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Curator as an expert and mediator in the paradigm of the new museum: a comparative case study of the Baltic and Finnish national museums

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Article II. Reidla, Jana 2020. Who Is Leading the Project? A Comparative Study of Exhibition Production Practices at National Museums in Finland and the Baltic States. – *Museum and Society*, 18 (4):368–385. DOI: 10.29311/mas.v18i4.3456.

Article III. Reidla, Jana. 2020. Identity and the Controversial Experiences of Museum Researchers: The Case of the National Museums of Finland and the Baltic States. – *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 14 (2):99–122. DOI: 10.2478/jef-2020-0018.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EHM	Estonian History Museum (*Eesti Ajaloomuuseum*)
ENM	Estonian National Museum (*Eesti Rahva Muuseum*)
FN	fieldwork notes
NHML	National History Museum of Latvia (*Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures Muzejs*)
NML	National Museum of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Nacionalinis Muziejus*)
NMF	National Museum of Finland (*Suomen Kansallismuseo*)

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INTRODUCTION

The museum paradigm is changing – a process that has lasted for twenty and more years and covers an increasing part of the world's museum landscape. Scholars estimate the length of the process of changes differently, but there is general agreement that the shift at the idea level began in the last quarter of the 20th century in Western Europe and North America. The notion of the new museology emphasized the social role of museums and their interdisciplinary nature, which led museums to look for new ways of expression and communication, also distinguishing the notion from the classical museum in which "collections are the centre of interest" (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010: 55). The reinvention process of museums has reduced their elitism and moved them towards wider social inclusion. Taking into account the diversity of audiences and their distinct needs, emphasizing visitor involvement, education and communication has become a new normality for the museum institution.

Characterizing the point museums have reached, John Fraser, editor of *Curator: The Museum Journal*, writes that: "there is no longer a new museology, but rather, a museological practice that continues to advance through experimentation, testing, and eventually evaluation to assess development" (2019: 96). It can be concluded that a certain maturity has been achieved and it is time to analyse the process: what has the changed paradigm meant for the practice in terms of staff and museum organization. This dissertation highlights the ways, in which museum staff, especially curators, have understood and applied the expectations placed on them in the conditions of the reinvented museum, and how their professional self-perception has been affected by the process.

The dissertation consists of a framing introductory section, and the section of original publications with three articles covering the research objectives. The introductory section is structured into six chapters, which open up the research problem, provide a framework for research and transmit the concluding discussion as well. The published articles are thematically intertwined, as are the functions of the museum, so all the chapters in the introductory part provide a grounding to all three articles.

Chapter 1 introduces the development of the research problem and states the research questions. In addition, I explain how I understand the concept of a curator, how the emphasis on the functions of a museum has changed and what this has meant for the profession of curator.

Chapter 2 presents the development of globally spread paradigm of the new museum. The topic is explored through a reflection on the basic concepts and processes of the new museum paradigm in museum studies over the last decades. This chapter also introduces the main factors influencing museum work and changes in the profession of curator, highlighting the viewpoint that new museology is certainly not the only significant factor causing the shifts. There are others that were just as vital. A more in-depth opening of these topics was necessary to provide background for all three articles, which form parts of the

dissertation. Chapter 2 also gives an overview of the research conducted so far in the field of the museum work environment and museum professions, thus providing a context to the relevance of this dissertation.

Chapter 3 maps comparative economic contexts of cultural policies, including museum policies of the last decade in the four respective countries of Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, and museology training practices for museum staff. Thus, this chapter proceeds from the global context to the specifics of the respective countries. In connection with the issue of professional development and training in the museum sector, changes in education and research policy, which primarily concern the three Baltic states, are briefly explained. A comparison with the Soviet research policy was necessary to show the differences in the background of the Baltic states and Finland, although to date all of them have adopted neoliberal research policies. While Chapter 1 explained the changes in museum professions at the global level, local museum-specific professions are highlighted in Chapter 3 based on regional surveys of museum staff.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the sources and methods used. It mainly reflects on how I collected the data, established contacts, conducted fieldwork, and analysed websites and documents. Methodologically, an important aspect of ethnographic research is the researcher's personality and previous experience. My own background as a former museum worker, which affects my position as a researcher, is briefly discussed in all the published articles. However, in Chapter 4, I elaborate on the impact of my previous experience in museum work on the process of this study. I also reflect on my position regarding that, being well acquainted with the Estonian museum landscape, I had little prior knowledge about Latvian, Lithuanian and Finnish museums. This reflects my awareness of the methodological risks posed by the uneven level of prior knowledge. As most of the interviews were conducted in a foreign language for both the interviewer and the interviewee, I also touch upon this factor.

In **Chapter 5**, I present summaries of the three published articles that are part of the dissertation. In the respective reviews, I focus on summarizing the purpose and conclusions of each article.

Chapter 6 contains a concluding discussion. The chapter focuses on the most general results and conclusions, as more specific results are presented in Chapter 5. It also addresses suggestions for museum policy makers thus contributing to the development of the museum landscape.

Regarding the order of the studied museums and countries, there is an intentional lack of consistency in which order they appear in this dissertation. I considered the alphabetical order, but it seemed too rigid and essentially unjustified. I wanted to underline that no museum is more important than the other, so in all cases I chose a cognitive order that was suitable for reflecting the respective themes. Accordingly, in Tables 1 and 2 (at the end of Chapter 4) the museums are listed not in alphabetical order, but in the order of the fieldwork overview in Chapter 4. For the purpose of equal treatment, 'Baltic' comes first in the title of my dissertation, as 'Finland' came first in the published articles.

1. POINT OF DEPATURE

The dissertation deals with key changes in museum work over the last twenty years, using a comparative perspective (central cultural history museums in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland). Inevitably, as the paradigm of the museum has changed, the perception of the role of the museum professionals must have changed as well. Although the changes are global, each country has its own characteristics. Therefore, the aim of this dissertation is to study the role perceptions of museum staff and shifts in the arrangement of work and structure of the institution within the new museum paradigm. Specifically, I paid attention to how the new orientations in museums have affected the substantive staff, such as curators with research capabilities, and how they feel amid these inevitable changes. The comparative analysis pays attention to museums in one region, thus framing the conditions under which the conclusions are drawn. In the focus of this dissertation are shifts that have recently taken place in the field of museums of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland. These countries were not the initiators of the idea of new museology but have adapted it in their own way for at least the last few decades. This approach helps to understand the current position of these countries both in the context of changes in the global museum landscape and against the backdrop of local cultural and museum policies.

When institutional changes take place, employees enter an identity transition phase (Geijsel and Meijers 2005). To align institutional and individual goals and cope more successfully with changed circumstances, they need more support from the management (Billot 2010). Once the problem is recognized, the concerned parties should work together to find ways in which professionals can adapt their identities to reality, and *vice versa* – how the institution can align its goals with the professional's self-determination. This requires an integrated assessment of the role of the curator, making sense of the institution's objectives, and new criteria for evaluating performance. The arguments presented in this dissertation can be important starting points for both policy makers at the state level and the management of the museum institution in organizing its work and shaping the role of the curator. The curators as substantial staff, initially trained for research, have a lot of potential to increase the relevance of museums in society. This could be used more effectively if policy makers recognized the possibility that academic research could adapt to the specificities of museum work.

1.1 Changing emphases on the functions of museum

As a framework for this study, it is important to examine how the change of the functions of the museum institution within the new museum paradigm has affected the functions of the staff. Traditionally, the museum's three basic functions are preservation, research, and communication (see Fig. 1), as they were formulated in the PRC model by the Reinwardt Academy in the 1980s (Maroević 1998: 224;

Desvallées and Mairesse 2010: 29). All three functions are intertwined in the way that addresses the museum as an institution consisting of connected subsystems where "the output of one subsystem serves as the input of another, or in theory all others" (Meijer-van Mensch 2017: 64). All three functions were originally performed by professionals titled as curators, so this type of curator can be called a classical or archetypal one. Today, the classical curator is no longer taken for granted as there has been a shift towards specialization (the concept of curator will be discussed in more detail in the next subsection).

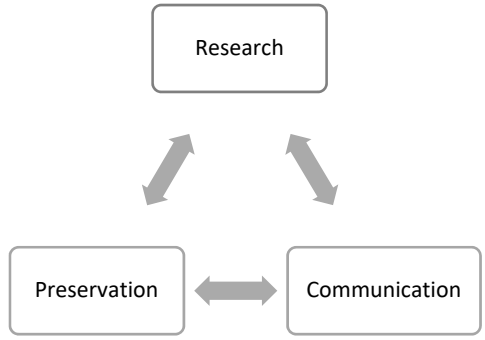

Figure 1. Three basic functions of the museum

How, eventually, has the process of introducing a new museum paradigm shaped the museum's functions? In essence, all the functions presented in the PRC model have been retained, however, the aspect that has changed is the emphasis. Functions related to the visitor service and various kinds of administrative tasks, which constitute the communication function, have come to the foreground. The weight of the communication function in a contemporary museum is vividly illustrated by the scheme of museum functions presented by the ICOM International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP) (Ruge 2008: 14). Figures 2 and 3 follow the scheme (Ruge 2008: 14), which describes functional relationships in the organization. Figure 2 indicates the three main functional areas of the contemporary museum. If we compare the functions given in the classical museum according to the PRC model (Fig. 1) and in the "new museum" (Figs 2 and 3) it appears that the fulfilment of *all* functions of the classical museum fits into one area called "Collections and research".

Figure 3 shows in more detail how the museum professions are divided into three areas according to the three functions: 1) collections and research (including exhibitions), 2) visitor service, 3) administration (including marketing). Here, I would like to draw attention to the presence of the communication function in all three main areas. In the field of collections and research, the communication function is performed by an exhibition and display curator and a designer. In the field of visitor service, the communication function is performed by all listed

professions and in the field of administration most professions are also performing the communication function one way or another.

Various studies have shown that, as a result, researchers and curators perceive imbalances in functions in the global museum landscape. While prioritizing the social role and mediating activities of the museum is leaving its other traditional functions in the background, the emphasis on the roles of museum staff has also changed. Although exhibitions are prioritized, the fundamentals of exhibitions, especially collections and object-based research, have become invisible (see Anderson 2005, Graham 2005, Reid and Naylor 2005; Cavalli-Björkman and Lindqvist 2008; Lehman-Brauns *et al.* 2010; Thomas 2016).

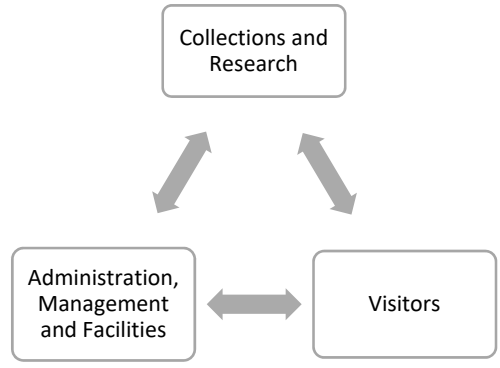

Figure 2. Three main functional areas in the 21st century museum

Source: based on Ruge (2008: 14)

Collections and Research	Visitors	Administration, Management and Facilities
•Curator •Inventory co-ordinator •Registrar •Conservator •Curatorial assistant •Document centre manager •Exhibition and display curator •Exhibition designer	•Manager of the education and visitor service •Education and visitor service officer •Visitor care and security manager •Visitor care and security assistant •Library and media centre manager •Web master	•Administrator •Facilities and security manager •IT manager •Manager of marketing, promotion and fundraising •Press and media officer

Figure 3. The division of the museum staff into three functional areas

Source: based on Ruge (2008: 14)

1.2 Defining the concept of curator

Nowadays the curator, be it in the classic sense or not, still acts in the museum field. Nonetheless, curation has spread far beyond the museum sector. As the notion of curator is widely used in this dissertation, it needs further definition. The articles of the dissertation also deal with the curator in different contexts. In Article I, the transformation of the classical curator into a more specialized one is examined. Article II deals with the curator performing the function of making an exhibition, and in Article III the focus lies on a curator who does research in a museum. I have previously also discussed the changing meaning of the curator's and researcher's professions in the Estonian context (Reidla 2019). In Chapter 4, I will reflect on the experience of using these concepts in fieldwork and as follows, I am going to explain the dynamics of the concept and how the curator is understood in this dissertation.

Over the last ten to twenty years, the concept of both curator and curating have taken on a very fluid meaning, which almost always depends on the context of use. The widely used expression "curating seems to be everywhere" (Schorch *et al.* 2020: 5) suggests that curator has come to be referred to as the manager of a variety of areas outside the museum. For example, professional curators create art exhibitions in galleries, professional content curators bring out the most important content on a topic on the Internet (Ashton and Couzins 2015), but curation today also includes displaying in shop windows, compiling healthy food suggestions, assembling a fashion show, selecting performers for a music festival, etc. (Booth 2012; Blight 2013; Balzer 2015; Byrne 2015; Cohen 2018).

The meaning of curation stems from the Latin *cūrātor* "one who looks after, superintendent, guardian", from *cūrāre* "to watch over, attend" (Merriam-Webster website: curator). The concept has etymological roots dating back to the representatives of the government of the Roman Empire in Britain, who were 'curators of public affairs', in the Middle Ages; the same stem word *cure* was also used for naming the professions who took care of people's souls and bodies (Merriam-Webster website: cure etymology). Curating has a long history in the context of museums, where the curator represented a cultural elite knowing the materials of special value and taking care of them in the 18th–19th centuries (Alberti 2012). Thus, the classical curator's profession focused on collections since the museum's attention was on collections. Accordingly, the curator occupied the central position among museum staff. Some specialized professions, for example conservators and collection keepers began to appear alongside the curator after World War II, taking over some of the curator's previous responsibilities (Schorch *et al.* 2020: 5). However, the era of the classical curator continued until the late 1980s, as the central role of the curator is reflected in the handbooks of museum work of the 1980s and the 1990s (see, for example, Thompson 1984; Edson and Dean 1996). The classical curator had to be trained in an academic discipline corresponding to the theme of the museum. The curator was directly responsible "for the care and academic interpretation of all objects, materials, and specimens belonging or lent to the museum" (Edson and Dean 1996: 18). It was the curator's competence

to make proposals for acquisition, deaccession, attribution, and authentication, do research on the collections and publish the results of that research. The curator might also have either or both administrative and exhibition responsibilities and had to be familiar with sound conservative practices (Edson and Dean 1996: 18). In the dissertation, referring to the classical curator, I proceed from the above approach and tasks that are presented on Figure 4.

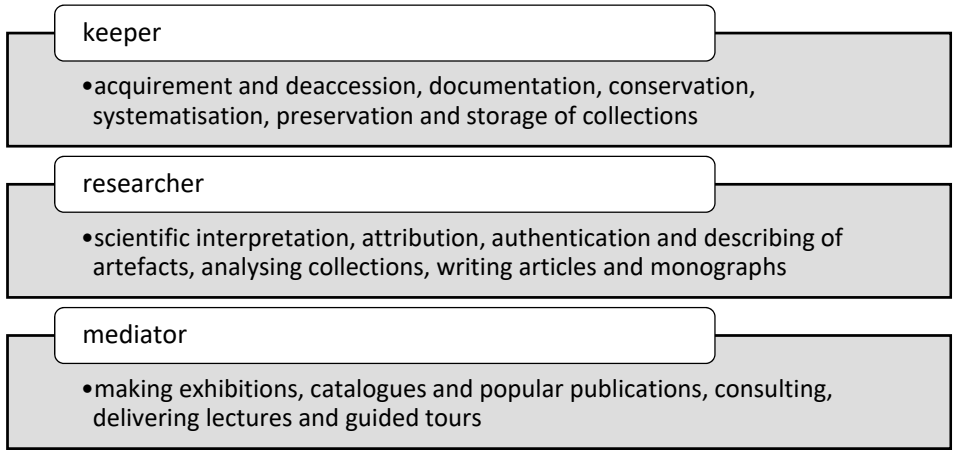

Figure 4. Three main fields of tasks of the classical curator

Today, the concept of curator is deeply influenced by the use of the same term in the context of exhibition making. The ambiguity of the term curator was introduced by art curators, who in the 1960s and 1970s began to organize exhibitions outside art museums and institutions, and in the process became independent producers, and opinion leaders on avant-garde art. Accordingly, the term curator obtained a meaning narrowly addressing exhibition curation, which remains in parallel use to this day, both inside and outside museums (Balzer 2015: 55). The opening of curatorial programs at universities since the late 1980s has helped to develop the profession of independent curator. Today, curatorial training programs are widespread in universities around the world, focused on organizing exhibitions rather than preserving museum collections (Hansen *et al.* 2019: 3).

In the context of a museum, the curation of an exhibition is a role that may or may not be performed by a museum professional, nor does the job title not necessarily be a *curator* to perform curating in the museum. The task of the researcher in the role of curator is to compile the scientific concept of the exhibition, to select the exhibits, to write the texts and, if no project manager has been appointed, to coordinate the whole project. In addition to the profession of curator, the ICTOP list of professions describes the "exhibition and display curator" (see Fig 3), who plans and conducts temporary exhibition projects and must have a master's degree in a field related to museum collections (Ruge 2008: 16, 22). However, Ruge in a footnote (2008: 22) suggests that this may be a temporary role as "the

curator of exhibitions and displays is usually the curator of the museum". Today, exhibition work is often seen not only as a presentation of research results, but also as a research process (See Bjerregaard 2019; Sheikh 2019). The curation of exhibitions is also considered to be more intertwined with museum education than it has traditionally been (See Mörsch *et al.* 2017).

So how should the concept of curator be understood in the context of a contemporary museum? Job portals reflect the modification of the curator's work with a diversity of job titles and job descriptions. The diversification of museum professions, which began in the 1980s in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, has long been the subject of a difficult debate in the international museum landscape (Ruge 2008: 10), to which extensive museological literature has been devoted (Reid and Naylor 2005; Boylan 2006; Edwards 2007; O'Neill 2012; McCall and Gray 2014; Nielsen 2014; Lubar 2014; Arnold 2015; Schertz 2015; Ewin and Ewin 2016; Mörsch *et al.* 2017; Nielsen 2017; Viau-Courville 2017; Jensen 2019; Schorch and McCarthy 2020; etc.). These studies suggest that the curatorial profession is fragmented, full of challenges, and still open to change. In my view, as the curator has different roles and tasks, they can apply personal creativity to realize the opportunities inherent in this position.

The curator's duties in 21st century Europe include "the care, development, study, enhancement, and management of the collections of the museum" (Ruge 2008: 16). Enhancement means that the curator contributes to the designing and organizing of permanent and temporary exhibitions, publications, and activities for the public. Management includes managing budget and staff under the supervision of the director.[1] With regard to collections, the curator mostly plans and supervises, as there are other professionals working on collections too: inventory co-ordinator, registrar, conservator, curatorial assistant, document centre manager, exhibition and display curator (Ruge 2008: 14)[2]. Such an approach reflects the more administrative nature of the contemporary curator compared to the classical curator.

To sum up, in this dissertation the curator is understood as a museum researcher whose job title can be one of several options: researcher, curator, researcher-curator or even something else, because often the job title indicates some specialization. The curator's specific tasks may be more or less related to the museum's collections, exhibitions and research, and they are required to have a degree in a scientific discipline relevant to the subject of the museum. Thus, today's curator may specialize in one of the areas shown in Figure 4.

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[1] The education required of a curator usually is a master's degree in a discipline corresponding to museum collections, at least so is it set in the ICOM ICTOP European Museum Professions document (Ruge 2008: 16).

[2] This, of course, depends on the size of the museum: the smaller the institution, the more multifunctional the staff.

1.3 Formulation of the research problem

Initially, I planned to focus the study on the activities of mediating material culture in museums. I wanted to compare the role of different museum specialists in interpretation and mediation of museum collections. It soon became clear that the focus needed to be sharpened, because today's museum work is so multifaceted. Therefore, I put one group of mediators – curators (regardless of the exact job title) – to the centre of the study. I was intrigued by the controversial position of the curator in the midst of the ongoing change in the museum landscape.

Also the case study of the Cultural Heritage Study Centre of the Estonian National Museum (Reidla 2017) revealed that the counselling, educational and popularization work within the organization had shifted away from research topics. While academic research was a priority in the research department, the curators' time and energy were spent on organizing workshops, folk costume classes, personal counselling, making exhibitions, and delivering lectures in different places. My suggestion (Reidla 2017) for the administration was that to avoid the curators' overload, activities should be less fragmented, more planned in the long run, and popularization and counselling that raise the museum's relevance in the communities also needed greater recognition by the administration.

Currently, the various outreach, development and marketing professionals in museums of Estonia have a definite positive image, as there is high expectation that they could reshape the institutions to become more prominent at the field of creative industry. Estonia stands out as a prominent museum country, having received several international nominations and awards during the past few years[3]. Expanded exhibition teams, costly but attractive design and technical solutions, and a multidisciplinary approach have become the standard. The obligation of museums to earn their own revenue forces them to strive for the economic viability of all activities.

While some attention has been paid to sharing the authority of a curator and activities connected to the engagement of audiences, both important in the new museum paradigm, the curators' professional potential has not received much attention. They have remained "hidden" in the museum's backstage, where they feel they are not "real" researchers in the academic sense, nor relevant in terms of the museum's leisure and sales activities. On the other hand, they are occupied

[3] European Museum of the Year Award was granted to the Kumu Art Museum in 2008; European Heritage *Europa Nostra Award* was granted in 2017 to the Niguliste Museum, in 2015 to the Estonian Open Air Museum, and in 2013 *Grand Prix* to the Estonian Maritime Museum. Estonian National Museum received the special prize of the *European Museum of the Year Award* (EMYA) 2018 competition, the *Kenneth Hudson Prize*. The concept of the Estonian National Museum's Finno-Ugric permanent exhibition "Echo of the Urals" won the main prize in the environmental design category at the prestigious *European Design Awards* in 2017, and the same exhibition has won dozens of other international awards. The Maarjamäe Centre of the Estonian History Museum was nominated for the 2020 *European Museum of the Year Award*. The History Museum has been among the EMYA nominees before, in 2013 with the renovation of the Great Guild building.

with a myriad of tasks, because the museum, adapting to the needs of the audience, expects more and more "input" from curators as substantive professionals.

When I started conducting interviews for the dissertation, initially the interviewees in Estonia welcomed my interest in the work of substantive professionals, as it has been a neglected field of research. But some Estonian interviewees were at first unwilling to talk about curator's tasks, as their previous experience was that talking about problems did not lead to a solution. Thus, on the one hand, it was argued that no one was interested in the curator's opinion on the current exhibition and research policy, but, on the other hand, the same people felt that there was no point in talking to me either, because my conclusions would not interest those who make decisions. Such a reaction confirmed the existence of the problem and the need to elaborate on and analyse it. Thus, I designed the research questions based on Estonia's problems, as my initial knowledge was based on Estonia, and I was also more familiar with Estonian conditions through personal experience (see Chapter 4). In order to obtain more generalized conclusions, I applied a comparative method to explore how the change in the profession of curators is perceived in neighbouring countries. So, even though my initial experience was Estonia-centric, fieldwork in Latvia, Lithuania and Finland provided an important addition to generating questions and topics.

