of the study involves an iterative and changeable process in regard to the data collection methods, instruments and data analysis. The limitations arising from this is that the final design emerges as the collection and analysis of the data progress. The flexibility of the research design means that it will change to suit the specific context of the study, in this case the e-book market in Sweden, but it was made more difficult as changes were occurring regularly in the e-book market during this time. The emergent design, the two studied respondent groups and the two data collection methods meant that the process was time consuming and labour intensive as revisions were made in all parts.

Further research in this area that would be relevant for the future could be to include all digital books and compare the progress of audio books with e-books, as the former has increased in use considerably more quickly than the latter, especially during the last few years. There is a need to look at the distributors and digital book services from the perspective of the library users and bookshop customers. What makes the readers decide to use one service
over another and how do readers decide where to obtain their e-books? What is most essential for them in their decisions in borrowing or buying an e-book? In answering these questions, the situation of the e-book and the roles of the distributing actors in the Swedish book market could be made clearer.

It would be interesting to do a case study of a public library that uses the business model of subscription services and markets older e-book titles to see what the effect would be on e-book lending. Public libraries could benefit from using the strategies of subscription services, who are in a similar position as public libraries. In the commercial chain of distribution of books, subscription services usually have to wait a few months for new titles in order for the other booksellers to sell the books first. The subscription services in this study claim that it is not necessarily a problem as in their kind of service, the customer mostly reads titles that are a year old or older. When a new title comes out, the reading of other titles by that author increases significantly, and if marketed properly, older, quality titles can have a long life in the public library service as well. This is really no different to how printed books are treated in public libraries on a daily basis, with the displaying of both new and old titles.
References


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Appendices

Appendix 1: Public library survey

*The case of the e-book in a "small language" culture: Media, technology and effects in the digital society* is a research project at the Swedish School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Borås, funded by the Swedish Research Council. The purpose is to investigate the significance of the e-book as a phenomenon in all areas of the book market, from authors, publishers, bookshops, libraries to users / readers.

You may remember that you answered a previous survey that we did in 2012. In this new survey, the goal is to update the previous information we have received from you and ask any further questions about what has happened since then. The survey takes about 25-30 minutes to complete and your responses will be managed confidentially. Your participation is very important to our study and we hope you want to fill in the survey.

Participation takes place first and foremost by completing the attached web site: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3PW5J37

**Your number:** 001

If you prefer to fill in a paper questionnaire instead, you can email me your address and I will send it by mail immediately. 

We wish to receive your reply by **June 1st.**

If you have questions about the questionnaire or about the research project, please contact me at birgitta.wallin@hb.se

Thank you for your participation! 
Birgitta Wallin, PhD student
University of Borås
Part 1: Handling of e-books

The first questions are about your suppliers, policies regarding purchasing and handling of your e-book collection, service, problems, difficulties and opportunities you experience with e-books. We also ask questions about which systems can be considered as optimal for your library and which barriers prevent the utilisation of this technology.

1. Who delivers e-books to you and to what extent? Several providers may have the same ranking.

0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 3 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplier</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elib</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adlibris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bokus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free e-book services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, give example</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What system (e.g. contract with suppliers, formats, catalogue entries, etc.) for access to e-books in Sweden do you think is optimal?
2.1 What factors prevent this optimal system from being achieved?

3. How do you use Elib’s e-book loan model in your library?
Please enter all valid answers.
   a. Combination of piece and access license
   b. License license, the library pays in advance for a certain amount of lending
   c. Access License, the library pays a sum per lending
   d. Sets the upper limit per loan of ______ sek

4. How do you value Elib’s new model used since 2014?
   Advantages:
   Disadvantages:

5. An American librarian has suggested that agreements with e-books suppliers meet the following five criteria. Indicates to what extent the criteria are met in your agreement with Elib by ticking the appropriate box for each example:
0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 3 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free access</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free from DRM (i.e. free from copyright protection)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote loans between libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of individual titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable prices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, state what</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Does the library have any strategy paper for managing e-books?
   No
   Yes, 6.1 Enter url here:

7. Do you experience any problems or difficulties in providing e-books because of suppliers or third-party vendors?
   No
   Yes, 7.1 Which of the following problems do you experience and how often do you experience them? Tick the appropriate box for each example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of lending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical issues such as download</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No possibility for the library to select titles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarantine of new e-books for library lending, i.e. new e-books are released for loan several months after the printed book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too small selection of e-books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too few children’s books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not possible to remote loan between libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad interface</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, state what</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Does the e-book represent any problems for the library?
   Tick the appropriate box for each example and indicate to what extent you consider that e-books are a problem for the library:
0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 3 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E-books require major marketing efforts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of hassle with downloading, apps etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowers experience the technology as difficult and need a lot of help from the library staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books are costly to handle, for example in time, staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints from the staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other, give example:

9. Do you see any problems with e-book costs compared with printed books?

10. Are there any weak points in the public library's provision of e-books, and if so, which?

11. How much of your purchase budget goes to e-books? Enter as a percentage.
   11.1 Is it enough to meet demand?
   Yes
   No, 11.2 How do you handle the situation?

**Part 2: Access to e-books**

The following questions are about catalog entries, availability, how library users access and find the e-books, as well as rules for loans.

12. What rules do you have for e-book use for borrowers in your library?
   12.1 How do borrowers receive information about these rules?

13. Are library e-books available in your catalogue?
   No, 13.1 How does the user access e-books in your library?

   Yes, 13.2 If yes, how do you handle catalogue data? Fill in all valid answers:
   a. From the supplier of e-books
   b. Creates own catalogue entries
   c. From Libris
   d. From BTJ
   e. Other, specify which one:

14. How does the library market e-books? Enter all relevant answers:
   a. Direct contact with visitors
   b. Through printed matter, such as brochures
   c. Library website
   d. User training
   e. We do not market e-books
   f. Other, state what:
15. E-books are available to readers in a variety of ways, such as subscription services, direct purchases, and free resources. What special benefits do you see with access to e-books through public libraries?

15.1 How do you view the relationship between lending in libraries and the commercial availability of e-books, such as online bookseller and subscription service?

16. To what extent do you cooperate with the local bookshop? Tick the appropriate box for each example:

0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 3 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperation</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At various common events, e.g. author talks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bookshop competes with its own lending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bookshop informs about e-book lending at the library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps with acquisition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Is the supply of e-books in Swedish enough to meet the demand?

- Completely insufficient
- Not enough
- Enough
- More than enough

18. Do you offer e-books in languages other than Swedish?

- No

Yes, 18.1 To what extent do you use the following methods to provide e-books in languages other than Swedish? Tick the appropriate box for each example:

0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 5 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We buy titles with full ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have licensed access to the publisher's platforms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pointers in the library catalogue to free e-books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elib's range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other supplier; state who / which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3: Demand for e-books in libraries
Here we ask questions about the demand for e-books, what drives demand and how it affects the library, as well as questions about education and complaints.

19. Who are asking for e-books in your library? For example, men or women, age groups, students, teachers, unemployed, retirees, etc.

20. How many e-book downloads have you had at your library last year? Enter the number of downloads and as a percentage of your total lending.
20.1 Number of downloads:
20.2 E-books as a percentage of total lending. Tick in a reply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per cent</th>
<th>0,1-1</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>&gt; 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Other, in per cent:

21. How has the demand for e-books changed over the last five years? Enter an answer by circling the one of your choice:
a. It has grown very quickly
b. It remains at about the same level
c. It has grown very slowly
d. It has decreased

22. What do you think are the main factors driving demand for e-books? Rate and tick in the appropriate box for each example:

0 = Not important; 1 = Small meaning; 2 = Fairly important; 3 = Very important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driving force</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The readers need a portable, useful format</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily accessible collections online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong marketing from publishers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The great access to reading tools / reading devices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturers of e-readers push through new technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology's ability to customize text size, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other factor? Comment:
23. Do you offer any training courses for users of e-books?
No
Yes, 23.1 What kind of education do you have? Tick all applicable answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to use the catalogue to identify e-books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to access library resources at a distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to download in the library or at a distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rules (e.g. loan period) for e-book lending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of e-readers (Sony, Kindle, iPad etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of apps for e-readers (e.g. Kindle for iPad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, state what</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. Do you receive complaints from borrowers about e-books?
No
Yes, 24.1 Indicate how often you receive complaints about the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complaints</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of e-books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with technology, such as reading tools, systems, download</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, state which one:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24.2 What measures do you take after these complaints?