After doing the first round of fieldwork in all museums, I got an overview of the functions of a curator in a regional perspective. It became clear that the various facets in the role of curator are still intertwined, however, the approaches of museums to this profession are somewhat different. The profession of curator turned out to be too multifaceted to be explained in one article. So, the following three areas came to the forefront of my dissertation: curators' task of managing collections, the researcher's role in the curating of exhibitions, and curators as researchers.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question of the dissertation is: what are the key changes in the role of a museum professional in the last ten to twenty years? Specifically, how do professionals capable of research (so-called substantial or content workers), mainly curators, in museums perceive their current role and the changes that have taken place in it? I approached the research question from a comparative perspective, involving the central cultural history museums of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland as research objects.

I approached the question of the role of the curator and the shifts in it through three fields of curator's responsibility: 1) curator as a keeper of collections, 2) curator as a researcher, 3) curator as a mediator of museum topics to society. I was interested in whether the changes that have taken place were of any systematic or regular character that would enable to point out the conditions that favour certain tendencies. Although each of the three articles focuses on one of these

areas, especially in the first article, it was necessary to look at the context provided by the cross-article questions.

In Article I, the question was: What are the main principles of division of the organizational structure in comparable museums, have there been any significant organizational changes in the last decade? The answers to this question also helped to establish the connections with the analysed material in Articles II and III – to study the role of the curator in the context of the organizational structure.

Is there a classical curator who performs the three main functions of a museum and where has the curator's specialization been applied? This question was particularly important in Article I. The answer to this helped to align the analysis in all three articles.

The main questions of Article I were: Are the curator's collection-based tasks in the five museums similar or different and how? Can the dynamics of change be compared? Is it possible to point out the impact of new museology on changing practices in preserving of collections?

How has the emphasis on the function of communication in museums affected the work of curators and their perception of their professional role? This was an important issue in Articles II and III, but I also touched upon it slightly in Article I.

The main questions of Article II were: have there been any changes in the production of the exhibition, taking into account the general changes in the museum paradigm? What have the possible changes meant for the researcher in the role of curator?

The main questions of Article III were: how have the changes in the museum paradigm affected the sense of professional identity and work motivation of the researcher working in the museum? What problems and what shifts can be observed in their professional identity? How do curators articulate the problems, what basic discourses can be outlined? In the light of these questions, I also tried to define the specifics of museum research.

2. THE PROCESS OF CHANGING THE MUSEUM PARADIGM

In the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of a new museology confronted the so-called old museum which carried mainly the 19th century museum ideas. According to the British tradition[4], new museology is a critical discourse on the social and political role of museums. Peter Vergo, the compiler of the seminal volume *The New Museology*, defines new museology as "a state of widespread dissatisfaction with the 'old' museology, both within and outside the museum profession; […] What is wrong with the 'old' museology is that it is too much about museum methods, and too little about the purposes of museums […]" (1989: 3). Vergo also emphasizes "a radical re-examination of the role of museums within society" as a direction for the future (1989: 3).

An insight into the literature on museology indicates how museums have struggled for the last decades to renew, reinvent (Anderson 2012), and rethink the museum (Andersen 2018), to make museum revolutions (Knell *et al.* 2007) and to leave the past behind. However, the debate continues: whether the old museum has been finally abandoned or whether the changing of museum is essentially impossible. I myself am one of those who think that we no longer need the oppositional "new museology" (see Fraser 2019), but have reached the establishment of a new museum paradigm, which enables constantly evolving practice. Hence the change is no longer the opposite but a feature of a museum, this idea is also shared by contemporary Nordic museologists Kerstin Smeds (2018) and Christine Buhl Andersen (2018).

The main mistakes of the old museum were: authoritative and linear method of teaching, representation of elite views, colonial approach to collections and exhibiting, tolerance of social inequality and injustice, and self-encapsulation (the metaphor of living in an ivory tower is widely used, for example Heijnen 2010). In the late 1980s, British cultural historian Charles Saumarez Smith perceived the 19th-century mentality in museums, contrasting it with the idea that museum objects are not neutral but "complex and subject to changing meaning" (1989: 19). Saumarez Smith calls on museums to change their mindsets in the areas of conservation, exhibition, and scholarship (1989: 20–21). First, he calls to respect the life cycle of the artefact, not seek to reverse it by restoration; secondly, acknowledge the diversity of exhibiting methods which means the use of a mixed style of presentation, use audience involvement methods of display; and thirdly, Saumarez Smith considers awareness of different, but equally legitimate, methods of interpretation important as museum "scholarship has traditionally been reticent in its

[4] The concept of new museology (*la nouvelle muséologie* in French) originates from France in 1960s–1970s, where the focus was not on criticism but on developing new types of museums like ecomuseums, social museums, scientific and cultural centres (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010: 55; Viau-Courville 2017: 12).

methods of interpretation" (Saumarez Smith 1989: 20). Given the time that has elapsed since these notes were written, they still sound respectfully relevant today.

As the well-known British museologist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has described very precisely the main nature of the "old museum", I will quote her below (2000: 13–14):

> *"Old museums" were creations of the Enlightenment, institutions that came into being in the Modern period. Attempts were made to construct knowledge that could be relied upon at all times and in all places. The 19th-century public museum was tasked with the production and dissemination of knowledge. Its epistemological identity was constructed through a range of collection-related disciplines (art, natural history, geology, archaeology, ethnography). It was intended, at least in part, to convert raw humanity to civil society, to create docile bodies. The modernist museum was intended to be encyclopaedic, to draw together a complete collection, to act as a universal archive.*

Hooper-Greenhill thus tightly links the worldview and values of the age of Enlightenment and the period of Modernism to the characterization of the "old museum".[5] The weakness of the pedagogical and communicative approach of the old/modernist museum emerges from the aim "to enlighten and to educate". The "knowledge transmission" model characteristic of that time addressed communication as a linear process of information-transfer from an authoritative source to an uninformed receiver. Hooper-Greenhill sees knowledge as objective, singular and value-free (2000: 15)

2.1 The main concepts and processes of the new museum paradigm

The concepts and processes outlined below indicate the key points frequently used to describe the new museum paradigm. Many of these are interrelated or develop from each other. The following is a selection of the key concepts I consider most characteristic of how the new museum defines itself.

Museum as a **communicator**. Nowadays, as Jane Nielsen (2017: 443) explains: "Communication is at the heart of everything a museum does". This direction has been strongly emphasized and developed by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, whose main research topics are the communicative character and the social agency of museums. She addresses the changing educational role of museum since the 1990s (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 1994, 2000), and introduces the concept of the post-modernist museum (Hooper-Greenhill 2007). The idea of a museum as a communicator has fallen on fertile ground as it has been taken up and further developed

[5] Following this logic, the adjectives 'modern' and 'modernist' are used to describe an old museum, and the adjectives 'post-' and 'postmodern' are linked to a 21st century museum.

by both theorists and practitioners. Communication in itself can be defined as the transmission and exchange of information. However, museum communication also encompasses central concepts of learning, meaning making and interpretation already heavily used by museums (Nielsen 2017: 441). Communication influences every aspect of how a museum approaches its work. Janet Marstine (2006) complements Hooper-Greenhill with the idea of post-museums being where dialogue about cultural values takes place. Furthermore, she claims that the post-museum "exposes conflict and contradiction", which means that museums take an active role in shaping meaning by challenging frames (Marstine 2006: 19). In the 2000s, the approach to museum communication includes the condition that the museum no longer represents a voice of authority, but rather another voice in multifaceted disputes over cultural meanings and memory (see Marstine 2006).

New museology has led museums to apply contemporary communication theories and constructivist learning theories. From communication studies, the concept of the active audience was borrowed on the basis of which museums began to emphasize the need to carry out audience research (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 17–18). A new approach to learning where education focuses on the processes of learning rather than those of teaching has been applied in museum education. Accordingly, education is defined not as an "achievement of the intended result", but rather as a "meaningful experience", which is educational in essence (Hein 2007: 348). "The role of the teacher is to provide stimulating environments for learning" (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 23). In line with this approach, the learner constructs their new knowledge, based on different aspects of the topic and their previous knowledge and experience.

Over the last twenty years, the need for visitor research to understand the audiences has been recognized and addressed. Therefore, the public is no longer seen as a "relatively homogeneous and rather passive mass" (Macdonald 2006: 8). When handling audiences, their characteristics are taken into account, both in terms of background diversity and different interests in activities (see Hooper-Greenhill 2000, 2007; Falk 2006, 2016; Falk *et al.* 2007).

Participatory museum has been conceptualized by Nina Simon (2010, [2009] 2012) as a museum offering a platform that connects different users who act as content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators. Accordingly, the participatory institution provides opportunities for diverse co-produced experiences which means that museums must "design opportunities for visitors to share their own content" (Simon ([2009] 2012: 331). Simon's concept is actively followed in museums, both in practice and relevant research. I can stress here that more attention could be paid to Simon's cautionary remarks. Simon warns that in most cases, visitors are very one-sidedly invited to create content, while for some visitors it is daunting when museum educators leave them with too many free choices to participate in activities, because they need more support to feel comfortable. Furthermore, experience with social networking platforms has shown that only 1% of visitors want to create content themselves, they are more interested in rating or making choices, and as Simon ([2009] 2012: 337) proposes, this is likely to be the case in museums.

Socially inclusive museum is a multifaceted area highlighted by Richard Sandell (1998, 2002). In essence, this is an update of what Vergo (1989: 3) advocates as "a radical re-examination of the role of museums within society". The contributors of *Museum, Society, Inequality* (Sandell 2002) raise concerns about inequality and offer a number of strategies that should be followed in museums to become more relevant – from the therapeutic potential of museums to representing lesbians and gay men. Thus, Sandell's (2002) volume addresses the many understandings of the social agency of museums, the ways in which museums have sought to engage with actual social concerns and to act in partnership with communities in order to instigate social change. The idea of an inclusive museum is grounded on the acknowledgment that museums may influence and respond to current concerns of society, that museums carry responsibility as their decisions have impact, both positive and negative.

Community practice is a broad umbrella concept for the democratization processes of the museum. Mostly it means community collaboration and reduction of social inequalities. Community practice includes shared authority in curating exhibitions and managing collections and stresses the role of museums as contributors to cross-cultural understanding. Viv Golding and Wayne Modest (2013) present the curator's new responsibilities: to share authority, re-image the museum and its vision, and to arrange more complex relationships – along with acquisition and managing the content of museum collections have contributed to this topic. This process is closely intertwined with the power or standpoint of the curator, the involvement of indigenous people, or like Steven Lavine admits: "Voice has emerged as a crucial issue in the design of exhibitions" (1991: 151). Collaboration with indigenous communities, like the issue of colonial heritage in general, has been a challenging issue in museums, but today many changes have taken place and are still being made in this area. According to Candace S. Greene (2015), Nicholas Thomas (2020) and other museum anthropologists, nowadays the inclusion of the "native voice" in exhibits and collections management has become routine, and co-curation is a rather common practice. Thomas considers that the issue of the decolonization of knowledge, which became relevant in the 1980s and 1990s, is now becoming obsolete, as curators have changed and by now, "increasing numbers of curators and museum professionals are, anyway, of indigenous descent." (Thomas 2020: 27)[6]

Broadened and open access to information includes the human dimension of an inclusive and participatory museum, but also alignment with developments in the info technology field. As the new museology emphasizes open communication and open access to information, it shows its neoliberal nature (Boast 2011: 64), thus contributing to the democratization of museums (Runnel and Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt 2014; Runnel *et al.* 2013). The possibilities of digital technology are applied to invite the visitor to engage in dialogue in multiple ways. Over the last

[6] However, the heritage of colonialism is a complex subject, not all scholars agree that museums have been able to reconstruct themselves after the collapse of the colonies, and the subject of neocolonialism is now on the agenda (see Boast 2011).

decade, a lot of resources have been invested in the digitization of collections, assuming that this opens up access to collections and provides an opportunity to invite audiences to be active participants and increase their connection to cultural heritage (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Aljas 2011). Museums offer virtual engagement possibilities in exhibitions where the visitor's own cultural background is combined with stories in the exhibition, visitors can also engage with collections directly through the devices. Researchers of cultural events and policy, Pamela Barnes and Gayle McPherson (2019: 258) argue that museums have become hybrid spaces, where consumers – as they refer to visitors – may challenge what they see and participate as co-creators. The hybrid museum space consists of both physical and online space, where the boundaries of disciplines and medium are entwined, visitors are engaged in all forms.

Relevant museum – is the quintessence of all described developments, outlining the main status where the museum wants to find itself. The museum is a step forward from both the "old" and the "postmodern" remains relevant and, according to Nielsen (2014, 2015), the desired result is a "transformed museum". This is a museum where interactive activities are no longer sufficient for the visitor, they want a direct impact on the learning process – a social and personal experience of visiting the museum. Thus, visitors need to be given the opportunity to shape their own stories, discover information they find interesting, design activities and exhibitions where they can share and add their knowledge and experience. This requires flexibility to engage different types of visitors: sometimes visitors can also provide expertise, sometimes social participation or digital intervention (Nielsen 2014: 27).

In conclusion, as a result of the development of the idea of new museology, a social dimension was added to exhibitions, collections and the whole museum institution (see, for example Karp and Lavine 1991; Macdonald 1998, 2002; Macdonald 2006; Marstine 2006; O'Neill 2012; Schorch and McCarthy 2020). All these concepts and processes are involved in the making of exhibitions, they affect all the tasks related to the profession of curator. These and other influences are discussed in the following subsection.

2.2 The main factors influencing museum work and changes in the profession of curator

As follows, I will look at the three main factors that have caused shifts in the museum landscape since the end of the 20th century, but especially over the last fifteen years: 1) the idea of a new museology that directed museums to face the public in a more socially responsible manner; 2) the development of scientific disciplines, which led to new research topics and methods, and caused the separation of the museum and the university; 3) the neoliberal model of governance, and the accompanying method called *new managerialism*, which is used to organize the work of the public sector.

2.2.1 Shifts in museology shaping curatorial profession

In the 1990s, when shifting from collections-centred thinking to audience needs was discussed in the American museum landscape, Stephen Weil argued that collections are a versatile tool for serving the public, not a thing in itself and "the emerging public service oriented museum must see itself not as a cause but as an instrument" ([1999] 2012: 188). Weil's argument suits for characterizing the visitor-centred turn which happened in the 1990s in Western countries. As a result of the initial eager shift to face the public's needs, the collections were marginalized. Furthermore, curators and research closely linked to the collections lost significance, and the role of curators in the institutional decision-making process decreased (McCall and Gray 2014; Ewin and Ewin 2016; Viau-Courville 2017; Stoškutė 2017). Since the first key professional in the 19th century museum was the curator (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010: 68), the collections defined the curator's identity and authority (Alberti 2012). Yet, at the end of the 20th century, the position of curator was perceived as a resistance to progress. Ever since the first significant volume on museum revolution – *The New Museology* edited by Peter Vergo (1989) the curator has been criticized as a collection-focused researcher who is unable to communicate the museum in the way that meets all needs. A contributor to Vergo's volume, Charles Saumarez Smith (1989) holds curators responsible for not addressing history in all its complexity, but instead focusing on classification and representation of collections. However, the problem had been observed much earlier. The question raised by Duncan Cameron in 1971 whether a museum is a temple or a forum contained an indication of the museum's excessive elitism, which also extended to the position of curator (Cameron 2012). Although Cameron's discussion ends with the understanding that both "temple" and "forum" belong to the museum's identity, the idea of the museum's elitism is derived from it. Another controversial problem was that curators were associated with the creation and management of colonial collections. This whole complex of issues was not beneficial for the curator's reputation. Analysing museum policy, Clive Gray (2015: 151) argues that the new museology introduced a "tradition of strong criticism of this professionally based status". Given the criticisms directed at scholarly curators in the context of the new museology, they could be expected to take a rigid stance on research topics or ignore public interest.

In order to increase communication capacity and reduce curatorial power, structural changes were undertaken in Western countries in the late 1990s. In addition to curators as specialists of disciplines related to museum collections, "new specialists" were recruited in the fields of museum education, communication and design (van Mensch 2004: 5). Representatives of new professions had to help build a bridge between society and the museum and bring fresh approaches and methods to museums (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 28). In addition to realizing their mission to be more social and communicative, museums needed 'new kinds of staff' to cope with the infiltration of business rules into museums. Moreover, the professional changes reached the management level. According to experienced museum curator and director Robert G. W. Anderson (2005: 303), directors no

longer needed the background of a researcher, but rather the skills of a Chief Executive Officer. The effect of the changes was that heads of museums distanced themselves from scholarly curatorial staff, which resulted in the decline of the position of research in the museum.

Along with the reduction in influence, a decrease in the number of curators has been pointed out, which means more responsibilities for the remaining staff (Anderson 2005; Greene 2015; Ewin and Ewin 2016). In museum work, all parts are interconnected, therefore such "resource shift limits access to collections for research purposes and reduces the incorporation of anthropological thinking into public engagement" (Greene 2015: 7). Nicholas Thomas confirms that the problem persists: "Museum restructuring has in too many places downgraded research-based curatorial practice. In many institutions, there is simply less expertise about collections, and less expertise to negotiate the challenges they raise, ranging from the complexities of provenance to ethical questions of access and interpretation." (Thomas 2020: 27)

Changes can be observed in the requirements for the profession of curator. In the job vacancies in the British *Museums Journal* from 1990 to 2005, the demand for organizational, administrative, IT and communication skills from curatorial candidates increased over the last 15 years, while the demand for research ability declined (Edwards 2007: 113). Analysing the Danish museum landscape, Susanne Krogh Jensen (2019) finds that the discourse of professional skills has changed significantly since the 1960s. Jensen points out that nowadays employer expectations on museum professionals are characterized by "the declining focus on academic skills, the increasing importance of performativity and the growing definition of personal skills" (Jensen 2019: 478).

Consequently, the profession of curator has not become extinct, but is currently changing, and trying to adapt to expectations. It can be noticed that in recent museum literature, the curator is no longer accused of colonial-mindedness, and, instead of criticism, positive examples are given of curatorial capability to share authority and re-image the museum (see, for example, contributions in Golding and Modest 2013, and in Schorch and McCarthy 2020). In order to restore the dignity of the curator's profession, new outputs are sought for the interpretation of collections and the reinvention of the link between research and exhibitions.

The contemporary curator is encouraged by Schorch, McCarthy and Dürr (2020: 9) to change the approach to the whole concept of exhibition making "by conceptualising exhibitions as *processes* to be revealed rather than *products* to be presented and experienced". Museologist Peter Bjerregaard (2019) proposes to turn exhibitions into research, comparing the process of making an exhibition with work in a laboratory, where the result may not be as expected. Moreover, Bjerregaard stresses that it is vital to understand playful, challenging and associative approaches to research if one wants to embrace exhibitions as research. Curator and theorist Simon Sheikh (2019), addressing curating and research as "an uneasy alliance" points out how "the idea on research in an academic sense, and the idea of practice in a professional sense always shift between being complementary and conflicting (Sheikh 2019: 97). Thereby Sheik (2019: 99)

distinguishes the notion "curatorial" as a form of research, which may not necessarily take the form of exhibition but "employs the thinking involved in exhibition making and researching". Thus, a theoretical basis is created to reduce the opposition between academic and museum professional practices. Based on this, curation could be considered as a special knowledge creation system.

2.2.2 Shifts in disciplines shaping curatorial profession

Museums in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries were closely intertwined with scientific disciplines and universities, which eventually made them depend on the shifts that took place in disciplines and academic landscape. Museums of science had an important position as centres for science teaching and research from the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century (Jones 2013: 716). The disciplinary specialization of museums in the 19th century is seen as part of a wider epistemological development, the formation of some collections has been part of the development of a particular discipline and has played an important role in the "constitution of scientific knowledge" (Macdonald 1998: 3). In that period, the mission of museums was to help perform scientific conceptions of "truth" and "objectivity" (ibid.). As Tony Bennet discusses in his study *The Birth of a Museum* (1995), in the mid-19th century it was research and the systematization of collections that made museums stand out from popular cabinets of curiosities, circuses, and fairs. On the same basis as museum collections were an important source of research in the 19th century, exhibitions were then seen as an integral part of conveying a "scientific message" (Macdonald 1998: 12).

While in the early stages of the evolution of scientific disciplines, museums played a key role, further development led researchers (around the middle of the 20th century) from describing and systematizing objects to new methods. Ethnologist Orvar Löfgren (2012) discusses how up to the 1960s materials were gathered to build further theories on processes of evolution and diffusion. In many European settings, the project of creating atlases of the distribution of items of culture like objects, buildings, and customs consumed a lot of energy and resources. In the 1960s, the atlas projects came under heavy criticism and disappeared. The divergence of social anthropology from physical anthropology in the UK and the development of cultural anthropology in North America reduced academic interest in object research (see Conn 2010, Herle 2016). In the late 1980s, Saumarez Smith (1989: 20) stated that as a result "museum scholarship has steadily drifted out the mainstream of research in the humanities into a methodological backwater governed by empiricism". As a consequence of such divergent developments, in Europe, the discipline of ethnology, which was increasingly interested in theoretical and intangible topics, moved from the museum to the university (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2005). The change in the relationship between museum and scholarship is acknowledged in *Key Concepts of Museology*, which states that "since a large part of the research such as was carried out in the last third of the 20th century has been moved from museums to laboratories and universities" (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010: 73). *A Practical Handbook*,

published by ICOM in 2004, addresses research to a small extent, and mainly as the resource for museum education and public service: "Research on museum collections and publication of the findings provides a particular type of access to the collections, and allows museums to address their education and interpretation mission" (Ladkin 2004: 29). In the given examples, in the context of the museum research is primarily considered to be popular, supportive, and applicable.

Similar shifts occurred in natural history museums, where research and exhibition were historically rooted in collections. Steven Allison-Bunnell (1998: 77) claims that even though in the 1990s a considerable amount of research was still conducted in natural history museums, technical research was almost entirely separated from the public exhibitions at many institutions. Such a shift began in the 1960s, because "university-based laboratory research programs enshrined the definition of biology experimentally and mechanically-oriented, precluding the descriptive view of naturalists as objects as knowledge" (Allison-Bunnell 1998: 93). At the end of the 20th century, as museums began to lose their role as scientific experts, they found a new role in mediating the scientific world to the public (Macdonald 1998: 13). However, natural museums tend to be more conservative. For example, the Finnish Museum of Natural History, as a university research institution, mainly served a variety of academic needs. Thus, exhibitions and publishing policies were not influenced by public interest ideas. As a result, the professionals of a natural history museum were not affected by the same goals as the rest of the museum sector; museum professionals were university staff who had a responsibility to teach and work with students, and museum collections served as a tool for this work (Pettersson 2011: 278). In Estonia today, the same can be said about the University of Tartu Natural History Museum, which participates in international research projects and whose director is one of the most cited scientists in the world in its field.

In European ethnology, a renewed interest in the materiality of everyday life appeared in the 1980s–1990s, mainly through an interest in the study of consumption (Löfgren 2012: 172). Biographies, both things and people, and the ways people tell their stories through things became a tool for exploring everyday life. This approach did not yet bring museums and academia closer together. In the years 2000–2010, the interest of ethnologists, anthropologists and historians in the artefacts kept in the museum as a source material has increased again (Greene 2015; Hood 2009). Thus, the earlier material turn in ethnology (Löfgren 2012) has probably reached or is about to reach museums. From the 1990s, the history of collecting became an important part of historical research, exploring topics such as the origins of the Western collection tradition, its psychological background, gender bias, and memory (Hood 2009: 323). The study of the formation of museum collections is an important step in the contextualization of collections, without which objects cannot be interpreted. In the 21st century, the study of material culture has become so extensive that it is no longer an unknown subject. This trend is characterized by object researcher and a historian Adrienne Hood (2009: 315) as "for so long an academic orphan, material culture seems to be turning into a star pupil".

Recent studies point to the need of rehabilitation of the collaboration between the curator of the museum and the academic researcher, as well as the resumption of the institutional joint operation. Canadian museologist Mathias Viau-Courville argues that in recent years, Quebec museum (*Musée de la civilisation*) has re-engaged museum researchers more in curatorship of exhibitions to increase the study of collections and emphasize the importance of researchers in the design of exhibitions. To facilitate this, the research division in the organizational structure was moved from the exhibitions department to the collections department (Viau-Courville 2017: 27). The double agency of research in museum institution has recently been referred to by the Icelandic museologist Ólöf Gerður Sigfúsdóttir (2019). She draws attention to a recurring theme in museum institutions, which contrasts research with other key components of professional museum work and advocates museums' simultaneous impact in the fields of science and culture, which is one of the fundamental qualities of museum research output, making it unique among conventional research practices (Sigfúsdóttir 2019). German museum anthropologist Philipp Schorch and co-authors believe that "the historical gap between the university and the museum is closing up" (Schorch *et al.* 2020: 7). They are considering that "anthropology does offer tools and methods that can critically analyse, revise and galvanise curatorial theory and practice" and "museums are re-engaging with anthropology, and curators employing its methods to reform their practice" (ibid.: 7). Furthermore, British museum anthropologist Nicholas Thomas (2020: 27) considers partnerships between collections staff, university-based researchers and community members are vital to "sustain understandings of the present and potential significances of remarkable expressions of past human creativity".

2.2.3 Shifts in economy and governmental management shaping the curatorial profession

Certainly, the idea of new museology and development of the disciplines are not the only driving forces behind changes in curatorial work. Museum policies are largely influenced by the socio-economic situation of a country and the dominant economic policy and ideology. Since the 1980s–1990s, neoliberalism has become the hegemonic discourse in Western countries (Olssen and Peters 2005: 314). The era of neoliberal politics is characterized by the supremacy of financial capitalism, and its main tools for shaping the society are the competition inherent to the free market and economic globalization (Sevänen and Häyrynen 2018: 6). In the context of this model, the production of goods and services is primarily the responsibility of enterprise, not the state. At the same time, by emphasizing global market competition, states act as competitive entities in a free market environment. Researchers of cultural and economic policies, Erkki Sevänen and Simo Häyrynen (2018: 20) point out that such an approach includes a "new kind of *economic nationalism*" that has come to replace protectionism. Competitiveness is enhanced by each individual country in two ways: 1) by raising the competi-

tiveness of domestic enterprises in global markets and 2) by shaping the national social system and environment as an attractive place of business for domestic and foreign enterprises and investors. Thus, "capitalist markets are seen as self-evident ways of organizing social action" and neoliberal politicians try to shape society as much as possible to meet the competitiveness needs of the country's economy (ibid.: 23).

Neoliberalism and the market economy affect the museum institution in a similar way to higher education institutions. Governmental management directs cultural, educational and research institutions towards applicability, efficiency and gaining economic benefits. Arguments for this have been taken from *New Public Management* policy (or *new managerialism*) which assumes that public sector organizations need to become more accountable, more efficient, more entrepreneurial and applies methods for measuring the performance of public services (Osborne 2006, Guthrie *et al.* 2014). Although new managerialism has its own characteristics in varied contexts and across countries, the similarities include a decrease in organizational autonomy, an increase in weight of the reporting system and a market orientation (Lusiani and Zan 2011).

As there is some overlapping in the identity of academic staff and museum curators, I will provide results of the effects of neoliberal governance on the identity of academics studied in the 2000s. As the market pressure is constantly reshaping the activities to be undertaken, neoliberal policies for academics are accompanied by a change in professional identity, and there is even talk of a de-professionalisation effect (Olssen and Peters 2005: 325). The idealization of corporate efficiency and the shift of the institutional focus in the academic landscape to global competitiveness has, among other things, led to a decline in academic autonomy (see, Harris 2005, Olssen and Peters 2005; Lynch 2006, Archer 2008; Billot 2010,). As sociologist Louise Archer sums up, there are several studies, which conclude that the entry of "audit, markets, surveillance and managerialism" in higher education has negative consequences for academia (Archer 2008: 267). Furthermore, academics in universities are concerned about the shift in objectives, as governance methods have too much influence on research directions. Jennie Billot argues in the New Zealand context that "an academic identity is influenced in its construction to achieve governmental and managerial aims, rather than primarily scholarly objectives" (2010: 718). Changed conditions affect the identity and emotions of researchers, the reconstruction of identity has caused academic staff self-questioning and feelings of fear and anxiety (Billot 2010: 710). Similar to curators who try to find a balance between the demands of research and communication, academics struggle to attain a balance of research and teaching. Academics find that many administrative tasks are handled at the expense of quality. At the forefront of institutional requirements is an individual evaluation system, which is reducing collaborative and supportive relationships with colleagues (Billot 2010: 719).

Since neoliberal governmentality handles the education process as an input-output system, equating it to economic production (Olssen and Peters 2005: 324), a similar approach has been extended to museums (see, McPherson 2006). To

make them more efficient, business management models are implemented when evaluating their performance. While the importance of the mediation function is often justified by the increasing openness of museums, the focus on mediation is also the result of following the logic of the market in museum work (Jensen 2019: 474). Marketing is today seen as a natural part of museum activities (see Ekström 2020). Proponents of "a leisure experience" suggest that traditional practices should not be abandoned, but "business like" services should be added (Barnes and McPherson 2019: 259). However, the expansion of services affects the tasks of curators. In line with higher education, where competitive management describes more and more precisely the workload of academics and the content of courses reducing thereby the traditional autonomy of teaching and scholarly work (Olssen and Peters 2005: 325), market-driven decisions are constantly reshaping the priorities of museum activities.

In the context of neoliberal cultural policy, museums' budgets do not consist exclusively of government funding. Increasingly, the budget must be filled by the museums' own revenues. Policy makers direct museums to act in contradictory circumstances: to follow the commercial aims and to perform an educational function increasingly called "edutainment" (see Anderson 2005: 307). When the 19th century museums began to differ from fairs due their scientific nature, as Tony Bennet (1995) points out, from the end of the 20th century the fiscal pressure once again led museums "to imitate rather than distinguish themselves from places of popular assembly" (Bennet 1995: 104). In a way, we can here observe the development spiral, which has returned to a starting point.

Market-driven priorities are clearly reflected in research and exhibition policies. In *Key Concepts of Museology,* Desvallées and Mairesse formulate the effect of the market on research-based exhibition making in museums, as follows: "Aided by market mechanisms which have favoured temporary exhibitions to the detriment of permanent ones, part of the fundamental research has been replaced by a more applied research, particularly in the preparation of temporary exhibitions" (2010: 74). Consequently, for temporary exhibitions, curators will not be able to do the same in-depth preparatory work that lasts for years as for a permanent exhibition. In practice (Article II), temporary exhibitions are often based on an intriguing idea and effective design with the aim of increasing visitor numbers, and the authors of the exhibitions are often not the museum staff but external curators.

Desvallées and Mairesse (2010) draw attention to the changing discourse of museum science in the basic texts of the museum landscape. The most important is the current ICOM definition of museums from 2007. According to the ICOM Statutes, adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria, on 24 August, 2007[7]: "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment*".* As Desval-

[7] ICOM Museum definition: https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/ (accessed February 2, 2021).

lées and Mairesse (2010: 73) point out, ICOM's previous definition of museums, which was valid until 2007, considered museum research "as the driving force behind its functioning". Thus, the previous definition more strongly addressed the basic importance of scholarly work in museums.

A cautionary note made by the long-serving director of the Glenbow Museum in Canada Robert R. Janes serves to sum up this theme. Janes (2009: 184) points out that "marketplace ideology, capitalist values and corporate self-interest are clearly not the way forward, having conclusively demonstrated their financial fragility and moral bankruptcy". Moreover, Janes calls museums to turn away from "the belief that unlimited economic growth and unconstrained consumption are essential to our well-being" (Janes 2009: 94). While academic researchers perceive pressure on efficiency and competitiveness, museum researchers in addition witness museum science moving away from academia due to pressure to comply with the demands of the leisure market. Thus, operating as a credible educational or even research institution in competition with the entertainment industry is a controversial challenge for curators as researchers at museums. A more detailed overview of cultural policy in the context of specific countries can be found in Chapter 3 discussing the cultural and museum policies of Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

2.3 Perception of paradigm shift in the "backstage"

The research objective of how paradigm shifts are perceived in the "backstage" combines the research of museums and organizations. While this topic has so far received little coverage in museology, it has been studied more by sociologists who specialize in organizations. As Morse, Bethany and Richardson (2018: 112) point out when introducing the *Museum and Society* special edition, "museological techniques and practices and how these can be understood as part of how museums function, as well as part of the wider ideological and political apparatus of museums, have been relatively overlooked within the new museology". Furthermore, Morse *et al.* (2018: 114) find "there has been a tendency to focus more on the 'front stage' of the museum, with lesser attention to its backrooms and back stage, with the exceptions of collection stores and archives".

The above does not mean that the "backstage" has not been explored at all in museum studies, indeed the expression "behind the scenes" refer to an ethnographic study carried out by anthropologist and museologist Sharon Macdonald (2002) at the Science Museum in London. Macdonald investigated the diverse hopes and ambitions of the staff during the making of an exhibition, which was supposed to bring science and the public closer to each other. Her fieldwork space was thereby the museum creating an exhibition, and she was not a museum employee herself. The time frame of the late 1990s, in which the fieldwork took place, marked the start of the debate in the UK "over public accountability, consumerism, the role of national cultural institutions, knowledge, authority and authorship" (Macdonald 2002: 3). Thus, Macdonald found herself in the midst of

a change in professional identity, a change in attitudes towards collections and the public – most of these discussions are reflected in her study. It was also the beginning of the era of extended exhibition teams, a significant turn that is addressed in the volume *The Politics of Display*, compiled by Macdonald (1998).

In Macdonald's footsteps, social anthropologist Jennie Morgan (2013; 2018) has investigated UK's galleries' and museums' daily practice of exhibition making in the 2010s from the viewpoint of organizational anthropology. Analysing the experiences of ongoing changes and the perceived sense of professional self of curatorial staff, Morgan (2013: 168) reveals how curators are exploring reconfigured organizational constellations and in doing so, "they reassemble (or negotiate and adapt in practice) a professional identity that is "complex and multifaceted"".

My dissertation is directly linked to the topics covered by Macdonald and Morgan, because in a way, the same shifts have in the 2010s reached the countries which I study. Although recruitment of "new professionals" and other processes influencing curators began in the UK about 30 years ago and, as I referred above, the results of the process have been analysed, it has also been emphasized by researchers (see Morse *et al.* 2018) that it has been done insufficiently. This means that it is even more important for other regions where the transition period is still ongoing. There are a few studies that tackle the impact of the changes on the work environment; for example, recent organizational changes and staff relationships in Polish museums (Nieroba 2018), and how the structure of the museum affects the fulfilment of the mission at the Reykjavik Art Museum in Iceland (Kristinsdóttir and Hafsteinsson 2019).

While Macdonald and Morgan examine the perception of changes at workplace by curators through specific exhibition cases, sociologists of organizational research have a broader view, examining the museum institution at a more general, organizational research level. About a decade ago, research questions gradually began to cover the consequences of putting the idea of a new museum into practice on the museum's work environment. Organization sociologists noticed that changes have affected staff relationships, and issues of power and authority have become more apparent at the workplace. Among the first, British sociologist Vikki McCall and cultural policy researcher Clive Gray (2014: 24) argued that "the differences between members of staff need to be increasingly recognized when attempting to understand how the sector functions". They began to empirically examine whether museums are still dominated by a centralized source of power based on professional qualifications and experience, or whether power is dispersed among several internal actors representing different interests. McCall and Gray (2014) have contributed to the study of the staff's self-perception, revealing the polarisation within museums, especially between managers and traditional curatorial roles. Secondly, Gray and McCall (2018) place the museum institution in the general context of organization research by examining the bureaucratic nature of museums. Furthermore, while McCall (2016) explores the gap between museum policy and practice, Gray (2015) covers the neglected field of studies about the political nature of museums and their implications. Gray also (2016) pays attention to the museum structure, agency and museum policies.

At the same time organization theorist Anwar Tlili (2016) examines the policy and organizational context within which the roles of museums have expanded in the UK. Tlili addresses the impact of the social inclusion policy (2008), and the new management policy as well as the regime of accountability in the museum sector (2014). As Tlili (2014) advocates the "form of creativity specific to museum work", he finds that creativity is contradicted by the conformism fostered by new managerialism. Tlili (2016) also highlights that creativity in museum work requisites craft knowledge that distinguishes museum work from many others. He finds that this creativity has not been sufficiently recognized or theorized.

Going beyond the UK, there are some examples from Canada of research into the museum organization. Robert R. Janes (2013) analyses his own experience as a museum director managing cardinal changes in the 1990s in the Glenbow Museum. Janes openly reflects on management techniques that were or could not be applied to organizational change in museums, assuring that the team-based approach may give beneficial outcome in the long run, even if it is not the easiest way for those involved.

Canadian art historian and museologist Mathieu Viau-Courville (2017) analyses the gap in collaboration between the traditional scholar-curators and project managers at the Quebec Museum (*Musée de la civilisation*) since the late 1980s. Whereas Janes does not pay special attention to the curator working in a museum, Viau-Courville focuses on the career of a scholar in a museum that is becoming project-based and social-themes-centric. In the 1990s, when project managers replaced museum researchers in making exhibitions, academic researchers were hired on a contract basis to produce exhibition texts, and they had little influence on the exhibition concept, which was the responsibility of the project manager (Viau-Courville 2017: 17). Viau-Courville highlights that such exhibition production often relies on the content shaped by the project manager who asks conservators "to include artefacts in order to illustrate the set narrative and educators to enhance visitor experience". Finally designers, who are unfamiliar with the topic, create the exhibition's scenography based on their own view. Viau-Courville (2017: 28) concludes that this type of production has led to "exhibitions whose 'voice' is primarily that of the project manager and designer". Eventually this is a "departure from interdisciplinarity and multivocality, so essential to socially responsible museology" (ibid.: 26).

Viau-Courville's discussion resonates with the production models of the exhibition proposed in Article II. Despite the 20–30-year distance, a similar issue is currently relevant, especially in the case of Estonia. In the context of this dissertation, it is also relevant that the shortcomings experienced in the exhibition production model presented by Viau-Courville have led to some changes made in Canadian museums in the second half of the 2010s. According to Viau-Courville (2017: 30) the research department has been brought closer to the museum's collections department which is an attempt to strengthen the study of collections and to reconcile exhibitions with the collections. Some other organizational arrangements such as "(re)hiring Ph.D. holders as permanent staff" have been conducted to reconcile academic with museum practices (Viau-Courville

2017: 30). Besides, the terms of the project manager's role have now been defined much more precisely which reinforce participatory projects and give greater voice to the communities (ibid.: 32).

Coming closer to the region under study, that despite trying to find relevant research, it must be said that the perception of a paradigm shift by museum professionals has been a neglected field of research in the Baltic states and Finland. In Lithuania, doctoral dissertations in museology mostly address the themes of communication, education, and public involvement (see the full list in Keršytė 2016: 16). In the Estonian context, popular themes of museum studies are: visitors, auditoriums, target groups, exhibitions, museum education, collections, documentation, digitization, conservation, institutional history, management, marketing, sales, communication, and involvement (ICOM Estonia website: list of studies on museology). Four dissertations on museums have been defended at the Institute of Journalism and Communication of the University of Tartu. Krista Lepik analyses cultural participation and visitor-related power relations in Estonian museums and libraries (Lepik 2013). Johannes Saar examines the rhetoric of press communication of the Estonian Art Museum (Saar 2018). More precisely, Saar looks at the contemporary public and self-image of Estonia's central art museum in the light of postcolonial research concepts, such as cultural self-colonization and Western cultural hegemony. Linda Lotina (2016) conceptualizes the ways of engagement in Latvian museums. Although her focus is on how museums understand the engagement of auditoriums (both on-site and online), she does not examine internal working life but external activities, and museum-audience relationships. As an exception, the dissertation of Taavi Tatsi (2013) clearly reaches to the backrooms of the museum, dealing with "identity struggles of museum professionals". Tatsi's research is framed by "transformations of museum-embedded cultural expertise" and partly follows the discourse on the critique of the professional status of curators introduced by the new museology, which was pointed out by Clive Gray (2015: 151, see above in this chapter). Tatsi as a researcher plays a double role: while working in the museum, firstly as exhibition manager, then as a curator, he conducts participatory observation, using working meetings and roundtable debriefings as sources. Thus, Tatsi's research is a vivid example of studying a museum's work life from the inside.

Of the Finnish doctoral candidates, I consider ethnologist Inkeri Hakamies thematically closest to my research. Hakamies studies Finnish museum history to find out how social practices in the museum field have been adapted and changed. She analyses interviews with Finnish museum professionals, conducted as part of a national museum history project in 2005–2011, and focuses on the concept of "real museum work" (see Hakamies 2017, 2019). Hakamies offers a retrospective view of the first decade of the 2000s, which is largely the starting point for the changes I discuss, a link to which is given in Article I. The concept of the "real museum work(er)" proposed by Hakamies is similar to my approach to the classical curator.

3. IMPACT OF RELEVANT POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUSEUM SECTOR IN FINLAND AND THE BALTIC STATES

As the main questions of this dissertation address the changes in the perception of the curator's role within certain regional frames, it is essential to look at the regional context influenced by the country specific politics and policies that affect museums. Clearly, how changes in the museum paradigm affect the professional identity and motivation of a curator, and how curators address or articulate problems, largely depends on the context. Developments in the sector may be the result of more or less conscious policies, affecting the workforce in the sector. Therefore, in this chapter, I discuss national economic and cultural policies, museum policies, educational and research policies, and training of museum staff, which together provide the necessary context for the conclusions of the dissertation.

3.1 Economic contexts of cultural and museum policies

National cultural policy traditionally involves public financial support to museums, visual arts, performing arts, historic preservation, creative writing, and poetry (Mulcahy 2006: 321). To obtain an overview of the cultural policy of a country and more specifically the museum policy, one cannot ignore the socio-economic situation of the country and the dominant economic policy ideology. Although neighbouring countries, the historical background in Finland and the Baltic states is somewhat different, and until the early 1990s different economic policies were followed. For almost 50 years, the Baltic states were incorporated into the socialist economic and social model established in the Soviet Union, whereas Finland operated in the market economy where social policy was guided by the Nordic welfare state principles.

Today, all four countries operate in the capitalist free market economy. The capitalist model of society has undergone developments at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, which have led from the "organized" or "social capitalism" of the 1970s and 1980s to the era of neoliberal politics (Sevänen and Häyrynen 2018: 4). The Baltic states and Finland were affected by two major shifts in global economic and social policy in the 1980s and 1990s. First, Europe and North America began to move from a traditional welfare state to a competitive market-based society after the 1980s, and then, in the 1990s, the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe switched from a planned economy to a market economy. Finnish researchers Sevänen and Häyrynen (2018: 16) who have studied the impact of globalization and marketization on national cultural politics, point out that during recent decades, several cultural institutions have been privatized in European and North American countries. In addition to the privatization and transformation into (not always economically successful) businesses, the current model assumes that public cultural institutions obtain sponsorship money from the private sector.

However, alongside the Western European and North American models, where financial capitalism increasingly dominates cultural life, Nordic cultural policy has remained more conservative. The concept of a "general welfare program" includes fundamental principles such as freedom of expression, equality in the dissemination of cultures and intercultural democracy (Häyrynen 2018: 156). Despite the global trends of the 1980s and 1990s, the Nordic countries, including Finland, did not radically change the volume of public support for their welfare state tradition and culture. However, there have been such manifestations of Finnish cultural policy that are in line with global developments since the 2000s. Emphasis is placed on the importance of marketing and managerialism that should make the public sector more cost-effective (Kangas 2001, Häyrynen 2018). When an alternative to state-supported cultural policy was sought in Finland in the early 2000s, the hope was to combine culture and the market economy, including sponsorship money. At that time, Finnish cultural policy researcher Anita Kangas (2001: 65) maintained that in the case of Finland it was difficult to see the market as a generator of cultural activities. Kangas relied on historical experience, according to which the role of the market in supporting culture in Finland has not been very prominent, as the rise of the middle class has resulted from the development of the public sector and not from a strong business sector (ibid.). As will be explained below, there was a similar hope on sponsorship money in the Baltics, which did not really materialize.

In contrast to the Nordic states, the former European post-socialist countries moved to a market economy rapidly and in a straightforward manner in the 1990s. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland in particular are called model countries where the liberal market economy's "crude version" was implemented (Sevänen and Häyrynen 2018: 14). Often the economic analysts use the term 'neoliberal Baltic capitalist model' to highlight the economic model of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (Norkus 2011: 24). Lithuanian sociologist Zenonas Norkus (2011: 24) claims that according to the overwhelming opinion of experts, Estonia represents the clearest case of the implementation of a liberal market economy among the countries of the Central European and Baltic region. Based on the above, one can assume that economic effects on cultural policy are also "the crudest" in Estonia.

The cultural system of the Soviet Union, of which the Baltic states were part after World War II until 1991, was ideologically guided, top-down, hierarchical, highly institutionalized and a centralized system (Kulbok-Lattik and Lüüs 2013). Under the Soviet socialist cultural policy, the state had subsidized all cultural activities. But during the transition years (1991–2004), a key goal of cultural policy in the Baltic states was the decentralization of the funding system. The new system prioritised the redistribution of financial and managerial responsibilities between the levels of government. Decentralization of funding was intended to reduce the role of the state in shaping cultural policy and to give responsibility for allocating grants to cultural experts (Kulbok-Lattik and Čopič 2018: 198).