25. Have you conducted a study of the users' views on your e-book services?
No
Yes, 25.1 What was the result of the survey? Have the users expressed themselves as:
   Very dissatisfied
   Quite dissatisfied
   Quite satisfied
   Very satisfied

26. What have been the main effects in the library regarding the demand for e-books? Tick the appropriate box for each example:
0 = No effect; 1 = Little effect; 2 = Quite big effect; 3 = Very big effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty about budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to train the staff in new skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to get acquainted with different reading tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to train readers in how to use reading tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to train readers how to download e-books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other effect, comment:

**Part 4: Thoughts about the future**

In conclusion, we ask some questions about the National library if Sweden’s role, e-book benefits, future of e-books demand and barriers that prevent full utilisation of this new technology.

27. How do you view the National library if Sweden’s role in providing e-books in public libraries?

28. Do you think that the demand for e-books in the future will:
   - Decrease
   - Stay the same
   - Grow slowly
   - Grow fast
   Why do you think so?

29. What benefits do you think e-books add to public libraries?
   Tick the appropriate box for each example and indicate to what extent you consider them to be advantageous:

   0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 3 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited number of users per book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books do not take up any physical space in the library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-books do not need to be physically handled which saves time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowers have access to them when the library is closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other, give examples:

30. Do you think it is important to increase e-book provision in your library or do you think it's more important to invest in printed books?

31. Which of the following factors do you consider hindering e-book lending in public libraries?
Tick the appropriate box for each example and state to what degree you consider them to be obstacles:

0 = Not at all; 1 = To a small extent; 2 = To a large extent; 3 = To a very large extent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readers' continued preferences for the printed book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small access to e-books in Swedish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of reading tools, such as e-readers and tablet computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of e-book lending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of marketing e-books from publishers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of a national e-book lending system</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient resources to meet potential demand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other factor? Comment:

32. Is there anything you would like to add?

33. Would you be interested to participate in an interview about e-books in public libraries?
   Yes No

33.1 Do you want access to a report of the results of the survey?
   Yes No

33.2 If you answered yes to any of the above, please fill in an e-mail address:
Appendix 2: Bookseller survey

The research project; *The case of the e-book in a "small language" culture: Media, technology and effects in the digital society* – Survey of booksellers. This questionnaire addresses all categories of online and physical bookshops to map the resale of and attitudes to the e-book phenomenon. The survey is divided into three sections: A, B and C. Section A applies to bookshops that provide e-books today. Section B applies to bookstores that do not provide e-books today. Section C is common questions to all bookstores.

**Initial question**
Please circle your answer

1. Do you provide e-books?
   - Yes - Continue to section A, questions 2 - 11.
   - No - Continue to section B question 12-17.

**A. Questions to booksellers who provides e-books**

2. Our bookshop provides e-books because we have ...
   Circle one or more reasons:
   - a. Demand
   - b. Well-functioning routines
   - c. Good agreement with publishers and suppliers
   - d. Interest for the product

3. How do you market your e-books?
   Circle one or more options:
   - a. Website
   - b. Displays in the shop
   - c. Advertisement
   - d. At book presentations
   - e. reading circles
   - f. Other:

4. What kind of relationships do you have with the publishers you buy books from? Circle one or more options:
   - a. We only buy printed books
   - b. We have expanded our purchases with e-books
c. Publishers do not make e-books available to us
d. We use special ebook providers (see question 5)
e. Other

5. Do you use suppliers like Elib, Dito, Ebok Direct or others?
Enter which one or which:
a. Elib
b. Ditto
c. Ebok Direct
d. Other: __________________