Some cultural institutions were privatized in the Baltic states during the post-Soviet transition period, funding for culture was decentralized and new legislation

was introduced; however the countries were so poor the market economy rules did not work in cultural management (Sevänen and Häyrynen 2018: 19, Kulbok-Lattik and Lüüs 2013). By the end of the 1990s, the strict tracing of the neoliberal tendencies of West-European and North American countries, had a very painful effect on the cultural institutions of the economically poor Baltic states. Initially many post-socialist countries, including the Baltics, had great hopes for sponsorship in funding culture. However, the opening enthusiasm for private investment in the 1990s was followed by the bitter experience of unrealistic expectations (Kulbok-Lattik and Čopič 2018: 199). Eventually the situation was perceived as a threat to the existence of institutions that created national identity and professional culture (ibid.: 207). Therefore, in the next decade, cultural policy became more conservative. The professional cultural institutions of the Baltic states retained their main functions and budgets because they were considered to be representatives of national identity. Based on this tendency, Kulbok-Lattik describes Estonia's cultural policy of the second half of 1990s and first half of 2000s as elitist-conservational (2008: 141).

As Sevänen and Häyrynen (2018: 20) point out, two trends – raising the state's competitiveness and practicing economic patriotism – largely shape national politics, including cultural politics. Thus, support for professional culture is nationally preferred because a high level of professional culture is one indicator of competitiveness.[8] Although liberal rhetoric has prevailed in the Baltic states throughout independence, both before and after joining the European Union in 2004, networks of large cultural institutions aimed at strengthening national identity have been maintained (Kulbok-Lattik and Čopič 2018: 198, 208). It has been argued that in practice liberal discourse may not be applied to policy-making in Baltic states as much as it is reflected in cultural policy documents (ibid.: 198). However, at least in the case of Estonia, the shift towards a marketing-based cultural policy has taken place since the second half of the 2000s, when cultural institutions, such as theatres and museums, began to be transformed into foundations. The Estonian Human Development Report highlights that in the conditions of a market economy, by the middle of the 2010s, the position of culture has shifted from the centre of social life to the field of "merely leisure activities", and cultural stratification has increased, as a growing trend, high culture only affects the more educated part of society (Lauristin 2015: 237).

At the turn of the millennium, a global turning point took place in computer technology and the Internet. This has led to new cultural forms and influenced cultural creation processes and artists (Laak and Viires 2015: 227). At the beginning of the 21st century, Anita Kangas named investing in new technologies as the key to adapting the cultural policy of the Finnish welfare state to the new era (Kangas 2001: 75). Similarly, Finland and the Baltic states have moved towards an open and information society in the 2000s: this includes the digitization of the

[8] For example, Latvian Cultural Policy Guidelines for 2014–2020 clearly proceeds from neoliberalist politics, in which cultural sector is increasingly influenced by a strive towards competitiveness (Creative Latvia 2014).

state-run library and museum sector and ensuring access to information. The impact of the spread of digital culture in 2010s has been controversial. Digitization of cultural heritage, which is an important agenda in all the countries concerned, has enriched the cultural space, broadened the dissemination and the use of cultural heritage (Laak and Viires 2015: 234). On the other hand, the boundaries between professional and amateur culture have become blurred, the hierarchical relationships between the cultural phenomena have disappeared, and cultural phenomena are moving beyond the borders of national culture (ibid.: 227). To some extent, this shift has also marginalized professional artists and cultural workers.

In the conditions of a market economy, artists and creativity are hampered by an excessive project-based approach to culture as well as the income gap of cultural workers and artists compared to specialists in other fields (Lauristin 2015: 237). Research has highlighted in the contexts of both Estonia (Lauristin 2015: 237) and Finland (Häyrynen 2018: 169) that the small size of the domestic cultural market and relatively low volume of cultural exports affect the artists' ability to secure themselves financially by selling their works. Similar circumstances are also present in Latvia and Lithuania, which makes the cultural life of all of them highly dependent on the national cultural policy.

In general, the cultural policies in the four studied countries – Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – are not much different in the 21st century. All of them still have a tradition of financially supporting institutions operating in the administrative field of the corresponding ministry. The changes in Finland in 2010s have not been as abrupt as in the Baltic states in the 1990s and the centralist model of cultural policy has not been replaced. Lately only some elements of the welfare state rhetoric have been reinterpreted, according to Häyrynen (2018: 168), the political and economic agenda "now emphasizes growth, productivity, and efficiency more than redistribution, equality, and security".

In the following section, I will discuss in more detail the elements of cultural policy that concerns museums. Museums in the Baltic states and Finland are expected to contribute to the cultural industry and especially to cultural tourism. The effects of new museology, changes in disciplines and neoliberal economic policies create the background for change.

3.2 Museum policies

In the Baltic states, changes in the museum sector began after 1991, when the independence of the countries was restored.[9] The impact of the Soviet period on the museum sector was marginalizing: low wages and unrenovated buildings, limited exhibition space, absence of new museum buildings was the material expression of the sector's insignificance. ideologically, museums were pressured to act as mediators of Soviet propaganda, and local history had to be presented only in the context of Soviet history. In the early 1990s, getting rid of Soviet ideological influence created the preconditions and motivation to be receptive to new Western ideas. At the same time, the weakness of the material base put museums in a most vulnerable position after the restoration of independence. The hard economic situation of the 1990s exacerbated the difficult position and normalized both low wages and the archaic working environment for the museum sector for at least two decades.[10]

Although the material conditions remained unchanged for years, international communication initiated by the museum staff to educate themselves and communicate with Western colleagues became more active.[11] In a few years, the museum landscape was reorganized following the example of Western museum practice and theories: creating legislation, organizing, and joining an international cooperation network (ICOM, NEMO –*Network of European Museum Organisations*, European Museum Forum, etc.). Since 2004, museum staff from the Baltic states have met once a year at the Baltic School of Museology. It was launched at the initiative of Latvia in cooperation with the Ministries of Culture of all three Baltic states, the then National Government of Latvian Museums and

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[9] Some published research about the history of museums in Finland and Baltic states: Nastazija Keršytė's (2016) monograph about the history of Lithuanian museums, doctoral dissertations by Piret Õunapuu (2011) and Marleen Metslaid (2016) about the early years of the Estonian National Museum; Mariann Raisma's articles about Estonian museum policy in 1919-1924 (Raisma 2011), and Estonian museums in the end of 1980s and beginning of 1990s (Raisma 2009, 2017); article about history of national museums in Finland by Susanna Pettersson (2011), extensive volume about Finnish museums history compiled by Susanna Pettersson and Pauliina Kinanen (2010); about history of national museums in Latvia give an overview Toms Ķencis and Kristin Kuutma (2011). Rindzevičiūtė (2011), Keršytė (2016), Kuutma (2011), Astel (2009), and Konksi (2009) discuss how collections-, exhibitions and research policies were reorganized in the Baltic states according to the Soviet model.

[10] Because almost no new museums were built during the Soviet era, this issue became topical in the newly independent Estonia. *The Foundations of the Cultural Policy of the Estonian State* approved by the Parliament in 1998 provided some clarity. This cultural policy document declared an action plan for the construction of two new museum buildings – for the Estonian Art Museum and the Estonian National Museum. While the design of the art museum started in 2002 and the new building was opened in 2006, the new building of the Estonian National Museum was only completed ten years later. About the complexity of reaching the new ENM building and the accompanying debates, see Kuutma and Kroon (2012).

[11] The museums of the Baltic states had previous contacts with Western colleagues and researchers, partly thanks to exile researchers.

ICOM (Sedleniece 2020). Once a year, a week-long training is offered there, bringing together professionals from various countries and exchanging experiences, which is linked to the theory of museum practice (see Jirgensone 2015).

At the same time, there was no such a sharp turn in the Finnish museum landscape, whose museum policy will be discussed below. As follows, the most important legislation and organizations that represent the common part of the museum policy of the Baltic states and Finland are presented.

The Museums Act regulates the relationship between the state and society in the field of museums. The Act defines the role of museums and defines some important concepts of the sector, the bases for the management of museum collections and other activities. Common practice is that changes in museum policy are reflected through the renewal of museums acts.

In Finland, the Museums Act and Decree, which defined the role and funding of regional museums, were adopted in 1989 (Vilkuna 2018: 97). Already in 1992, the new Finnish Museums Act was completed, it was updated in 2005 and 2015 (Vilkuna 2018), and last amended in 2019 (New Museums Act… 2020). Lithuania was the first of the Baltic states to adopt the Museums Act in 1995 (Keršytė 2016: 260), act was last amended in 2016 (LitMuseums Act website). Estonia received the first Museums Act in 1996 (Kuutma and Kroon 2012: 73), the 2019 version of the new Act passed in 2013 is currently valid (MuuS 2013 website). Latvia adopted the Museums Act in 1997 (Garjāns 2015: 136), which was last amended in 2017 (LatMuseums Act website).

The Museum Association is a professional organization that unites museum staff to protect their interests, share information and provide training. The Finnish Museum Association has existed for the longest time – it was founded in 1923 (FinMA website). The Finnish Museum Association is currently a supporting organization at the *Museovirasto* – Finnish Heritage Agency (Vilkuna 2018: 96). The Estonian Museum Association was founded in 1988 (EstMA website), the Latvian Museum Association was founded in 1992 (LatMA website), and the Lithuanian Museum Association in 1995 (LitMA website; LitMuseums website).

It can be expected that the focus of the Museum Association's interests reflects the current topics for the museum professionals of the respective country. Based on this assumption, the main ambitions of the Estonian Museum Association are to value the work of a museum specialist in society and to have a say in shaping the legislation concerning museums (EMÜ Arengukava 2017). The goal of the Latvian Museum Association is to represent the interests of museums at the national level by informing both state and local government agencies and the business community about the museum's problems (Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014: 6). The Association of Lithuanian Museums addresses the development of the competencies of museum staff and the close links between education and the museum as key objectives (LitMA website). In Finland, where there is also a strong trade union to protect the interests of museum staff, the museum association sees itself as the initiator and coordinator of various projects and marketing campaigns, as well as conducting various research in the field of museums (FinMA website).

The **International Association of Museums** (ICOM) was founded in 1946. Its primary mission was to promote the educational role of museums and exhibitions, the international circulation of cultural property, and the conservation and restoration of cultural property (ICOM website: history). The Finnish ICOM National Committee was established at the same time as ICOM and was officially registered in 1976 (Vilkuna 2018: 101). ICOM National Committees were established in Estonia in 1992, in Latvia in 1993 and in Lithuania in 1996 (see, ICOM Estonia website; ICOM Latvia website; ICOM Lithuania website).

The Council of Museums has been established in each of the Baltic states under the Ministry of Culture. It functions as an expert consultative institution, which participates in the development of the sector's strategy. The members and activities of the Museum Council are regulated in the acts of museums and by regulations of the respective Ministry. For example, in Estonia, the council consists of representatives of museums and their founders, as well as other experts in the field of museums. The Museum Council makes proposals and submits expert opinions on issues arising in the field of museums (MuuS 2013 website). The Latvian Council of Museums is also a consultative body that promotes cooperation between institutions related to the sector and participates in the preparation and adoption of decisions related to the strategy in the field *(*Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014). According to the Lithuanian Museums Act, the Ministry of Culture outlines the strategy for the activities of national and state museums, while the Museum Council is an expert and consultant on the implementation of museum policy (Compendium Lithuania 3.1; LitMuseums Act website). In Finland the Museum Advisory Board was active in 1973–1993 (Vilkuna 2018: 97). Nowadays the Finnish Heritage Agency[12] is the main expert on museums for the Ministry of Education and Culture.

In terms of administration and museum policy management, the museum sector traditionally belongs under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture – it is so in the case in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In Finland, museums are under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Nonetheless, there are museums everywhere that, due to their profile, are under the administration of other ministries. Next, the museum policy of each country is examined separately.

3.2.1 Museum policy in Latvia

There are state *(valsts)*, municipal (*pašvaldības)*, autonomous (*autonoms*) and private museums (*privāts muzejs*) in the Latvian museum sector. According to the Act of Museums in Latvia museums are divided into public and private museums depending on their founder (LatMuseums Act website). State, municipal, and autonomous museums are public. Private museums are founded by

[12] *Museovirasto* in Finnish, National Board of Antiquities in English until 2018, since then Finnish Heritage Agency in English (Vilkuna 2018: 96).

associations, foundations, companies or their structural units. Two museums among the state museums (the Latvian National Museum of Art and the Latvian National Museum of History) have the status of a national museum (*nacionālais muzejs*) (Sedleniece 2020). The Act of Museums states that the national museum has four key characteristics: 1) its collections have the largest scope both regionally and chronologically; 2) it conducts research of collections and other research in its discipline; 3) it permits and fosters accessibility of collections and use for education; 4) it is a leading institution in the museum field. The status is given by the Ministry of Culture and Cabinet of Ministers.[13] Such a national museum "in the Latvian case it is a mix of institutional status and the mission" as defined by Toms Ķikuts from the Latvian National Museum of History.[14]

Due to the economic recession, the Latvian museum sector was reorganized in 2010–2011, reducing the number of institutions in order to keep costs down (Sedleniece 2020). Since the 2010s, coordination of the field of museums is performed by the Museums Division of the Culture Policy Department of the Ministry of Culture. Initially, between 1998 and 2010, the sector was organized by the State Administration of Museums (*Muzeju valsts pārvalde*). The strategy of museums points to the abolition of the State Administration of Museums as a shortcoming, which led to excessive decentralization and hinders the implementation of a coherent cultural policy in the Latvian museum sector (Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014: 7).

In 2017, there were 77 municipal museums, 15 state museums, 6 accredited private and 10 accredited autonomous museums, and about 200 private sector non-accredited museums and collections in Latvia. Eight museums and four branches of the museums established by the state are subordinated to the Ministry of Culture, some are also subordinated to other ministries that correspond to the profile of the museum. (Sedleniece 2020)

In Latvia, the Ministry of Culture implements museum policy through accreditation. This means that state- and municipally funded museums must be accredited from 1999 onwards. In order to be accredited, a museum must meet certain standards (Sedleniece 2020). Upon passing the initial assessment, museums are granted a 5-year accreditation, and after subsequent re-assessments, museum can be accredited for 5–10 years. In the Ministry's view, accreditation is the most important tool for supervising the sector to stimulate museums to improve their performance (Garjāns 2015: 136).

Accredited museums are required to report annual statistics on all areas of the museum's work. Since 2012, statistics on Latvian museums have been compiled on the *Latvia's Cultural Data portal* (https://kulturasdati.lv/lv) (Sedleniece 2020). The submitted statistical data are the basis for the Ministry to evaluate the implementation of the museum sector strategy. Accredited museums can participate free of charge in a web database, the *Joint Catalogue of the National Museum*

[13] I thank Toms Ķikuts for his help in explaining the Latvian Museums Act (Ķikuts e-mail February 19, 2021).

[14] Toms Ķikuts in e-mail to the author, February 19, 2021.

Holdings. As part of the database development program, the Ministry of Culture equipped museums with scanners and cameras, and museum staff were trained to use the database and digitize museum objects (Garjāns 2015: 136). Thus, on the one hand, the state uses accreditation to identify problems in museums and, on the other hand, shapes the processes taking place in museums through the recommendations and measures of the accreditation committee. Criticism of the system has highlighted the point that the sector lacks the capacity to use museum accreditation and statistical data for research (Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014: 7).

In 2015, the Latvian Museum Sector Strategy for 2014–2020 was approved (see Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014). Although the strategy points out that despite limited resources, museum attendance has not decreased significantly and the existing museum network is stable at both regional and national levels, it also highlights a number of weaknesses in the Latvian museum sector (ibid.: 7). Insufficient funding is perceived as a serious problem in the Latvian museum sector. The Museum Sector Strategy (ibid.) recognizes that as a result of the economic recession of 2009–2011, most Latvian museums operated with minimal resources.

The first group of problems refers to how underfunding reduces the position and visibility of museums in society. The persistent lack of financial resources has had a negative impact on the wages in museum sector, reducing the prestige of museum profession in society. Although many museums have modernized their permanent exhibitions and developed innovative pedagogical programs, the overall quality of services and the comfort of visitors still do not meet the requirements of modern society. Due to the lack of resources, the academic and applied research necessary for the development of policy and practice in the museum sector has not been outsourced (Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014: 7).

The second set of problems addresses the balanced development of the museum. The strategy points out that it is not just the function of communication with visitors that needs to be fulfilled. The strategy emphasized that by adapting to market requirements and improving the museum's communication function, research and other "invisible" functions have been neglected, seriously jeopardizing the scope of national cultural heritage research and the professionalism of museum work. Preservation of cultural heritage also needs attention as there are unsatisfactory storage conditions in some national cultural heritage repositories, and the conservation capacity does not meet modern requirements (Muzeju nozares stratēģija 2014: 7).

Therefore, the increase of funding in the museum sector was foreseen in the *Latvian Cultural Policy Guidelines for 2014–2020 Creative Latvia*. The policy takes into account the significance of cultural heritage for the development of culture and creative tourism and states that it is necessary to invest in modernizing museum exhibitions, promoting the competitiveness of museums and creating new services" (Creative Latvia 2014: 52). *Creative Latvia* also provides for the construction of a new heritage storage complex, National Museum Holdings, on Pulka Street in Riga (Creative Latvia 2014: 54), and establishment of a Council for Digital Cultural Heritage for solving the issues of digitalization, accessibility and preservation of cultural heritage (Creative Latvia 2014: 57). A museum

repository that is the largest in the Baltics was opened in Riga in December 2019 and houses collections of the National History Museum, National Museum of Art, Literature and Music Museum, and Film Museum (New Latvian museum depository… 2019).

In conclusion, the emphasis of the museum policy of the Latvian state is laid on the need to increase the competitiveness of museums. The main tools to achieve this are: the modernization of exhibitions, including the importance of research-based content and educational programs for visitors; increasing the professionalism and salaries of museum employees, the strengthening of the infrastructure for the creation, research, preservation, and active use of cultural heritage. One significant point is that the Ministry of Culture has recognized the need to place more emphasis on research-based decision-making concerning museums, and determination of education requirements for museum employees (Garjāns 2015: 135). In the Latvian Museum Sector Strategy, constructive criticism of the sector can be considered positive. Unfortunately, other analyses could not be found for a more diverse picture in Latvian museum policy.

3.2.2 Museum policy in Lithuania

According to the Lithuanian Museums Act, museums are divided into five categories: national (*nacionaliniai*), state (*respublikiniai*), municipal (*savivaldybių*), local (*žinybiniai)* and private or "other" museums (*kiti muziejai*). In 2017, there were 103 museums in Lithuania, including 4 national museums and 15 state museums (Bortkevičiūtė 2017: 46). Since 1997 the national museums have been: the National Museum of Lithuania (*Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus*) in Vilnius, the M. K. Čiurlionis Art Gallery (*Nacionalinis M. K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus*) in Kaunas, the Lithuanian Art Museum (*Lietuvos dailės muziejus*) in Vilnius, and since 2009 the National Museum – the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (*Nacionalinis muziejus Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės valdovų rūmai*) in Vilnius (Keršytė 2016: 431; LitMuseum Statistic website). National museums collect, preserve, research, restore, conserve and exhibit the most important collections of state history, art, technology, nature and other values. State or republican museums mainly differ in the specialization of their collections. According to the Museums Act the decision on the establishment of a national museum or the granting of the status of a national museum to a republican museum is made by the Government on the proposal of the Minister of Culture (LitMuseums Act website).

The work of Lithuanian museums is organized by the Ministry of Culture. Over the years, the units supervising museums in the ministry have changed: Department of Museums (1990–2001); Information Society Development Division (2001–2015), and since 2015 Museums, Libraries and Archives Division (Keršytė 2016: 436). As can be seen from the 2013 order, by which the Minister of Culture makes recommendations on the quality and management of museum activities, the regulation of the Lithuanian museums' organization is detailed (see, Lietuvos

kultūros ministro įsakymas 2013). Museums are divided hierarchically, and the Ministry's order prescribes, among other things, how many departments are allowed to be established in each group of museums and lists the possible forms and functions of structural units.

Since 2013, the Ministry of Culture has been organizing evaluations of all Lithuanian national and state museums, with the aim of increasing the transparency of performance and evaluating the implementation of planned activities.[15] The considered disadvantage of the evaluation system is that it focuses largely on quantitative indicators, compliance with legal objectives and requirements, yet, these quantitative indicators do not reveal the quality of performance, and most museums do not tend to evaluate their results critically (Bortkevičiūtė 2017: 48, 66). One of the reasons is that, because different statistical criteria are used and contradictory data are obtained, it is not possible to assess, what added value the communication activities of museums create (Laužikas and Žemaitytė 2013: 185).

Museum policy is shaped and implemented by the Ministry of Culture, the Museum Council and the Lithuanian Council for Culture. In order to improve the quality of activities of museums, in 2007 the Museum Modernization Program for 2007–2015 was approved, which focuses on financing the improvement of the material base of museums, building reconstructions, repairs, installation of premises and restoration of exhibits, and strengthening information, communication and educational activities (Keršytė and Kelpša 2013: 23). In 2015, the Minister of Culture approved *Strategic Guidelines of Museum Development in 2015–2020*. The document focuses on five topics for strategic development: 1) the creation of modern exhibitions, 2) the strengthening of educational activities based on inclusion, creative teaching and learning methods and the synergy of formal and non-formal education, 3) the enhancement of collections' record keeping, storage and public presentation, 4) the availability and quality of services and products and improving competitiveness, 5) encouraging the development of skills and qualifications of employees (Compendium Lithuania 3.1).

Rasa Bortkevičiūtė (2017: 47), who studies the application of new public management principles in the Lithuanian museum landscape points out that Lithuanian museum definition is too traditional: focusing on the functions of collecting, preserving and exhibiting without emphasizing the purpose of serving society and active communication. Bortkevičiūtė's main conclusion (2017: 49) is that while the strategic guidelines adopted in 2015 address some principles of new management, the document sets tasks without additional funding or clarifications for implementation. Research reveals a lack of solid Lithuanian museum

[15] The experience of Denmark, UK and Latvia was analysed during the preparation of the regulations for the evaluation of Lithuanian museums. The model chosen is the closest to the British museum accreditation system, which emphasizes the management aspects of the museum and its collection and the services provided to visitors (Keršytė and Kelpša 2013: 42).

policy and indicates that the governance of museums highly depends on the ideas of certain museum authorities (ibid.: 65–66).[16]

The strategic plans of both the Latvian and Lithuanian museum sectors reflect the need to modernize exhibitions in order to be more attractive to visitors. A recent study (Šimanskienė *et al.* 2017) on the compliance of the services offered by 22 museums in Latvia and Lithuania with the expectations of the visitors claims that the main areas in need of improvement are the accessibility of the museums and the services provided. The study (Šimanskienė *et al.* 2017) finds that provision of public information and design of services are not prioritised in museums and the staff feels more responsible for the exhibiting, restoring and preserving functions. The researchers formulate the following fields and activities that need attention: "providing information about the museum staff and their qualifications, disclosing the staff's contribution to attracting the visitors; lack of souvenirs, merchandise and museum reproductions or replicas, as well as information about the possibilities to buy these things on the spot; information about the services offered by the museum, their availability for the disabled; the museum's contribution to social and environmental projects" (Šimanskienė *et al.* 2017: 130).

Despite the shortcomings indicated above, other researchers have highlighted the progress of communication and education in the Lithuanian museum landscape. Lithuanian museologist Nastazija Keršytė finds in her monograph of Lithuanian museology (2016: 434) that during the 1990s and 2000s Lithuanian museums shifted the focus on visitors and community involvement, and the use of social media. Archaeologist and museologist Rimvydas Laužikas (2013: 13) studying the potential of communication activities in Lithuanian museums also finds that museums began to become more inclusive and open in the 2000s. However, Laužikas and Žemaitytė (2013: 185) argue that research policy based on collections needs to be renewed, as the collections contain a large amount of material with sufficient research material for researchers both inside and outside the museum. They consider, as a weakness, the closed nature of some museums for researchers from other research institutions, and the lack of interest of research funding institutions in museum collections. As a result, most museums remain 'frozen' for the public space, undisclosed, unpublished and without added value (ibid.).

Whereas Lithuanian organizational management researchers and economists recommend modernizing services and following the example of business enterprises (Šimanskienė *et al.* 2017) for museums, the implementation of the pragmatic recommendation they offer is probably not easy, given the existing traditions in the museum sector. Furthermore, Keršytė (2016: 278) claims that: "there

[16] As a political decision that should affect the management of the cultural sector, an amendment to the law was made in June 2018, introducing a five-year employment contract for the heads of state museums, libraries and cultural institutions, and allowing the heads of state cultural institutions to serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms (see Laurinavičienė 2019).

is skepticism in Lithuania about culture as a consumer product". Besides, a 2017 survey ordered by the Ministry of Culture showed that Lithuanian museum staff feel the obligation to engage in sales as a threat to the traditional purpose of museum work. The reason is that in terms of sales and marketing, a large part of the resources must first be devoted to organizing commercial events and other commercial activities (Lietuvos muziejų darbuotojų... 2017: 43). Bortkevičiūtė's study also finds that managers who favour innovation are cautious in introducing new practices in order to avoid major internal conflicts within the team (2017: 57).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Ministry of Culture, together with the Lithuanian Museum Association, identified education as the most important priority of the museums' activities (Keršytė 2016: 260). This meant the integration of museum education and museums into the whole educational process, greater cooperation between the Ministries of Culture and Education. Also, emphasis has been laid on the integration of museums, especially regional museums, into the tourism industry and the creative industries (Keršytė 2016: 433). The most recent cultural policy document on museums is *The Lithuanian Cultural Policy Strategy 2030* that was adopted in 2019 by the Lithuanian government. It identifies "the quality of content and its communication" as the success factors of the activity of memory institutions. There is also criticism that some of the exhibitions are still static, do not reflect current issues in society, are not of interest to visitors, in short – do not meet the quality standards of a modern museum (Compendium Lithuania 3.1). Thus, the most important keywords for the development of the Lithuanian museum sector are museum education, modern exposition and services, opening collections to users and communication.

3.2.3 Museum policy in Finland

There are over 300 professionally managed museum sites in Finland, as well as several hundred non-professional museums.[17] The systematization of professional museums has recently been reformed in Finland. From 2020, the museum landscape is divided into national, national specialised, regional and local museums. There are three national museums (*kansallinen museo)* in Finland: the Finnish National Gallery, the Finnish Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of Finland. In addition, there are 17 national specialised museums (*valtakunnalliset vastuumuseot*), and the 2019/2020 reform merged the regional cultural history and regional art museums into 32 regional museums (*alueelliset vastuumuseot*). The remaining museums are local museums (*paikallismuseot)*, regardless of the size of the collections, staff and budget (New Museums Act… 2020; Museovirasto website: About Finnish museums).

[17] Professionally managed museums have at least two employees who are full-time museum professionals. Non-professional museums are managed by volunteers and through the activity of citizens (Museovirasto website: About Finnish museums; Mattila 2018: 29).

The task of regional museums is to manage and promote the activities of museums in their area. National specialised museums coordinate national storage, research, and exhibition activities in their area of specialization (MinEduFi website: Museums). The notion *valtakunnallinen* in Finnish (national or state-owned in English) was replaced with *kansallinen* in Finnish (also national in English) to designate their central role in the Finnish museum landscape. The reason was that the notion *valtakunnallinen* did not distinguish sufficiently from other museums with a national reach, especially from national museums specializing in a particular subject. In connection with the changes, the concept of a national museum has been thoroughly defined in the 2018 development plan of Finnish museums (Mattila 2018: 38):

> *National museums are part of the national framework for art, science and culture institutions and are required by law. National museums acquire and preserve the oldest and most important national collections of cultural history, art and natural sciences, and promote research and awareness of their cultural and natural heritage and art throughout the country. National museums also play a key role in expressing their views in public dialogue. These museums are characterized by their wide publicity, nationally important activities and networks, and high visibility on the national and international arena. The expert responsibilities of national museums are defined by their collection management responsibilities. They have a special responsibility for developing the activities and competences of museums in cooperation with the Museovirasto and regional and national special museums.*

In Finland, the museum sector is managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (until 2009, the Ministry of Education). The Ministry's Department for Culture and Art Policy directly supervises museums and cultural heritage. The activities of the university museums are part of the university's management and funding system, which is supervised by the Department of Higher Education and Research Policy.

The Finnish Heritage Agency (*Museovirasto)*, under the Ministry of Education and Culture, is an expert, developer and authority on museums, cultural heritage and the cultural environment (MinEduFi website: Museums). The Finnish Heritage Agency was established in 1973 and since then the National Museum of Finland has been operating as one of its departments (Pettersson 2011: 275). The Finnish Heritage Agency compiles annual museum statistics, and statistical survey of the finances, staff and activities of Finnish professionally run museums, local museums and public collections is carried out every five years (FinMus-Statistics website). The Finnish Heritage Agency, together with museums, has developed a common evaluation model for the development of professionally managed museum activities (MinEduFi website: Museum policy). The management of collections between state museums and the modern documentation network are coordinated by professional museums in the network TAKO – National Network for Collection Management (ibid.).

The museum sector receives support from public funding, however, the budgets of cultural institutions and museums experienced a tightening of state funding in the early 2010s. Museums regard as problematic that the increase in fixed costs that are beyond their control reduces the resources left for actual museum work (Pettersson 2011: 282). As of the end of 2010s, the state and local governments finance about 40% of the museum sector's operating expenses, the rest of the funding must come from own revenues and other sources of income, among other things, the state provides separate support for projects (MinEduFi website: Museums). According to the statistics[18] of the Finnish Heritage Agency, in 2018 the state financed museum activities to the extent of 39.5% of the total funding. Museums' own income accounted for 18.8% of total funding in 2018 (FinMus-Statistics website: Tables).

The review of funding principles and making the system more efficient has recently been a topical issue in Finnish cultural and museum policy. In autumn 2016, the Finnish government initiated a reform of the funding system for local government cultural institutions. The point of departure of the reform was the need to improve the funding criteria, to measure the effectiveness of activities not only through the number of museum visitors, to take into account the diversity of museum activities and services (Mattila 2018: 45). According to the museum policy program, museums are expected to improve their competencies, to create elaborated services that can be sold. It is also recommended to intensify co-operation between museums to control fixed costs. In the case of national museums, the aim is to improve the management and monitoring of their activities (Mattila 2018: 47). In general, the reform of the funding system means that museums are developing neoliberal ways of earning their own income, improving the services they offer and increasing their efficiency. Thus, as in Estonia, in addition to the revenue from ticket sales, museums must develop new services and operate according to the model of a creative industry. It is recommended that museums combine business skills with the competencies of museum professionals.

The museum policy program also emphasizes the role and funding of university museums, and stresses the importance of cultural history collections, as research and teaching material has decreased (Mattila 2018: 40). The Natural History Museum *Luomus* is the only university museum that receives government grants from the Ministry of Education and Culture, as the resources of other university museums are decided by the universities that maintain them (Mattila 2018: 40). According to Janne Vilkuna (2018: 101), funding of university museums in Finland became a problem after the 1990s, when the Ministry of Education made funding for universities dependent on the achievement of MA and PhD degrees, publication results and external research funding. As museums do not offer postgraduate studies, it was difficult for them to compete for funding.

[18] Museum statistics cover all Finnish museums that are managed professionally and full-time by the state, municipalities, foundations, associations, and other communities. In 2018, the survey was sent to 154 museums and a response was received from 153 museums (FinMus-Statistics website).

The Finnish museum policy pays special attention to museum staff: it is acknowledged that "museum professionalism is undergoing a transformation", and this is related to changes in the focus of the museum institution (Mattila 2018: 16). A key factor in meeting the challenge of interdisciplinarity of activities is considered to be the shift "from emphasising museum professionals and professionalism to supporting the creation of expert communities composed of various professionals" (ibid.). One measure that has not been addressed in the case of the Baltic states, but is emphasized in Finland's museum policy, is to increase mobility, which should motivate and develop museum staff. It is also considered important to recruit new experts to the sector and provide postgraduate and further training to existing professionals, as well as the need to share existing knowledge and experience with young entrants to the museum sector. The role of competitive wages in maintaining the attractiveness of the sector has also been mentioned (Mattila 2018: 17).

To conclude, Finland's recent museum policy is fully in line with the neoliberal economic policy and the new museum paradigm. This emphasizes updated tasks and goals of museums, including the social engagement and design of services. At the same time, it pays attention to cultural sustainability, well-being, and supporting democratic progress which have been traditionally important values in the economic and social model of the Nordic welfare state. Thus, the most important keywords for the development of the Finnish museum sector are the effectiveness of activities, a diversification of services suitable for sale, complementing the competencies of museum professionals, and social welfare.

3.2.4 Museum policy in Estonia

In Estonia the museums are divided on the basis of their ownership: state museums (*riigimuuseumid*), museums of state-founded foundations (*riigi sihtasutuste muuseumid*), museums governed by public law[19] (*avalik-õigusliku juriidilise isiku muuseumid*), municipality museums (*munitsipaalmuuseumid*), and private museums (*eramuuseumid*) (MuuS 2013 website).[20] The notion from the previous classification a county museum (*maakondlik muuseum*) has abandoned been during the museum reform, and a local museum (*kohamuuseum*) may be used instead. The emphasis is on the word "may", as museum policy makers emphasize the freedom of choice, how to define museums depends on the context. Museums

[19] Including university museums (*ülikoolide muuseumid*).

[20] On the website of the Ministry of Culture, the dividing of museums is more detailed, distinguishing also such categories as museums managing national collections by administrative agreement (*halduslepinguga riigi muuseumikogusid haldavad muuseumid*), other state-related museums and research centres (*muud riigiga seotud muuseumid ja teaduskeskused*), and the category 'private museums' is replaced by 'museums of third sector and individuals' (*kolmanda sektori organisatsioonide ja üksikisikute muuseumid*) (MinCultEst website: Museums' list).

are not placed into a hierarchical system either. However, the "regional" museums that have previously "instructed" the smaller ones in their area regionally or thematically do it consistently, but "this role has in no way been imposed by the state".[21] The state has refrained from using the title *rahvusmuuseum* in the sense of national museum which is symbolically meaningful for the nation. Museum policy-makers have seen it as too much of a "political issue" that people always have different views on"[22].

At the beginning of 2020, there were 180 museums with 244 branches in Estonia, amongst them 7 state museums and 13 foundations under the administration of the Ministry of Culture (MinCultEst website: Museums). Museums are funded directly from the state budget, local government and university budgets, as well as through the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and Folk Culture Center (MinCultEst website: Funding). Although the museum sector in Estonia is formally managed by the Ministry of Culture, the main activities in the museum sector are curated by the National Heritage Board (*Muinsuskaitseamet*)[23], which is an agency under the Ministry. The tasks of the National Heritage Board are to organize counselling, training and research in the museum sector, to develop the joint repository of heritage project, to develop the information system of heritage and to design the state collection policy (MinCultEst website: Reform; MinCultEst website: Museums). The Ministry of Culture still has the position of museum counsellor in the Department of Cultural Heritage, and the competence of the ministry includes legislation, strategic planning, operating grants and investments, and coordinating the work of the Museum Council (MinCultEst website: Museums).

After the restoration of independence, one development plan has been compiled for the museum sector in Estonia. The development plan of Estonian museums for 2006–2015 was completed in 2006 on the initiative of the Museum Council (21. sajandi Eesti muuseumid 2006). The strategies of the development plan reflected the roles of museums in society: the museum as a memory institution, an educational institution, a cultural tourism institution, a research institution, an entertainment institution and a lifestyle influencer. One of the priorities that came into practice was to ensure public access to the cultural heritage preserved in museums, taking into account the principles of the information society (21. sajandi Eesti muuseumid 2006: 8). The main tool for achieving this goal was the web-based museum information system, the development of which has been the central task of museums for the last 15 years. In the field of collections, the need to compile collection plans was acknowledged (21. sajandi Eesti muuseumid

[21] Mirjam Rääbis, Director of the Museums Field of the Estonian National Heritage Board (Rääbis e-mail to the author, February 16, 2021).

[22] I thank Mirjam Rääbis for the explanation (e-mail to the author, February 16, 2021).

[23] The structural change was made in May 2019, with the enactment of new Heritage Conservation Act. During the reform, two work positions in the field of museums were transferred from the Ministry of Culture to the National Heritage Board and the Department of Museums and Art Heritage was created there (Koppel 2018; EstHeritBoard website: Contacts).

2006: 17), which in the following years was realized in the development of individual museums' collection policies.

One of the goals of the development plan is to regulate the network of museums (21. sajandi Eesti muuseumid 2006: 22) without explaining its nature in more detail. In practice, the Ministry of Culture had begun to reorganize the system of museum ownership and types in the early 2000s. This marked the beginning of an important development in museum policy – the creation of state-owned foundations on the basis of state and municipal museums. The first two foundations were established in 2002 and 2003. After a ten-year break, the establishment of foundations and the transfer of museums to local governments continued at a faster pace from 2012. In essence, it was a museum reform which was legislated by the new Museums Act adopted in 2013. It provides the possibility of transferring a state-owned museum collection to a state foundation museum for free use on the basis of an administrative agreement (MuuS 2013 website, §9).

There is not an updated development plan for museums, but the sector is covered by the development plan of the Ministry of Culture for 2016–2019 (KM arengukava 2016) and the basic principles of Cultural Policy until 2020 (Kultuuripoliitika põhialused 2020). The development plan of the Ministry of Culture emphasizes the increasing cost of resources required for the preservation of museum collections. Consequently, the need to critically review what has been collected, to develop meaningful collection activities and greater co-operation between museums is addressed (KM arengukava 2016: 80).[24] The basic principles of cultural policy provide the following priorities for the museum sector: contribution to educational activities and cultural tourism (besides collecting, preservation and research); cooperation between museums, heritage conservation and research institutions; analysis of collections and making them accessible to the public (*inter alia*, through digitization of collections and e-learning solutions); professional training system for museum specialists; involvement of partners both at the local government level and from the private sector to perform activities and increase public access (Kultuuripoliitika põhialused 2020: 10–11).

Plans to reorganize the network of museums have varied. According to the initial decision, by the end of 2018 most of the state museums under the Ministry of Culture had to be transformed into foundations or transferred to local governments. At the same time, three national museums (*riigimuuseum* in Estonian) – the Estonian History Museum, the Estonian Art Museum and the Estonian National Museum were planned to remain under the administration of the Ministry of Culture (KM arengukava 2016: 26; Reismaa 2015: 15). The changing nature of politics is illustrated by the fact that the Art Museum was reorganized into a foundation in 2016 and the History Museum in 2019, only the Estonian National Museum is still a state-owned museum (MinCultEst website: Museum network).

[24] For almost a decade now, museums have been compiling institutional collection policy documents that set out priorities and frozen collection themes that overlap with other museums. The aspect that has still received little attention is the substantive analysis of collections.

The Ministry of Culture advocates the advantage of the form of a foundation over a state agency by saying that it gives the museum a more flexible management model that is more linked to the local region or field (KM arengukava 2016: 79), the individual decision-making of the director is replaced by cooperation between the director of the foundation and the council (Reismaa 2015: 12). The creation of foundations has also entailed the merging of museums, which the Ministry advocates with the "synergy of interaction and greater economic capacity" (KM arengukava 2016: 80), in other words, the argument for merging museums is cost-effectiveness. The benefits of the status of a foundation are presented to museums primarily as an opportunity to achieve greater freedom and independence. As an advantage of a foundation, museums gain the opportunity to make decisions faster than in a state institution, greater flexibility in using the institution's property and earning own revenue (Reismaa 2015: 13–14). Fostering cultural entrepreneurship, which includes catering, selling souvenirs and renting premises besides education, is characteristic of the Estonian museum policy of the second decade of the 2000s (Reismaa 2015: 12). Thus, the main focus is on economic independence, but according to the official of the ministry, freedom from the role of the transmitter of messages provided by the state is not insignificant either (ibid.: 14).

Critics have seen, in the process of reorganizing the museum sector, the state's desire to shift the financial responsibility of state cultural institutions at least in part to local governments (Karulin 2014), and that state power has been replaced by the power of foundation councils, the members of which are appointed by the political ministers and are therefore affected by party politics (Allik 2013). Museum professionals have also perceived the "flexibility in earning the revenue" offered to foundations as pressure to become commercial institutions whose primary task is to entertain and earn revenue (Pesti 2012). Museums, as non-profit institutions, cannot make a profit, but can use the revenue to fulfil their statutory goals. In practice, foundations are more dependent on visitors than before because they are a source of income. Interviews with the heads of museum foundations in 2014 revealed that, in general, museums depended on about 50% of their own revenues (Pulk 2016: 31). According to statistical data, compared to 2011, the revenues of paid services provided by museums increased four times by 2015, so that in 2015 the own revenues of museums were close to the amounts received from local governments and the state (Martens 2018: 8). A survey of the Estonian creative industry revealed that although Estonian museums offer more entertainment opportunities every year for economic reasons, they do not want to consider competition in the entertainment market as the main goal of the museum's activities (Martens 2018: 3). It is a kind of vicious circle, if the income earned by attractive and crowded events is directed to the financing of new similar ventures, rather than to research or high-quality workshops with a small audience, which do not generate revenue.

By the end of the 2010s, the pressure of cost-effectiveness in museum policy has increased, which is linked to the general governmental financial policy. This is illustrated by the task given to the Ministry of Culture by the Estonian government

at the end of 2019 to prepare an efficiency plan for the museum sector by March 2021. The aim is to make the funding system more performance-based, so that it will be clear "why the state funds the museums it funds, and why with such an amount".[25] The background of such a task is the intertwining of Estonian financial management with the global plans of the European Commission and the OECD.[26]

In conclusion, both in making management decisions and in making creative choices, the state wants to interfere as little as possible in the activities of museums. On the other hand, a lot of efforts are made to enable museums to earn their own revenue, and it is hoped that cost efficiency will be achieved by organizing and preserving the collections with the help of information technology equipment[27]. How museums like the freedom offered is a separate issue worth exploring. Interviews conducted by ethnologists of the University of Tartu for the purpose of an ethnographic heritage survey (Kõresaar *et al.* 2021) in the summer of 2020 with the treasurers of Estonian museums revealed that at times it is felt that the state intervenes too little. There is a lack of guidelines and regulations on the preservation, documentation, prioritization and use of collections across the museum sector. Museums feel isolated, each making their own regulations. Problems have arisen in the dilemmas of earning money and preserving museum objects, when renting exhibition halls or preparing procurements (Reidla FN 2020).

3.2.5 Museum policies in comparison

It was possible to present museum policies at different levels of analysis, as this depended on the material available, and the analyses carried out so far. In the case of Lithuania, there were the most analytical articles available. The development of the museum sector has depended on the economic, cultural, and educational policies and on how international museology, or the paradigm of the new museum, has been applied. In the 1990s, Estonia applied the most liberal market regulations in the transition from a planned economy to a capitalist market economy. Museum policy in Estonia is also quite liberal, especially compared to Latvia and Lithuania. In Estonia, the state is reducing direct management, turning museums into foundations and there is no accreditation or evaluation system for museums in Estonia. Accreditation of state- and municipally funded museums is carried out in Latvia, evaluation of all national and state museums in Lithuania, the Finnish Heritage Agency runs the evaluation model for the development of professionally managed museum activities.

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[25] Rääbis e-mail to the info-list of Estonian museums on January 27, 2020.

[26] The development of Estonia's financial management through increasing the capacity to carry out "spending review" is supported by the European Commission's structural reform support program (SRSP). The project is being organized by OECD experts (Reismaa e-mail from January 27, 2020 to the Estonian Museums list).

[27] The National Heritage Board is developing in 2019–2021 a prototype of artificial intelligence for preservation and inventory (named Sälli), the aim of which is to plan conservation work more efficiently based on information in databases (EstHeritBoard website: Sälli).

The hierarchy and principles of systematizing museums are varied. In Estonia, the classification is not hierarchical, but based on the form of ownership. While in Finland, Lithuania and Latvia some museums are designated as central in the hierarchy, as their collections are most comprehensive and valuable for the state and the people, no such distinction is officially made in Estonia. The "title" of the national museum has been avoided for museums with important cultural heritage collections in Estonia. Museum policy in Finland, Latvia and Lithuania defines the hierarchies and systems of museums more specifically. They distinguish between national as state-owned and national as "museums with a national reach", and regional museums which are supporting the activities of museums in their area.

The main concepts and functions of the new museum paradigm (emphasis on communication, participatory and inclusive museum, broadened access, striving for relevance in society) are declared by all countries in recent policy documents. The paradigm of the new museum has become particularly prominent in the Finnish museum policy program. Financial capitalism gradually influences Finnish cultural policy, which has so far based on the Nordic welfare state standards. Thus, earning revenue is a clearly expressed issue in Estonia and Finland, while in Latvia and Lithuania modernization of exhibitions and active use of cultural heritage is emphasized. Museum policies in Lithuania and Latvia reflect the different activities of the museum almost equally; in Latvia, it is even noted that substantive activities must not be forgotten. In Estonia, little emphasis is placed on substantive activities and much attention is paid to efficient management.