6. Does you have reading devices or equivalent for sale?
Enter the current option:
Yes
No

6.1 If no, are you planning to do so in the near future?
Enter the current option:
Yes
No

7. Do you get questions from your customers about e-books?
Enter the current option:
Yes
No

7.1 If yes, what categories of customers are asking for e-books?
Tick for one or more options:
Achieved
Female  Male
a. Children
b. Young adults
c. Middle-aged
d. Elderly

7.2 In which visitor’s group is the demand greatest?
Circle only one option:
a. Regular visitors in the bookstore
b. Temporary visitors in the bookstore

8. Do you think the sales of e-books will increase?
Circle only one option:
a. Yes, in the next year  
b. Yes, in the next 2-3 years  
c. Yes, for the next 5 years  
d. No, not at all  
e. Do not know  

9 How has the development of e-books impacted your business overall? 
Circle only one option:  
a. Sales have increased  
b. Sales are the same as before  
c. Sales have decreased  

10 How do you think the development of e-books will affect your total sales in the future?  
Circle only one option:  
a. Sales will increase  
b. Sales will be the same as before  
c. Sales will decrease  

11 What conditions do you think must be for e-books to compete with printed books?  
Circle one or more options:  
a. Lower pricing than at present  
b. Better quality of e-books  
c. Improved quality of reading devices  
d. Access to extras, such as another chapter written by the author for the e-book reader, etc.  
e. The e-book stop trying to imitate a traditional printed book and instead offers another dimension of reading, such as links, sound and images.  

Proceed to section C question 18.  

B. Questions to booksellers who do not provide e-books today  

12 What is the reason why your bookstore does not provide e-books today?  
Circle one or more options:  
a. No demand among customers  
b. Publishers do not make e-books available to us  
c. No agreement with publishers and suppliers
d. We do not have the technical resources required to sell e-books
e. Other

13 Do you receive questions from your customers about e-books?
Circle the current option:
Yes
No

14 Do you think the sales of e-books will increase?
Circle only one option:
a. Yes, within the next year
b. Yes, within the next 2-3 years
c. Yes, within the next 5 years
d. No, it will not increase at all
e. Do not know

15 How has e-books affected your business?
Circle only one option:
a. Sales have increased
b. Sales are the same as before
c. Sales have decreased

16 How do you think the development of e-books will affect your total sales in the future?
Circle only one option:
a. Sales will increase
b. Sales will be the same as before
c. Sales will decrease

17 What conditions do you think must be for e-books to compete with printed books?
Circle one or more options:
a. Lower pricing than at present
b. Better quality of e-books
c. Improved quality of reading devices
d. Access to extras, such as another chapter written by the author for the e-book reader, etc.
e. The e-book ends trying to imitate a traditional printed book and instead offers another dimension of reading, such as links, sounds and images.
C. **Common questions to all booksellers**

18 What consequences do you think Amazon's entry into the Swedish book market will have?
   Tick for one or more options:
   a. It will mean a very small difference
   b. It will lead to reduced sales in the traditional bookstore
   c. It will lead to increased sales in e-books generally
   d. It will increase reading reading as a whole
   e. It will lead to a generally reduced value in the Swedish book market due to avoidance of paying taxes
   f. This will lead to falling sales figures of Swedish titles generally due to the dominance of English-language titles
   g. Amazon's loan schedule of e-books will lead to a decrease in the number of titles sold

19 How do you see the traditional bookshop's role in the future?
   Tick for one or more options:
   a. The physical bookshop will be the selling both printed books and e-books
   b. Only the online bookshop will be the seller of e-books
   c. The bookshop's role will probably decrease when sales of e-books increase
   d. The sale of e-books will increasingly be transferred to direct sales from publishers to readers or authors to readers

20 Do you engage in any of the following activities to increase the bookshop's visibility in society?
   Circle all current options:
   a. Books signing
   b. Author events
   c. Reading circles
   d. High reading for children
   e. Café
   f. Book presentations in associations
   g. Book presentations in schools
   h. Collaboration with public libraries about author visits or the like.
   i. Other, for example:

21 Are you interested in participating in an interview, individually or in groups, sometime during the project?
Yes No
If yes, enter your contact information here: (Name and email)

Would you like to be informed of the results of the project?
Yes
No

If yes, write your email here:

Is there anything you want to add?
Appendix 3: Consent form interviews

Recently, I had the opportunity to interview you for my doctoral thesis in the subject area of library and information science. It deals with distribution of the e-book in Sweden through bookshops and public libraries.