There is also a difference in practice: for more than ten years, Estonia has practiced creating modern and attractive exhibitions, expanding museum shops and offering other services; in the case of Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, the emphasis on modernizing exhibitions has only just begun – especially in large national museums (see Article II). Where does Estonia's initiative come from? The development model of Estonian museums in the 1990s and 2000s has been called enthusiastic (Koll 2012: 7), because changes in exhibitions, museum education and communication practice were quickly implemented, various forms of exhibition were tested thanks to the initiative of the museum professionals themselves. Little or no guidance was expected from the state, the examples were taken directly from foreign colleagues via contacts and courses. Also, when the first stage of development was enthusiastic and instinctive, since the second half of the 2000s, Estonia's cultural policy has prioritized investments into large state museums. Considerable investments have been made in their competitiveness, increasing attractiveness for visitors: new museum buildings were completed, old exhibitions were renovated and modern exhibitions with high design quality and attractive technological solutions were created.[28] In the second half of 2010s,

[28] The first purpose-built housing for a museum – Estonian Art Museum in 2006, a modern permanent exhibition in the Great Guild Hall of the Estonian History Museum in 2011, opening of the Estonian National Museum in 2016, renovation-construction of the Estonian History Museum Maarjamäe complex in 2015–2018.

however, the third stage was reached, now the state expects results from its investments – primarily in the form of earning the museums' own revenue.

Together, Latvia and Lithuania have received a recommendation from researchers to make the museums' service system more customer friendly. The organization and exhibition activities of Lithuanian museums have changed the least but have recently begun to change in Latvia (see Articles I, II and III). The above analysis of museum policy showed the detailed structural regulation of the Lithuanian museums, especially in comparison with the liberal Estonian museum policy. In the case of Lithuania, a lack of debate on new democratic national museum has been also noticed (Rindzevičiūtė 2011: 535), also the lack of a clear museum policy and an outdated management style has been criticized (Bortkevičiūtė 2017). On the other hand, an abundance of critical approaches show the existence of analysis and debate on Lithuanian museum policy. Estonian museum policy suffers from a lack of analysis and also does not stand out in terms of systematic approach: much has depended on the initiative of museums', little research has been conducted on which to base decisions. Furthermore, in 2015 an official from the Latvian Ministry of Culture has likewise assessed the previous museum policy as based on too little analysis, pointing out that decision making has mainly been based on "traditions, intuition and subjective awareness" (Garjāns 2015: 135). Since the changes in the transition period were based on the museums' own initiatives, Lubyte's (2001: 186) claim concerning Lithuania that the 1990s saw rapid changes in the museum landscape without a clear cultural policy strategy, it was a self-regulating, or even intuitive process, can also be extended to Estonia and Latvia.

It is worth mentioning that Estonia has started museum innovation from a more attractive side – the development of exhibitions and has achieved domestic and international recognition with it. At the same time Finland and Latvia have completed large modern collection repositories, which Estonia is still planning. Now when Estonia and Finland have in 2016–2021 renewed the permanent exhibitions of their central cultural history museums, Lithuania and Latvia can exceed this achievement with an even more modern and innovative permanent exhibitions.

3.3 Professional development in the museum sector

The issue of the professionalism of museum staff is topical in all Baltic countries and Finland, as expressed in the strategy documents. In general, it is emphasized that the strength of the museum sector lies in the high competence of its staff, and thus there is a desire to increase professionalism and prestige. In the following subsection, I will illuminate the issues of museum staff training, education required, education and research policies – as I consider such an explanation vital for understanding the professionalism of the museum employees. In Articles I, II, III, I have not elaborated on their educational background, but education is so closely linked to the identity of a museum worker that I could not ignore the subject here.

Next, I will highlight the need for interdisciplinarity, dual educational backgrounds and general skills in museum work. This explains why the notions "substantive" or "content workers", are often used to describe core museum staff, and also why separation between "new professional" (Heijnen 2010; van Mensch 2004) and "traditional collections worker" (McCall and Gray 2014: 30) is discussed, even though such a division is not formally made.

In the early decades of the 20th century, the professionalism of a Western museum worker was characterized by academicism. The duties of the curator were often intertwined with a professorship of the same discipline at a university. Due to shifts that took place in the early decades of the 21st century, museum professionalism is often not measured by academic achievements. The various psychological and social skills and additional knowledge are assessed to a much greater extent. These skills are a prerequisite for coping smoothly with teamwork, exhibition curating, databases, communication in social media, project management and so on.

The **interdisciplinarity** of museum work is reflected in the museum staff as it unites representatives of academic and non-academic disciplines. The education of the so-called substantive staff (curators, collection keepers, researchers) must be linked to the academic research discipline corresponding to the profile of the museum (history, art history, archaeology, biology, geography, etc.). In addition, museums need employees from different specialized areas: conservation, pedagogy, information science, design, marketing, etc. Interdisciplinarity also manifests itself in the intertwining of academic background and knowledge of crafts and materials. Education corresponding to the museum's profile in an academic discipline will be challenged in the form of museum collections. The substantive knowledge required for more traditional museum work is the identification and scientific description of objects in museum collections. The need for such knowledge is mentioned a little in the Estonian study (Mets and Viia 2019: 116). The problem of insufficient knowledge of material culture among young museum staff is mentioned in a Latvian study (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 22).

At the same time, **museology** is considered to be the bridge that unites the museum's various disciplines and fields of work. The need for training in museology reflects the **duality** of the education expected from a museum professional. So, the ideal museum professional is trained on two levels: a basic higher education in a scientific discipline (history, archaeology, ethnology, etc.) or speciality (marketing, communication, information sciences, pedagogy, conservation, etc.) should be supplemented by training in museology. The recent museum policy program of Finnish museums smartly summarizes the mission of museology education. It addresses the role of museology as useful for spreading of common understandings. Museum research is valued as it creates new information to meet the development needs of the sector. To achieve this outcome, the continuous teaching of museology in higher education institutions is stressed, and it is assumed that museum staff and managers have completed basic studies in museology (Mattila 2018: 17).

In addition to the required knowledge and level of education, important **general skills** have been recently highlighted in museum work. In the modern museum, the ability to manage projects is also considered as an increasingly necessary general skill. Database filling and other IT skills are required on a daily basis for managing collections. Using digital materials is unavoidable in the museum's various activities. Familiarity with the possibilities of applying digital technology is necessary when ordering products and services, among other things, the ability to design and layout information material and process image material would also be good (Mets and Viia 2019: 117–118).

Museum educators and guides as "customer service staff" need the communication skills essential in work with visitors as clients. The (scientific) communication skills are considered to be a growing need in the activities of researchers, curators and collection keepers. For example, in Estonia, the leading staff of museums considered the curator's ability to "explain scientific information without assessment, clearly and taking into account the needs and specificity of the target group" to be increasingly important in the future (Mets and Viia 2019: 117). The survey of Latvian museum staff reveals communication skills as the most important social skill applicable to all museum staff positions (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 22). In addition, museum staff are expected to have psychosocial skills and personality traits such as punctuality, responsibility, restraint, flexibility, and the ability to respond to changing situations, initiative, cooperation and teamwork. In the case of Latvia, the ability to serve the museum's priorities stands out as a special requirement compared to others (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 22).

Finally, it is vital for today's museum professional to be willing to innovate, to react quickly to change, to be flexible. The Latvian study also addresses distinction in ethical norms: older employees' perceptions of what is ethically acceptable to a museum, often differ from those of the younger generation (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 22). This is especially valid for the implementation of innovative and somewhat provocative ideas that young people think could be successful in terms of museum marketing, but one museum manager pointed out that insufficient knowledge of the value of objects is accompanied by a lack of respect for museum collections (ibid.).

3.3.1 Education systems and education and research policies

Before discussing the education of museum staff and their opportunities to study museology, the related education and research policies need to be explained. The historical background of the Baltic states and Finland is different but has reached more or less the same level today. The possibility for museums to acquire the status of a research institution today depends on whether its research has been internationally evaluated. As a result, the requirements for research degrees for museum positions are arising. In this area, culture and museum policy are in direct contact with research and education policy, which I will explain below.

During the Soviet occupation, higher education in the Baltic states followed the Soviet system of higher education. The five-year university program was completed with independent academic research and the final result of the qualification was a specialist's diploma (see Vaht *et al.* 2010: 36–37). Accordingly, museum work required higher education in a discipline corresponding to the field of the museum (usually a diploma of a historian), and a university diploma was enough to work as a researcher in the museum. The next step, Candidate or Doctor of Sciences (*кандидат наук, доктор наук)* was not part of university education but an achievement of independent research in the system of the Academy of Sciences (during postgraduate studies called *аспирантура*).[29] Completing the Candidate or Doctor dissertation often proved to be a scholar's lifework, as it had to be confirmed in Moscow by a special committee whose decision making process was opaque (Vunder 1996: 17).[30]

Due to the peculiarities of the Soviet education system, very few university graduates had a scientific degree, even though they worked as researchers at a university or museum. Besides, the field of research had an informal hierarchical structure: the institute of the Academy of Sciences was at the highest level, the universities at the next level and the museums at the lowest level. Figuratively, those institutions had the following functions: museums "collected" and "showed", whereas universities "taught", and institutes "studied".[31] Both the level of research and the salaries were low in museums, therefore people interested in research left the museums, if possible, for the system of the Academy of Sciences (Viires 1993: 11; Vunder 1996: 18).

Through the Bologna Process, from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, the Baltic states reorganized their education systems. The universities of the Baltic states introduced a so-called Western structure in their academic programs: a 3-level system with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs (Vaht *et al.* 2010; Dedze and Rubene 2016; Leisyte *et al.* 2015). In Finland, the Bologna Process was introduced between 2001 and 2005 and it led to structural changes within the universities. However, in Finland, the Bologna process did not have a major impact on university degrees, as a similar system already existed in most areas (Syzenko 2015). The university reform was carried out in Finland in 2010 – with the purpose to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of universities, to increase the international competitiveness of the universities (see Aarrevaara *et al.* 2009: 4; Ylijoki and Ursin 2013: 1135–1136).

By emphasizing innovation, growth and competitiveness, areas of science, education and technology are increasingly subordinated to the logic of the capitalist economy. In their research policies, the Baltic states and Finland have now switched to results-based research evaluation, and research is subordinated to the

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[29] I thank Kristin Kuutma for explaining the Soviet research and education system.

[30] According to Government regulations in the 2000s the Specialist's Diploma issued in the former USSR corresponds to the master's degree and the degrees of *кандидат наук* and *доктор наук* correspond to the doctoral degree (Vaht *et al.* 2010: 37).

[31] I thank Ene Kõresaar and Tiiu Jaago for explaining the Soviet research and education system.

logic of business (HER Reform in Lithuania 2009; Syzenko 2015; Volkova 2016). As Estonian researchers Katrin Aava and Kristi Mets-Alunurm (2020) point out, global institutions such as the OECD, the World Bank and the EU influence the research and education policies of nation states with their goals and decisions. In addition to the project-based nature of funding, the logic of business has led to constant competition for research funding, both within and between universities. Researchers produce articles and their productivity is measured quantitatively. The system requiring a researcher constantly writes projects for funding, markets himself, hires assistants and doctoral students, and has skilfully adapted to bureaucratic requirements has also been called an academic enterprise (see more Aava and Mets-Alunurm 2020). The nature of short-term projects hinders the development and implementation of a long-term research strategy in both universities and museums. As commercialism increasingly defines the life and existence of humanity in the world, Sevänen and Häyrynen (2018: 29) point out that it has led to the social sciences and humanities remaining marginalized in competition and resource sharing.

3.3.2 Museum professions

In the Finnish Heritage Agency statistics, a museum professional is defined as having a master's degree, a university degree, a professional higher education degree or an equivalent previous college degree and holding a position corresponding to their education (see, Museoiden henkilökunta 2018). The education must be related to the museum field or the museum's specialty. Conservators are included in this group, but other job titles are not listed. The Finnish Museum Association has conducted surveys of museum staff in 2003, 2008 and 2013. Vilkuna (2018: 101) summarizes those surveys and concludes that although a BA level would suffice, most museum professionals have an MA degree. He also points out that the PhD requirement is rare in museums, with the exception of the Finnish Museum of Natural History, a research institute at the University of Helsinki, where all directors have a PhD degree. Overall, Vilkuna (2018: 101) considers the academic level of Finnish museum staff to be high. In addition to university-level studies, the Museum Association of Finland organizes in-service training for museum staff – about 20 different courses are held each year and e-learning is offered (FinMA website: Training).

In Latvia, positions of museum staff are defined as those that are necessary for the performance of the basic functions defined in the normative acts, as well as the mission and tasks defined by the museums themselves (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 7). Based on these considerations, the museum professionals are: collection keepers (k*rājuma glabātāji)*, restorers (*restauratori*), scientific research specialists (zinātniski pētnieciskie speciālisti), communication specialist (*komunikācijas*

speciālisti),[32] museum educators (*muzeju pedagogi*), design specialists (*māksliniecisk noformējuma speciālisti*), and support (economic) staff (*atbalsta (saimnieciskais) personāls*) (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 7–10). In Latvia, the national classification of professions was approved in 2017. Among other professions it includes the definition of qualifications and the requirements for museum professionals (Noteikumi par Profesiju... 2017). A certain code has been assigned to a profession included in the classification of professions, and appropriate basic tasks and basic qualification requirements for identification of the name of the profession have also been determined. It features museum positions in various groups of professions. For example, the senior museum specialists are in same group (code 2621) as archivists (Noteikumi par Profesiju... 2017: article 294).

In Lithuania, compared to the others, the definition of a museum worker is less varied, with mainly one job title and different levels of management or levels of competence. The job title of the specialist is *muziejininkas* – "a museum employee who performs functions related to the acquisition, accounting, preservation, restoration, research, exhibition and popularization of material and immaterial cultural values and natural objects" (Lietuvos kultūros ministro įsakymas 2005). The title *muziejininkas* which could be translated as curator in English encompasses different stages, from chief specialist to senior specialist and junior specialist. In Lithuania, similar to Estonia, Latvia and Finland, if the employee is involved in collections and research, higher education is expected in the discipline related to the topic of the museum (Muziejų darbuotojų... 2017: 4–5).

Working as a researcher or curator in Estonia requires at least a MA degree or equivalent education in disciplines such as history, art history, natural sciences, ethnology, archaeology, architecture, etc. (see Mets and Viira 2019: 119). In Estonia, active preliminary work was done to establish professional standards for museum staff in the early 2000s. The professional standards of a museum specialist (levels II, IV and V) were developed by the museum association and adopted in 2005 by the Qualifications Authority. Unfortunately, the system was not implemented and the initiative waned by 2012 (Koll 2012: 10). Thus, there is not currently a professional standard in force for museum specialists[33], such as the collection keeper, curator or researcher in Estonia.[34] The 2019 survey conducted by the Qualifications Authority identified, with the help of museum experts, six main professions of the Estonian museum sector: collection keeper

[32] According to a 2008 study in only a few museums in Latvia, communication duties are performed by specialists with a degree in communication or public relations. Museums often recruit communication and marketing specialists with education in discipline in line with the museum's profile (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 15–16). Mostly it is justified by financial considerations, as museums are unable to attract qualified marketers (ibid.: 9)

[33] For comparison, the Estonian archives have established professional standards, the corresponding levels and job titles. See https://eay.ee/arhivaari-kutse/ (accessed March 19, 2021).

[34] Few museum specialties have professional standards in Estonia, such as conservators and guides. However, possession of a guide's certificate is often not necessary for working in museums (Mets and Viia 2019: 106).

(*koguhoidja*), researcher-curator (*teadur-kuraator*), conservator (*konservaator*), visitor guides (*külastusjuht*), museum educator (*muuseumipedagoog*) and project manager (*projektijuht*) (Mets and Viia 2019: 104). The remaining professions are considered not to be directly related to the museum field. Treating the project manager as a main museum profession is, in my view, quite telling and would require further research. Anyway, it indicates to the increasingly project-based nature of museum work in Estonia. The study of Mets and Viira (2019) also reveals the lack of a system of job titles, as the officials of the Ministry of Culture involved in the study were not able to assess the content of the work by several job titles. Officials revealed this when compiling an overview of museum staff and trying to classify them according to the main occupations listed above (Mets and Viia 2019: 114). The ambiguity of job titles and lack of a system of professional standards may be a reason for the identity crisis of content professionals in the Estonian cases which I addressed in Article III.

The number of museum staff has increased slightly over the last ten years in Estonia, but that increase is due to positions such as visitors guides and educators, professionals of sales, marketing and communication, and managers of exhibition projects and events (Mets and Viia 2019: 112–113). It seems that the increase concerns mainly those who are not familiar with the subject of the museum, both in terms of museum-specific research discipline and museum theory. Thus, the need for museological training is increasing in line with the engagement of the new professions.

3.3.3 Training of museum professionals

As follows, I will look at the ways how the duality of museum work is addressed and museology education has been introduced in Finnish and Baltic museum field. I will briefly look at the opportunities available for university training in museology in the respective countries, and then take a closer look at the content of the training.

In Finland, the teaching of museology began as a minor subject at undergraduate level in the 1980s at the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Turku, in the 1990s at the University of Helsinki and Oulu, in 2002 at the University of Tampere (Vilkuna 2018: 99). Higher education in museology at MA and PhD levels has been available at the University of Jyväskylä since 2002 (professorship since 1998). BA, MA and PhD programs started at the University of Helsinki in 2018 (Vilkuna 2018: 99).

In Latvia, the Latvian Academy of Culture has provided a MA museology program since 2000 and a museum and cultural heritage program since 2012 (Sedleniece 2020). From 2017, the Latvian Academy of Culture has taken over the organization of museum professionals' training courses from the Museum Department of the Ministry of Culture (ibid.).

In Lithuania, the Department of Museology is at the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University. The first professional program was from 2001 to

2008 the MA program in Museum Studies at Vilnius University. This program emphasized the need for synergies between museology and communication studies, driven by the changing social mission of museums (Keršytė 2016: 94). Graduates of this program, most of whom were museum professionals, received a diploma of a communication specialist, not a museum specialist.[35] The program was terminated due to a declining interest of applicants, and the changed approach of the Faculty of Communication to museology (Keršytė 2016: 430). Next, the subject of museology was added to the heritage communication and information program of Vilnius University in 2008. In 2012, however, the Department of Museology at the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University was re-established (ibid.). After 2008, several other Lithuanian universities and the Lithuanian Academy of Arts have offered various museology courses in BA and MA programs which are integrated into other programs related to museology (Keršytė 2016: 104).

Unlike the neighbouring countries, no university in Estonia has a department of museology or an independent museology degree program. However, from time to time there have been museum-themed courses for students included in higher education programs. In 2018, the speciality of museology was launched at the Estonian Academy of Arts where the subject of museology can be chosen by entering the MA program in art history and visual culture as well as heritage protection and conservation. Tallinn University offered the subject "Museology and Heritage Protection" at the BA level in academic year 2018/2019. There are relevant subjects at the University of Tartu: the subject "Museology" at the BA level, and the module "Memory Institutions" at the MA level.[36] So far, no consistent independent museology program has grown out of any of them. Probably because of this, the requirement for training in museology for employees has not been relevant in Estonia either.

The need for programs of different levels in museology in higher education has been constantly on the agenda in Estonian museum communities (see Koll 2012). Furthermore, interviewed leaders of the Estonian museum sector have complained quite recently about "lack of knowledge about museology" in the 2019 survey of Qualifications Authority (Mets and Viia 2019: 115). Therefore, it is interesting to examine, the specific knowledge or skills, which are most lacking. According to the experts interviewed, more "museological" knowledge of modern exhibition requirements, information management, copyright and data

[35] This explains why those interviewed at the National Museum of Lithuania mentioned to me that graduates of museology are not museum specialists but communication specialists.

[36] Furthermore, at the University of Tartu some Institutes and one academy provide education suitable for museum: 1) Institute of History and Archaeology (archaeology, archiving, Estonian history, art history, recent history, general history), 2) Institute of Social Sciences (information management), 3) Institute of Cultural Research (ethnology and applied anthropology, cultural management), and 4) Viljandi Culture Academy (heritage technology, cultural management). For certain museum professions the education offered by Institute of Digital Technologies of Tallinn University (information science), and Tartu Art College (design, conservation) is also suitable (see details in Mets and Viia 2019: 119–122).

protection, the ability to "place collections in the context of a story or message" and evaluate museum activities based on visitor expectations rather than what the museum wants to exhibit would be needed (Mets and Viia 2019: 116–117). At the same time, specific knowledge of the objects in the museum's collections (composition, techniques used, etc.) is also considered necessary (Mets and Viia 2019: 116), which the theoretical approach of museology may not offer. Due to Estonia's alleged lack of museology education, it is appropriate to monitor the experience of neighbouring countries on museology training.

The importance of museology education was highlighted in Finland in 2005, when completed basic studies in museology (plus higher education at least at the MA level) became mandatory to apply for a director's position in state-subsidized museums (Vilkuna 2018: 100). According to a survey conducted a few years earlier, in 2003, studying museology did not contribute much to getting a job in a museum and half of the new employees did not have a museology education (Kallio and Välisalo 2006: 94). Although students of museology thought that they would benefit from being theoretically familiar with the basic concepts and principles of museum work, museum leaders preferred higher education in a museum-related research discipline, believing that museology can be supplemented later (ibid.). Archaeology, art history, ethnology and history were considered to be the most suitable higher education for museum staff in Finland, as it had been studied as a major subject by 74% of museum staff (Kallio and Välisalo 2006: 92–93). Concludingly, there was a gap between the expectations of museum leaders and the preparation of museology students, at least it was so in 2003. Kallio and Välisalo's (2006: 94) article points out that it is difficult for museum staff to recognize museology as an academic and theoretical discipline like any other science.

Like the Finnish survey of 2003, the Latvian survey completed five years later (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008) shows that a relatively small proportion of the museums included in the survey offer jobs to graduates of the MA program in museology. Like the results of Finnish study referred above, in 2008 most Latvian museum leaders preferred the museum staff to have higher education or a degree in a scientific discipline corresponding to the profile of a museum (history, art history, biology, etc.); it usually extends to the staff of collections, researchers and educators, with the latter being advised to specialize further in pedagogy (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 15). The Latvian museum leaders agreed that the MA degree in museology obtained at the Latvian Academy of Culture provides a better understanding of the specifics of museum work, helps to orientate on a conceptual level and provides knowledge about the latest trends in museology. On the other hand, museum leaders have experienced that the program pays too little attention to the ability to create content offered by a museum, focusing instead on delivering the product to the audience. This orientation makes the museology program similar to the communication and public relations program, as a result of which it loses its original meaning for the practical work of the museum (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 17).

A survey of Lithuanian museum staff in 2017 found that although Vilnius University's Faculty of Communication, Academy of Arts and other higher education institutions train museum professionals, the current training system did not meet the needs of museums for qualified staff (Lietuvos muziejų darbuotojų darbuotojų... 2017: 41). It was argued that the lack of relevant general and specialist knowledge and skills quickly emerged when evaluating the operation of a young specialist in a real work-situation. It was therefore claimed that it would be necessary to add professional practice in museums to the study of museology in higher education programs in Lithuania (Lietuvos muziejų darbuotojų... 2017: 42). Museums also wanted the higher education institution to have a specialist familiar with museum work, who would be responsible for organizing and evaluating the traineeship, so that this obligation was not imposed on museum staff (ibid.).

Discussing the education of museum staff, Vilkuna (2018: 100) notes that Finnish universities are increasingly providing more universal education, which will bring problems for museums in recruiting professionals in the future, because "the students do not gain substantial knowledge of their subjects as before". If museology teaches understanding of social relations, heritage and the museum, the museum's history, system, processes and ethics, then Vilkuna (2018: 100) asks, who today teaches a future museum professional the 'substance subjects' which are the basis of museum work: collecting and documenting.

As studies in Lithuania and Latvia reveal, the gap between theory and practice is not unique to training of museum staff in Finland. Whether the graduate comes from museology or an academic discipline, additional practical work skills are needed, which, according to museum leaders, are usually developed during practical museum work (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 14). Also, in-depth knowledge of many disciplines required by museums, such as numismatics, maritime history, military history, is not provided in the university but is acquired only through work in a museum (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 16). Similar to the generality of Finnish university education, which is pointed out by Vilkuna (2018), some Latvian museum leaders emphasized the general nature of history studies as problematic (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 17). It is considered a disadvantage by museum leaders in Latvia that university graduates are not sufficiently familiar with the topic of material culture which is why they are not ready to work with objects kept in the museum (only specialization in archaeology was considered sufficient). Thus, much more attention should be paid to historical artefacts in the education of young professionals (ibid.).

Under the circumstances described above, the training of museum staff often continues at the museum.[37] It is pointed out in the Latvian survey, that usually the responsibilities of an experienced museum specialist include both teaching a new

[37] To some extent, the museum associations help museums to organize special courses. At the level of non-formal education, all the Baltic states are united by the Baltic School of Museology, which operates in the form of a summer school. The museums themselves organize various conferences, seminars, workshops.

employee and supervising the work (Muzeja darbinieku... 2008: 20). Learning the specifics of museum work can take from a few months to several years, therefore some museums require many years of museum work experience from a candidate for the collection keeper's position (ibid.). Similarly, a 2017 Lithuanian study found out that in the case of insufficient previous practice, it is necessary to train young specialists at the museum; such a process requires human resources and time from the museum, sometimes taking a year (Lietuvos muziejų darbuotojų... 2017: 42).

In sum, museology, both in the form of advanced courses and university programs, provides a framework for newcomers and practitioners to understand museum work. Nonetheless, in Finland, Latvia and Lithuania, where it is possible to study museology at university level, teaching museology is considered to be insufficient because of its excessive theory and lack of providing special skills. The previous discussion shows the importance of the role of the curatorial staff in museums as well as the need for professional continuity. This further highlights the specificity of substantial museum work, for which formal education is not enough. As I emphasized in the articles, in particular Article III, knowledge-based museum mediation is a sophisticated task and requires comprehensive assessment of the role of the research-capable curator. I argued that neither an exhibition nor a consultation and other knowledge mediation could exist separately from research. At this point I add to the above that the training of newcomers is also a vital task for experienced curators that cannot be ignored. Training new colleagues is one of the many "invisible" tasks that curators carry out. As can be seen from the Lithuanian study (Lietuvos muziejų darbuotojų... 2017), museums are trying to push this task to the university because curators are overloaded with different tasks. A similar proposal was made by museum staff at the Estonian National Museum when the low interest of newcomers in research of collections, caused by little prior knowledge, was under discussion (Reidla 2017). However, it seems to me that museums cannot escape the training of practical work skills, but rather the scope of this work should be recognized and included in the plans so that it does not become an invisible additional task.

4. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

My dissertation is based on the ethnographic method. In the following I will reveal the context and components of my fieldwork and reflect on data collection and the methods of data analysis. My central source were interviews conducted during fieldwork with employees of the Estonian History Museum, the Estonian National Museum[38], the Latvian National History Museum, the National Museum of Finland and the National Museum of Lithuania in 2016–2019. The decision to compare these museums was made because they are the central national cultural history museums of their country, funded by the state, although the scope of collections, their sizes and traditions are somewhat different.

In addition to going to the 'field' in four distinct countries, I analysed websites and documents, which was a process that I also consider as fieldwork. Here I understand fieldwork in line with Kirsti Jõesalu (2017: 55) when she describes her experience of fieldwork in the archives as "an intellectual journey" which encompasses all senses (ibid: 56) and requires consistent notetaking (ibid: 57). In this chapter, I will give a thorough insight into the fieldwork process. In doing so, I have divided the sources into two groups: 1) main sources, which are interviews and notes made during fieldwork, and 2) additional sources, mainly documents received from interviewees, and notes taken when I was observing the virtual field of websites.

4.1 Interviews

The interviews took place in three stages. The first stage interviews took place from November 2016 to March 2017 at the ENM. The first stage resulted in the ENM-centric study *About museum education on the example of the Cultural Heritage Study Centre of the Estonian National Museum* (Reidla 2017). The focus of these interviews was the education, popularisation and consulting tasks carried out by a subunit of the ENM research department. Of these, issues related to research mediation activities, as well as curators' perceived identity as researchers and work organization problems were used for the present study. The second phase of the interviews proceeded from October 2017 to March 2018 and included all five museums. The third stage of the interviews also took place in all five from September 2018 to February 2019. In the second and third stages, I visited the museums under study for a few consecutive days, during which I became acquainted with the exhibitions and interviewed the employees at their workplaces. Interviews taking place in the workplace provide additional

[38] Two museums from Estonia are included in the comparison, as their collections complement each other: the ENM preserves the largest collection of cultural history in Estonia, dominated by old peasant culture material, while the EHM collections are rich in archaeological, numismatic, medieval material and reflect the political history of modern and recent history.

information, because in this way it was possible to get part of the communication between colleagues, make observations about work conditions and notice the publications of the museum on the desks or shelves. Describing the study of previously familiar social environments, Hubert Knoblauch (2005) advocates an approach which he calls focused ethnography, characterised by relatively short-term but intensive field trips. This approach also characterized my fieldwork.

The aim was to interview primarily the professionals trained for and capable of conducting research. Thus, I was looking for professionals from the research and collections departments, regardless of their job title as the latter could vary. It was also irrelevant whether or not they were doing purely academic research, as one of the aims was to find out the specifics of research in museum. For the context, I also interviewed some educators and designers as well as specialists of outreach.

I used the interview method, in which the blocks of questions were structured from personal work experience to a more general view. We started with the interviewee's work experience over the years, and the main tasks at the moment. I asked about personal research topics, experience in curating exhibitions and compiling educational programs. The open question "but what else do you have to do" highlighted the versatility of the curator's work. Next, if it did not come out before, I asked what the interviewee's role was working with the collections and to assess what proportion it had among other tasks. I also asked the interviewee to characterize the specifics of the museum's researcher/curator profession and to define the position of research within the museum and in the academic landscape. We usually ended the interview by mapping the most challenging areas, focusing on what they thought could change in the future.

4.2.1 Fieldwork reflection

Next, I will mainly reflect on my role in the research process, how I influenced the object of research and *vice versa.* Following the ideas of reflexivity and introspection, I tried to remember Linda Finlay's warning that the researcher should not use personal revelation "as an end in itself but as a springboard for interpretations and more general insight" (Finlay 2002: 215). Unlike ethnographers conducting fieldwork in other cultures, I had indirect and direct background knowledge of the field I studied. Thus, I can position myself between the researcher who has first-hand experience in a similar culture and the researcher who has not previously visited the culture they investigate, including not knowing the native language of the culture.

I was previously familiar with the Estonian National Museum, as I worked there from 1992 to 2004, first as a keeper of the photo collection, then as head of the exhibitions and public relations department. After leaving the museum, I stayed in touch with some of my former colleagues. Later, I led the project of the new permanent exhibition of the Bank of Estonia Museum in 2008–2011, and my husband has been working at the Estonian History Museum since 2005.

For the curators, as they are trained as researchers, being the object of research seemed to be an unexpected position, especially at the beginning of the interview. This is my general observation, which did not depend on the country or the museum. Thus, when starting, I could feel a certain vigilance, probably because they were used to being the interviewers themselves. When I noticed the interviewee's confusion in deciding whether to limit oneself to formal rhetoric or express a personal attitude, I wittingly emphasized the importance of a personal perspective. Some of the interviewees welcomed my interest in opening up the complex nature of the curators' tasks, assessing it as a commendable topic that needs to be raised. A smaller proportion expressed the opinion that it was quite useless to study the opinion of researchers, because "decision-makers" would probably not be interested in the results of my work. The request to appear 'anonymously' prevailed among those interviewed in Estonia. In the end, I therefore decided to anonymize the interviews across all four countries.

Having gained more than ten years' experience working in a museum, I had to ask myself if I was exposed to autoethnography in this study. Sociologist Leon Anderson (2006: 375) specifies autoethnography with the notion 'analytic' to ethnographic work in which the researcher is "(1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher's published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena". According to Anderson (2006: 382), the useful feature of this method is that "the autoethnographer's understandings, both as a member and as a researcher, emerge not from detached discovery but from engaged dialogue". Thus, communication between the researcher and other team members has the potential for deeper information retrieval as it is a mutual informativity (ibid: 383). Although I was in a unique position as a former member of the group under study, obviously I was not "a full member in the group" who is working at the institution at the same time. Thus, I do not use the method of autoethnography directly, but moving from a general to individual hermeneutic process of analysis (Bernard 2006: 475), I have used my previous experience as a museum worker.

Prior knowledge involves methodological risks. Initially, my experience at the ENM influenced my understanding of the profession of curator. I was familiar with the organizational structure of the ENM where separate departments for curators as researchers and for curators as collection keepers are common. Thus, I did not initially assume that preserving and researching collections is a joint nature of the identity of a classical curator. In other museums that I studied there was a united department of collections and research under joint supervision of collections director and of research director, which cannot be said of the ENM – this topic is addressed in Article I.

Prior work experience at the ENM also influenced my perspective on the production of exhibitions, a topic covered in Article II. As an anonymous reviewer noticed, I had too little criticism of the curator-driven model of exhibition making. My interviewees did not criticize this model either – and neither may my questions have addressed this issue in detail. As I had a prior knowledge, I did

not delve into the curator-driven model[39], and was more interested in the modern model of manager-driven exhibition production. However, while in Article II the focus of the analysis is on a manager-driven model, this is justified by the growing relevance of this model in the current museum landscape.

In Article III, when I was looking at the identity of the curator as a researcher, my position was clearer because I have never worked as a researcher in a museum. In this situation I was a representative of the academy, where the role of a researcher is somewhat different than at the museum. So, I was able to turn full attention to the perception of self of museum-working researchers, without remarkable prior experience.

Bringing together all the above examples, I find that it is not the same whether a university researcher or a museum researcher studies a museum. This time my position was somewhere in between museum and academia. Consequently, the analysis was most influenced by the fact that I knew the Estonian cases in a broader context, but in the cases of Latvia, Lithuania and Finland I had to limit myself to the words of the interviewees and the available written materials. Below, I will reflect a little on how my Estonian museum background also influenced fieldwork outside Estonian museums.

An essential observation is that a label of "belonging to the same group" was extended to me abroad when I introduced myself not only as an ethnologist from the university but also as a former museum worker. On the other hand, I realized that such a "confession" increased the risk that some concepts would be explained in less detail and an understanding of professional slang would be expected. Outside Estonia, my interest in research was addressed rather like the understandable curiosity of a colleague from a neighbouring country about colleagues' work abroad. An additional nuance to my research position in foreign museums was that the interviewees asked questions from myself, in the style "but how do you do it in Estonia?" Also, it was stated that "you know it already, you have the same way", to which I was able to answer sometimes that we still "have it a different way". On such occasions, a certain "mutual informativity" emerged, which is pointed out by Anderson (2006: 383).

Analysing my interview style, I rely on Mats Alvesson (2011: 5–6), who advocates "romanticism" in the interviewing. Such approach should not necessarily involve emotions, the most important is authenticity expressed in talk: "ideas, values, understandings of practices, efforts to reconstruct processes and interactions, and so on" (Alvesson 2011: 6). According to Alvesson, an open interview is better suited than a structured one for the "romantic researcher" whose intention is to get close to the interviewee's true self (2011: 5–6). My interviews were semi-structured, but with a spacious scope, as the functions of museum work are intertwined. The researcher described by Alvesson who builds trust and commitment between the interviewer and the interviewee, fits well with my approach to interviewing. I agree that only in a "warm" situation the interviewee is free to

[39] My personal experience has been gained in times when the model of the curator-driven exhibition was predominant in Estonia, in the late 1990s – early 2000s.

express themselves authentically and will produce trustworthy talk (Alvesson 2011: 6). Of course, it is more vital when the aim is to understand the interviewee's inner world. However, the study of the professional identity of the curators also benefited from the expression on ideas, feelings, intentions and the social reality experienced. Alvesson (2011: 6) also believes that making close personal contact with the interviewee can minimize the problem that the interviewee says what he or she thinks the researcher wants to hear. In my opinion, a risk will always remain that the interviewee is guided either by social norms and the desire to please, or also by the fear that openness will be misused. Russell Bernard (2006: 239–250) points out the same inevitabilities in the guidelines for ethnographic interview practitioners.

In the case of Estonia, I could not fully follow Bernard's (2006: 216) suggestion "Get people to a topic of interest and get out of the way" because for me, interviewing acquaintances sometimes meant a separate effort to keep the focus so as not to let the story deviate too far away. There is a lot of information in the interviews conducted in Estonia and in half of the cases also a lot of emotionality: laughter, bitterness and sadness. More open communication was evident in the interviews I did with my former colleagues. With the EHM interviewees, my position was more neutral than in the ENM, because we only knew each other briefly.

When it comes to interviews in Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, the issue of foreign and native languages appears. There is an approach in reflexivity called discursive deconstruction, where attention is paid to the ambiguity of meanings in language used and how it impacts on modes of presentation (Finlay 2002: 222). In the following, I am not going to deconstruct the use of language, but I agree with sociologist Bogusia Temple (2008), who encourages researchers to think about how languages are used in their research. Temple highlights that how people present themselves and how they are perceived is affected by the languages they use (2008: 362).

At the very beginning it crossed my mind to involve native language speakers in fieldwork. This would have been inevitable if I had investigated activities of museum mediation, but I did not consider it necessary for interviews with curators. As professionals with university degree, curators must speak at least one foreign language, and I hoped that my ability to communicate in English or Russian would solve the situation. In Latvia and Lithuania, the majority was ready to speak both. English was preferred among the younger generation, while the older generation preferred Russian and German.

The role of the language spoken by the interviewee was most evident in how it affected the use of the terms. Usually there was a mutual understanding during the interview, the gap might appear much later when I tried to translate the term into Estonian or from Russian into English. Then follow up communication by e-mail was needed to clarify how something was understood. For example, in the case of a specialist in museum collections and research, for whom I used the title *curator* in English or *куратор* in Russian, it was difficult to find a match in Estonian for a translation of the Lithuanian job title *muziejininkas*. I also realized

that by using the word *curator* (*куратор*) myself, I influenced one interviewee. I understood it when talking with another interviewee whom I had not yet influenced with *куратор* used the term *музеевед* in Russian. Finally, I decided to translate *muziejininkas* as a museum professional (*muuseumitöötaja* in Estonian) to avoid using the term *museologist*, which may rather refer to a researcher who studies museums.[40]

The use of a foreign language did not technically interfere with the interviews, but some language barriers remained. Depending on the individuals' fluency in foreign language, there was more or less hesitation and pauses in finding the right words, myself included. It is interesting that in the case of Finland, the language barrier was more noticeable. Presumably, it was influenced by my decision, not to offer an opportunity for an interview in Finnish as I wanted to be in a more equal position.

4.2 Additional sources

Documents, both on paper and electronically, are increasingly used as a source in anthropological studies. Official documents express certain bureaucratic rules, ideologies, practices, subjectivity, give an idea of the organization itself (see Hull 2012; Riles 2006). For me, the documents were a particularly valuable source for opening up cultural and museum policies, but also for a better understanding of the organization's functioning, tasks and structure. Some electronic documents were easier to find on the web, but I also got documents by e-mail or on paper from my key-informants during fieldwork. Those documents can be divided into two groups: 1) Official laws and policies of countries, statistical data. Some of them have been translated into English (e.g., Creative Latvia 2014; Mattila 2018); 2) work arrangement documents of the institution – job descriptions, reports and strategic plans of the organization. As a rule, they are only in native language, not translated.

In order to compare the museums' background, I used statistical indicators which would give an idea of the size and economic capacity of the museum – the number of employees, budget and own revenue. The latter shows the extent to which museums are affected by the neoliberal politics and the extent to which they participate in the creative industries. It was not easy to find comparable data as each country has its own tradition of how to present data.[41] It is also noteworthy that the Estonian data were the most hidden due to data protection law, so I received data by personally contacting the National Heritage Board. The Statistics

[40] See discussion about why most museum employees are not museologists, as one cannot claim to be museologist simply because of working in a museum – in Desvallées and Mairesse 2010: 52–56, 67–68).

[41] In the case of employee data, I therefore operate with their overall number, and adjustments are given according to the specifics of each country's data (in the case of Latvia, for example, the number of posts and the number of employees vary).

for Finnish and Lithuanian museums is most easily available: if one gets to the right website with the search, one can download large Excel spreadsheets with all kinds of data for each individual museum. In Latvia, statistics are available on the *Cultural Data portal (https://kulturasdati.lv/lv),* but access to those which interested me was limited. Asking my fieldwork key-informant, I received a web link to the museum's annual report in PDF format, where I found the data.

The **website** is a good source for exploring the museum's "face" directed outside. One would think that visiting a website is a matter of course, but I find it to be a versatile source. First, you can get contacts and information about exhibitions, collections, and organization structure. Websites were therefore an important source for preparing for visits. However, it turned out that it is equally telling what kind of information cannot be found on the website, or what kind of information has not been translated, for example into English. It is also telling when some topics are summarized very briefly.

When using websites as a source, visual screenshots are essential, because websites are constantly changing. I didn't realize it right at the beginning and so I only have screenshots of the Estonian History Museum, but fortunately I made fieldwork notes about websites as well (Reidla FN 2017–2019). As a researcher, I was lucky that all the museums under study also had an English version of the website, although the national language and English did not always correspond to each other as for the amount of information.

However, some museum websites were surprisingly unhelpful for obtaining personal contact information. This is particularly true in the case of Latvia and Lithuania. In addition to general contacts, only the director and heads of departments were listed personally on the website. The lack of a list of staff and posts hindered an overview of staff and posts in general.[42] At the same time, it proved in the cases of Latvia and Lithuania, that digging deeply into a website representations of the organization's chart (in the respective national language) become visible, which was not the case in Estonia. The special feature of Finland is that the National Museum is part of the Finnish Heritage Agency (*Museovirasto)*, so they have a joint map of the organization. It was also possible to monitor the list of employees by departments of the *Museovirasto*. Both the structure and the list of staff were available in Finnish and English, so it was good to compare how job titles are translated (FinHeritAgency website: Organization).

In addition to the National Museum of Finland, translations of staff's job titles were available only on the website of the Estonian History Museum (EHM website: people). This museum stood out by showing photos of employees. But a structure map was missing. However, as the list of employees was designed by structural units, it helped to understand the structure. The staff contacts on the website of the Estonian National Museum were also divided by structural units,

[42] Compared to the time of fieldwork, there have been changes in the presentation of employees on the NML website. Whereas, until Spring 2019 only the director and two deputy directors were represented, by February 2021 the public relations staff has been added by names.

but no English translation was found.[43] Only general contact telephones and e-mails were translated, and this selection illustrates the importance that the museum gives to visitor-services and earning the own revenue.

One conclusion that can be drawn from the contact data concerns organizational culture. The individual specialists are not highlighted in the case of Latvia and Lithuania – only those higher in the hierarchy are treated as representative figures, while in Estonia and Finland the contacts of staff are presented equally which allows for individual communications.

Secondly, one can conclude what areas of activity museums prioritize, according to the website. The Estonian National Museum website emphasizes entertainment for the audience and sales not only through the way contacts are presented. A variety of exhibitions, events, the sale of services and products is on the foreground, but one can also notice an abundance of educational programs (on the Estonian website only). The research fields and ongoing projects are introduced, but among all other comparable museums, the introduction of Estonian National Museum's collections is the shortest, both in the Estonian and English versions. The Estonian History Museum also does not pay much attention to the collections, not in English at least, although in the Estonian version is an overview of the collections.

A similar feature of the websites of the National Museum of Finland (NMF website) and the Estonian History Museum (EHM website) is that exhibition activity primarily catches the eye, and both provide similar messages regarding the missing research activities. In contrast, the presentation of the richness of collections seems to be a priority for the National Museum of Finland, as it is done in an attractive and versatile way (although to a greater extent in Finnish).

Compared to the others, the Latvian and Lithuanian cases stand out by providing information about collections equally in English and the native language; also the role of collections as a pillar of the museum stood out. The historical overview of the National History Museum of Latvia shows that research and publishing activities are considered important in presenting the image of the institution alongside exhibitions and programs (NHML website: History). However, there is no separate space for research activities on the website, detailed info can be read from the annual reports, which are linked. The website of the National Museum of Lithuania places great emphasis on collections and the mediation of collections by introducing several series of publications presenting the materials of the collections.

[43] In 2016–2017, the translation of then new website was modest; today, the main summary information on the ENM website has been translated into English, Finnish, French, Latvian and Russian. Nevertheless, in February 2021, the ENM website still presented the staff's contact data according to departments in Estonian only. See https://erm.ee/et/kontakt/üldkontakt (accessed February 22, 2021).

4.3 The studied museums in the context of fieldwork

Next, I will give an up-do-date overview of each museum I studied. It covers both the process of fieldwork and the general situation of the museum. Some data that indicate the scale and profile of the museum will be provided: location of the main building of the museum and existence of branches, permanent exhibitions currently open, number of employees in 2017 and 2018, budget and own revenue in 2017 and 2018 as well as description of the organizational structure. Finally, some characteristics of the group of interviewees are presented. Thus, my aim was not to delve into the historical overview of museums, but to highlight the most important points of reference from the recent past in order to create a context, and to add a reflection based on my experience.

4.3.1 Estonian National Museum

Estonian National Museum (ENM, *Eesti Rahva Muuseum*) was established in 1909 to preserve the heritage of Estonian peasant culture, the collection of which had been initiated by the Learned Estonian Society and the Estonian Students' Society, and to continue collecting. During the Soviet occupation, the integrity of the museum's collections was shattered by distributing most of the folklore, art and archaeology collections to other institutions. Thus, the artefacts of the Finno-Ugric peoples and the Estonian peasantry and the status of an ethnographic museum were preserved. Today's ENM has left aside the image of the ethnographic museum as too narrow. It started a rather long journey of transformation that began as early as the first half of the 1990s, with the extension of research and exhibition topics to contemporary everyday culture. At the end of 2016, the ENM's new building and new permanent Estonian cultural history exhibition *Encounters* marked a decisive step out of the "shadow" of an ethnographic museum. The ENM addresses the Estonian population as a whole, not just Estonian speakers and aims to reflect both the collective memory and the national and social diversity and dynamics of historical experience over time (see Rattus 2014; Kohtumised 2018).