This study follows research ethical principles, which means: participation is voluntary, which means that you are entitled to discontinue this at any time; that your personal name will be unidentified; that the collected interview material will be treated confidentially; that you have the right to review the transcription of the interview.

The collected data will be used by me and for research purposes only; for example, in articles, in my dissertation and at conferences.

Please sign this consent form with your name and by this you agree to that you received this information and that you also consented to participation in the data collection.

Please send this form to me.
Birgitta Wallin
University of Borås
Allégatan 1
501 90 Borås

Place and date:
Name:

If anything is unclear, please contact me via email at birgitta.wallin@hb.se
My supervisors Elena Maceviciute and Skans Kersti Nilsson can also answer any questions.
# Appendix 4: Interview guide online bookseller

## Booksellers' situation today and in the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Supplementary questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you start by telling me a little about your business?</td>
<td>Why? Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you give an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is it like to be a bookseller today?</td>
<td>What problems and opportunities are you facing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How large proportion of your book sales are e-books?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are your partners in regard to e-books?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you view your role in the book market now and in the future?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## E-book sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Supplementary questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think e-book sales have reached their full potential in Sweden?</td>
<td>If no, what do you think the obstacles are for e-book sales to gain momentum in Sweden?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there are increased opportunities for e-books for the book industry?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think there are any issues for the book industry regarding e-books?</td>
<td>If no, then why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are few physical bookshops selling e-books, what do you think it depends on?</td>
<td>Can you, as a bookseller, do anything to increase demand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it important that e-books are sold in the bookshops and not just through other channels?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E-book market actors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What actors are your biggest competitors in provision of e-books to the customer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you view the other actors who sell or lend out e-books, such as libraries, bookshops, publishers and authors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything you think I forgot to ask or is there anything else that you would like to add before we finish the interview?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thank you for your participation!</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5: Interview guide physical bookshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booksellers' situation today and in the future</th>
<th>Supplementary questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can you start by telling me a little about your business?</td>
<td><strong>Why?</strong> Why not? <strong>Please explain.</strong> What happened? Can you give an example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is it like to be a bookseller today?</td>
<td>What problems and opportunities are you facing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you view the e-book as a format?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### E-book sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you sell e-books?</th>
<th>If no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If yes</strong></td>
<td>• Why are you not selling e-books? Is there anything stopping you? • Are you planning to sell e-books in the future? Why / why not? • What could get you to start selling e-books?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who are your suppliers and partners?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does it work well? Is there any part that could work better?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What percentage of your total book sales are e-books?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you know any bookstore that successfully sells e-books?</th>
<th>If no, what do you think it depends on?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If yes, and if you do not sell e-books</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is it different from your bookshop?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Is it important that e-books are sold in physical bookshops and not just through other channels?</th>
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<td>Do you think e-book sales have reached their full potential in Sweden?</td>
<td>If no, what do you think the obstacles are for e-book sales to gain momentum in Sweden?</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>E-book market actors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you view the other actors who sell or lend out e-books, such as libraries, bookshops, publishers and authors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything you think I forgot to ask or is there anything else that you would like to add before we finish the interview?</td>
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**Thank you for your participation!**
## Appendix 6: Interview guide aggregator

### Booksellers’ situation today and in the future

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How large proportion of your book sales are e-books?</td>
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<td>Who are your partners in regard to e-books?</td>
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<td>Who are your customers?</td>
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<td>How do you view your role in the book market now and in the future?</td>
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#### E-book sales

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#### E-book market actors

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<td>Which actors are your biggest competitors in provision of e-books to the customer?</td>
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