As the **collections** illustrate the profile of the museum, as well as the expected educational profile of researchers, the composition of the collections is provided in Table 1 (at the end of Chapter 4). As one can see, there are not any collections of archaeology or numismatics at the ENM. Historically, the ENM has a particularly large representation of the material heritage of peasant culture of the 19th and early 20th centuries, originating both from Estonia and other Finno-Ugric peoples. In order to avoid overlapping in current collection activities with the Estonian History Museum, it has been agreed that the ENM will focus more on the everyday and private materials, while the history museum collects the political or so-called official history.

ENM is **located** on the territory of the historical Raadi manor in Tartu, yet, the main house is a new building, which was completed in 2016. Although some

collections of other museums have been merged with the ENM (see Table 1), there is currently only one **branch**, the Heimtali Museum since 2009.

Since 2016, the ENM has two main **permanent exhibitions**: 1) on the Estonian cultural history from prehistoric to recent times – *Encounters*, and 2) on the way of thought and life of the Finno-Ugric peoples – *Echo of the Urals*.

Alongside with the move to a new building in 2016, the ENM underwent a major change in both quantitative indicators and qualitative opportunities. Whereas in previous decades the ENM had 100–110 employees, the new museum building with two restaurant-cafés and other expanded service and marketing activities increased the staff. The **number of employees** was 142 both in 2017 and in 2018.[44]

The budget[45] of ENM was 6,011,855 euros in 2017, including revenue from paid services – 2,931,584 euros which represents 48.7% of budget. In 2018, the budget of the ENM was 5,864,950 euros, including revenue from paid services – 2,207,434 euros which is 37.6% of budget. Thus, the share of ENM own revenue is quite high, ranging from 40–50%.

The **organizational structure** was also changed in 2016 with the move to the new building. The structure was already function-based already from earlier, but now the sales and service functions have become more prominent. The four main functions of the museum were divided between four departments, the activities of which are organized by three deputy directors: 1) the chief curator is responsible for the collection and preservation of cultural heritage (collections department, conservation department); 2) the research director is responsible for research of cultural heritage (research department) and 3) the head of the sales and service department is responsible for mediating cultural heritage (sales and service department) (Reidla FN 2016). Separate units provide support services (finance, public and external relations, human resources, digital services, administrative services). The activities of the sales and service department as well as of the public and external relations unit correspond to what I consider to be a communication function in my dissertation: dealing with room rental, catering, museum shop service, as well as organizing conferences, cultural programs and exhibitions.

My **fieldwork** at the ENM took place in several stages (Table 2). Despite my former experience of more than a decade, the two-week observation internship in November 2016 in the renewed space added new knowledge, as the organizational structure, staff and expanded museum mission had changed in addition to the location. In November 2016, I specifically monitored the work of one unit – the Cultural Heritage Study Centre belonging to the research department and conducted interviews for my master's thesis. I also visited the ENM for interviews in March and April 2017, in September and October 2018, and in February 2019. A total of 6 interviews have been conducted for the doctoral thesis

[44] Thereby the staff included 131 full-time employees. Data received from the National Heritage Board, e-mail 16 February, 2021.

[45] Data received from the National Heritage Board, e-mail 16 February, 2021.

at the ENM and 7 more of the previous interviews made within the framework of the master's thesis have been used. Along with the master's thesis interviews, I actually did more interviews at the ENM than these 13, but since I did not use them all, they have not been included in these accounts.

Of the interviewees, 9 worked at the research department, one at the collections, one was related to the sales, outreach and administration, one to the museum education and one to the design. In terms of work experience, most had long-term experience of working at the same museum – in three cases well over 25 years, in four cases about 20 years, in three cases about 15 years, in two cases just under 10 years, in one case less than 5 years. Of the planned ones, a couple of younger employees who were on maternity leave at that time were not interviewed, and a couple of senior employees did not want to give interviews. In general, interviewees at the ENM were overwhelmed by uncertainty about changes in the museum landscape, especially the need to earn revenue, and concerns about a shortage of newcomers interested in research of museum collections. This may have been due to the composition of interviewees (mostly senior staff).

4.3.2 Estonian History Museum

The Estonian History Museum (EHM, *Eesti Ajaloomuuseum*) dates back to 1864, when the Provincial Museum was established on the initiative of the Estonian Literary Society. On the basis of its collections, a state history museum was established after the Soviet occupation of Estonia, which after various new titles became the Estonian History Museum in 1989. Similarly to the ENM, the collections of the History Museum suffered from redistribution and ideological cleansing during the Soviet era. Among other things, some collections from the Estonian National Museum were transferred to the History Museum, and a Natural History Museum was established on the basis of the nature collections of the History Museum. Table 1 illustrates the variable profile of the History Museum collections, which contains layers from the varied stages of the museum's development – from the 19th century, when everything was collected, to today's specialization in the country's political history. However, the collections of archaeology and numismatics play a prominent part of this diversity.

As for the introduction of the new museum paradigm, from the end of 2000s at the EHM the focus shifted to the production of innovative, interactive exhibitions and structural changes were made to emphasize importance of the communication. One after another, two permanent exhibitions equipped with modern technology were completed: in Maarjamäe Castle in 2008 and in the museum's historic Great Guild building in 2011. Then preparations began for the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia: the renovation of the entire Maarjamäe castle complex with the park area, a new exhibition and storages were built in Maarjamäe in 2015–2018, in October 2017 a new Film Museum and its permanent exhibition were opened. During my first fieldwork, the focus of the EHM

was on the preparation of a permanent exhibition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Republic, the exhibition *My Free Country* was opened in the renovated castle in February 2018.

EHM is **located** on two properties with historical buildings – in the Tallinn Old Town in the Great Guild (*Suurgild*) building and in Maarjamäe castle. The Film Museum established in 2006 is a **branch** of EHM. Since 2019, the Theatre and Music Museum has been merged with EHM into a foundation.

Two main **permanent exhibitions** are: 1) Estonian history from ancient times to the 19th century *Spirit of Survival* since 2011 and 2) Estonian history from the beginning of the 20th century to today *My free country* since 2018.

The **number of employees** at the EHM was 69 in 2017 and 74 in 2018.[46] The number of employees has increased in order to serve visitors (Reidla FN 2017–2019).

The budget[47] of the EHM was 1,039,148 euros in 2017, including revenue from paid services – 376,406 euros, which represents 36.2% of budget. In 2018, the budget of the EHM was 1,136,569 euros, including revenue from paid services – 661,755 euros, which is 58.2% of budget.

The **organizational structure** was changed in 2013 and then in 2019, when the Foundation Estonian History Museum was established. During my fieldwork, the EHM had three function-based departments: the collections and research department, the communication department and the administration department. Each of those functional areas was managed by a deputy director. The communication department was established with the structural change of 2013, with the aim of mediating the museum's research and collection work to the public. In the same year, the research department and the collections department were merged under the supervision of the research director. Both researcher-curators and collection keepers work in the collections and research department.

My **fieldwork** at the EHM took place in two parts (Table 2). I conducted five interviews in October 2017 and four in November 2018, when a new permanent exhibition was already open, and the formation of the foundation was imminent. The staff was familiar to me before, thus I knew whom to ask for an interview. However, out of the 11 persons I contacted by e-mail, two refused the interview, excusing that they would not be able to meet my goals. Of the nine interviewees, five were from the collections and research department (including one from the administration), one represented education, one design, and two communication and exhibitions. In terms of work experience, one interviewee had more than 40 years, two had about 20 years, three had 15 years and one had 10 years of experience at the EHM. One interviewee had about 5 years of experience at the EHM, but 15 years of general museum experience, and one had 2.5 years of experience at the EHM, but 10 years of general museum experience. As some of the interviewees at the EHM asked to remain anonymous, anonymity has been

[46] Thereby the staff included 44 full-time employees in 2017 and 49 in 2018. Data received from the National Heritage Board, Rääbis e-mail February 16, 2021.

[47] Data received from the National Heritage Board, Rääbis e-mail February 16, 2021.

extended to all museums. The EHM interviews revealed tensions within the organization, dissatisfaction with both the organization of work and colleagues, both from bottom up and *vice versa*. While the influence of the museum's need for revenue in the exhibition policy was felt as a reality at the ENM, those interviewed at the EHM spoke of it as something to think about after becoming a foundation. This confirms the assumption voiced by museum staff that the foundation means more pressure to earn its own revenue – yet, the budget figures above indicated that the EHM already earned a significant percent of income before becoming a foundation.

4.3.3 National History Museum of Latvia

The National History Museum of Latvia (NHML, *Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures Muzejs*) was founded in 1876 as the Museum of the Science Committee of the Riga Latvian Society. In 1924 the museum was renamed the State History Museum instead of the Latvian Ethnographic Museum (Ķencis and Kuutma 2011: 510). In the same way as in the EHM and ENM, during the Second World War the collection, documentation, storage and exhibition management was changed in accordance with the policy of the Soviet Union, and the name of the museum was changed several times (NHML website: History). Since September 2005, the name of the museum has been the Latvian National Museum of History (Ķencis and Kuutma 2011: 512) The museum was accredited as a state museum for the first time in 2000, and the next accreditations were, according to the procedure rules, in 2004 and 2014 (Latvia's Cultural Data portal).

The composition of the NHML **collections** is given in Table 1. The museum collections hold artefacts and documents from all fields of Latvian history. As an institution with the status of a national museum, collections of the NHML cover the whole country territorially, chronologically and thematically, and are the most important and complete in terms of their profile for the state.

The NHML has had **branch museums** and still does have some. Since 2010, the museum has merged the Latvian Culture Museum of Dauderi and since 2015 the People's Front Museum (*Tautas frontes muzejs*), the collections of which represent the freedom struggle against Soviet occupation and the so-called Third Awakening materials (NHML website: History). Riga Castle was the NHML's **main building** from the 1920s, but the museum was forced to move out after a fire in 2013. This caused an uneasy situation, which still prevailed in the museum during my fieldwork in 2017–2018, as the renovation works at the Riga Castle had been postponed for a longer period than planned. [48] Thus, as of May 2014, NHML collections and exhibitions were located at two temporary locations: the exhibition building and its staff in the city centre (at Brīvības boulevard 32) and

[48] In 2020 the collections and staff were located to a new storage building (Pulka 8). After the renovation of Riga Castle, the exposition will return to its historical home (NHML website: History).

the collections and other staff in another building (Lāčplēša 106), which were relatively far apart. In order to continue the activities aimed at visitors and not to lose its significance in society, it was decided in 2014 to open a new permanent exhibition in a temporary location as soon as possible (Reidla FN 2017–2019). Thus, the concept of the previous exhibition was not changed, the former exposition was practically restored in a new place and the exhibition halls were gradually opened in the temporary exhibition house.

The **permanent exhibition**, opened between 2014 and 2016 presents the history of Latvia from prehistoric times until the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991.

The **number of employees** at the NHML (in all branches) was 142[49] in 2017, but there were 132 job posts (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2017: 15). The number of job posts in all branches was 123.7 in 2018 (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2018: 14).

The budget of NHML was 2,916,417 euros in 2017, including revenue from paid services – 65,563 euros, i.e., 2.2% of the budget (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2017: 13)[50]. In 2018, the budget of NHML was 2,685,303 euros, including revenue from paid services – 76,806 euros, i.e., 2.9% of the budget (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2018: 12)[51].

The **organizational structure** was partly based on collections (see also Table 1), but a function-based approach was reflected in the structure as well. The three Deputy Directors organized the work in three functional areas: research, collections, and economic management. The research director and the director of the collections together supervised the collections field. At the same time, collections and research were divided into departments based on the disciplines corresponding to the collections, and these departments have separate heads (departments of numismatics, archaeology, ethnography, and history with its subdivisions – medieval, modern, and contemporary history). Additionally, the Museum of Dauderi and the Museum of the Popular Front were separate departments (NHML website: Contacts). Communication was not presented as a separate unit in this structure, but there were two employees for this function. Activities for the public were the responsibility of the Department of Museum Pedagogy and Exhibitions, which reported to the Director of Research.

My **fieldwork** at the NHML took place in two parts (Table 2). During my first four interviews in November 2017, the *Latvia's Century* exhibition dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia was prepared. The last four interviews with five people took place in December 2018, when the centenary

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[49] Including 74 substantial specialists (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2017: 15).

[50] State budget subsidy in 2017 was 2,659,584 euros (91.2%), but in addition a variety of grants, donations and transfers were received amounting to 191,270 euros (6.6%) (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2017: 13).

[51] State budget subsidy, including *Latvia's Century* project in 2018 was 2,605,202 euros (97%), donations and gifts received were 3,295 euros (0.1%) (Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures… 2018: 12).

exhibition had been open for half a year. I had no previous acquaintance with the museum, so I started contacting through the research director and afterwards my main contact has been the head of the department of Medieval, Modern and Recent History. He mediated my request to other staff as I described him my scope of interest. Thus, I do not know if there were those who refused to be interviewed. The key-informant also introduced museum-related documents in Latvian to me.

From all seven interviewees three worked in the field of education and exhibitions and four in different departments based on collections. Two interviewees had more than 25 years, two had more than 20 years and three had about 10 years of work experience. At the NHML I interviewed two persons twice, a year apart, because for the first time I talked to them more about the organization and work in general in order to get acquainted, and the second time I could talk more about the work of these professionals. I conducted one interview with two curators at the same time, as we discussed their joint experience curating the *Latvia's Century* exhibition.

I started to get acquainted with the museum with a thorough guided tour at the permanent exhibition. This was not the traditional tour, conducted by the head of the Department of Pedagogy and Exhibitions, but a combination of an interview and an exhibition presentation. Compared to the recently completed and renovated buildings of the Estonian History Museum and the Estonian National Museum, the situation in the NHML was contrasting. Both the exhibition and the staff area were temporarily housed in old building where only minor repairs had been made. However, this was not unprecedented, as Estonian museums experienced ascetic conditions as well before their infrastructure was upgraded. Also, the practice when communication functions are divided between several employees and the low marketing budget were very similar to the Estonian museums in the early 2000s.

4.3.4 National Museum of Lithuania

The predecessor of the National Museum of Lithuania (NML, *Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus*) was the Museum of Antiquities which was opened in 1856 at the premises of Vilnius University. Since 1996, the museum gained the status of the national museum as it keeps the most representative collections of Lithuanian archaeology, history and ethnic culture. The museum's main unit is housed in the historical defensive buildings of the Vilnius Castle Complex (NML website: History).

Table 1 provides the composition of the NML **collections**, the management of which was divided between thematic departments**.** The museum's **organizational structure** was divided into three major areas: Lithuanian collections, auxiliary, and exposition units (which are museum branches). The structure partly followed a collection/discipline-based and partly a function-based principle. There were collection-based departments with subdivisions at the NML: departments of

history, ethnic culture, iconography, contemporary history, numismatics, and department of archaeology which was divided into early modern and mediaeval unit. The themes of the museum's collections coincide with the departments (see Table 1). Accordingly, the collection-based departments represented different disciplines. Auxiliary departments were function-based, with the purpose to provide additional support to the activities of the museum collections and branches in different locations. There were the exhibition department, education department, restoration centre, archive and library among auxiliary units. The work of all collections was organized by the chief curator who is also the deputy director.

The museum has several **branches** both in Vilnius and throughout Lithuania: The Palanga Burgomaster Jonas Šliūpas Museum, Jonas Basanavičius Birthplace, Vincas Kudirka Museum, The House of Signatories, Kazys Varnelis House-Museum, The Former Detention House, The Bastion of the Vilnius Defensive Wall, Gediminas Castle Tower (NML website: Locations).

Two main **permanent exhibitions** are: 1) Housed at the Old Arsenal, partially renovated in 2008–2010, focuses on the history of Lithuania from the formation of the state to the middle of the 20th century and to Lithuanian ethnic culture, 2) Housed at the New Arsenal since 2000, the exhibition on Lithuanian archaeology *Prehistory of Lithuania* (NML website: Exhibitions; Reidla FN 2017–2019).

The **number of employees** at the NML (in all branches) was 244 in 2017 (including 17 of administration and 106 of substantial professionals. The number of employees in 2018 was 255, including 18 of administration and 117 of substantial professionals (LitMuseum Statistic website).

The budget funds received were 9,089,739 euros in 2017, and 9,536,715 euros in 2018 (LitMuseum Statistic website). Official statistics do not provide data on the earned revenue of Lithuanian museums. I found additional comparative data in a Strategy plan of the National Museum of Lithuania for 2017–2019 (Lietuvos Nacionalinis Muziejus planas 2017). According to this, the planned appropriations for strategic objectives and programs (collection, conservation, restoration, preservation and promotion of museum collections) were in the amount of 6,038,000 euros, including 5,638,000 euros (93.4%) from the state budget and 400,000 euros (6.6%) of the museum's own revenue (Lietuvos Nacionalinis Muziejus planas 2017: 3) for 2017. It must be taken into account that this is a plan, not result, however, the planned own revenue shows a much lower ratio to total costs than in the cases of Estonia and Finland.

My **fieldwork** at the National Museum of Lithuania took place in two parts (Table 2). I did not have any previous contact with this museum or its staff. As there were very few people mentioned on the museum's website, I first contacted the director by e-mail, and afterwards the deputy director for collections communicated with me and remained a permanent contact person. He also mediated the contacts of interviewees, guided me to their working rooms, and repeatedly confirmed that he was there for me, if necessary. Similarly, as it was in the case of National History Museum of Latvia, I don't know if there were anyone refusing the interview at the NML.

As the professionals shared the workspace between two or more, sometimes a colleague supplemented the main interviewee from the side, thus, there were 8 interviews and 10 interviewees, as sometimes there were several people together. I interviewed the contact person twice, both during the fieldwork, the second time the focus was on the experience of making an exhibition at the House of the Signatories (*Signatarų namai*). In total, I interviewed 6 curators from collection-based departments and one branch, and 4 employees from auxiliary departments (one designer, and three educators together). One interviewee had about 40 years, seven about 20 years, and two about 10 years of work experience.

At the NML I got a thorough overview of the House of the Signatories with the head of this branch museum. Again, this was both a substantive introduction and an interview on the organizational aspects of the exhibition production. The House of Signatories was chosen as it was the most recently reopened permanent exhibition of the NML, renewed in 2018 for the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuanian independence. The exposition is dedicated to the Lithuanian national awakening movement in the end of 19th and early 20th centuries and the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1918.

The two main permanent exhibitions were extensive, and I got acquainted with them twice, both alone and together with three museum educators. In contrast to the House of Signatories, the two main permanent exhibitions on Lithuanian archaeology, ethnology and political history were partially renovated about ten years ago and there were no major changes planned. However, during my first fieldwork, there was talk of a plan to add a period between the two world wars of the Republic of Lithuania to the permanent exhibition, and during my second fieldwork it was almost completed, although not yet open. Anyway, the timing was right for me, I got a tour with the curators to the newly completed permanent exhibition about Lithuania in the 1920s and 1930s.

4.3.5 National Museum of Finland

The National Museum of Finland (NMF, *Suomen Kansallismuseo*) considers its starting point from 1893, when several collections were combined to form the State Historical Museum; the name National Museum of Finland was established after Finland became independent (NMF website: History). The museum building was completed in 1910 and opened to the public in 1916 (Petterson 2011: 274). In addition to the main building in Helsinki, there are **branches** of the museum in other places in Finland: Olavinlinna Castle, Häme Castle, The Maritime Museum, Seurasaari Open-Air Museum, Tamminiemi, Hvitträsk, Louhisaari Manor, Langinkoski (the Imperial Fishing Lodge), and The Prison museum.

The collections of the NMF are Finland's largest cultural-historical collections, the composition of which is provided in Table 1. The museum preserves materials and phenomena related to Finland's state history as well as nationally significant historical and cultural turning points. In 2016, The Finnish Heritage Agency *(Museovirasto)* opened a new collection and conservation centre in Vantaa,

which is the largest and most modern in Finland. It is going to become the main repository of the NMF (Museovirasto avasi … 2016).

The permanent exhibitions in the main building are 1) since 2018 – *Prehistory*, and 2) since 2019 – Finland's history from the beginning of 20th century until today – *Story of Finland.* The NMF permanent exhibitions will be gradually renovated from 2017 onwards. Eventually, the main exhibitions will exhibit Finnish history from prehistory to the present day, but some parts (medieval and modern history periods) are under reconstruction until 2021.

The **number of employees** has decreased over the decades. In 1972, when the NMF became a department of The Finnish Heritage Agency, the museum had 234 employees (Pettersson 2011: 275). In recent years, there are about 120 permanent employees (in 2017 there were 115, in 2018 there were 125) in the NMF (FinMusStatistics website).

The **Budget** of NMF was 20,561,273 euros in 2017, the museum's own total revenue was 2,956,190 euros (14.4% of total budget), of which ticket revenue was 1,850,238 euros. The budget of the NMF in 2018 was 20,342,078 euros, own revenue 4,097,182 euros (20.1% of total budget), of which ticket revenue was 2,740,049 euros. (FinMusStatistics website)

In terms of organization structure both a function-based and a collection-based approach were represented. There were three major function-based areas: marketing and communication, collections, and museum services. Museum Services includes departments of exhibitions, public programmes and events, also branches in different locations (FinHeritAgency website). The collections department had three subdivisions: 1) the collections centre (storage), 2) conservation, and 3) collections and research (Article I). Curators (*amanuenssi*) and collection keepers (*intendentti*) were working in the collection-based units – history, Finnish ethnology, the Finno-Ugric collection, ethnography of other nations, the Maritime museum, the independence era, the coin chamber (see Table 1).

My **fieldwork** at the NMF took place twice, exactly one year apart (Table 2). During my first visit, the renewed parts of the permanent exhibition were recently opened, while the renovation of the medieval and modern parts was in the planning stage. The first phase of the renewal, the exhibition on prehistory, was opened in April 2017. Next, the period from 1900s until today, dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Finnish state, was reopened in December 2017. So, the exhibition was half old, and half brand new. I had visited Finland's previous permanent exhibition, opened in 2000, several times. While getting acquainted with the new exhibition, I interviewed the head of the Public Programs and Events department, who was also the project manager of the exhibition. A total of five people were interviewed, three of whom were curators from the Department of Collections and Research, one from the Department of Exhibitions, one from the Department of Public Programs and Events. One person has more than 30 years, two more than 15 years, two about 10 years of work experience in museums. Compared to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, there were more professionals with experience in working in several museums.

The interviews reflected the lack of space for temporary exhibitions. By the time of my second fieldwork, 2019, an architectural competition had been announced to build an additional building in the courtyard of the museum (Reidla FN 2017–2019). The new building is planned to be completed by 2025 and thus make the courtyard area available to a wider audience, while the museum will have new exhibition spaces (Rakennuslehti 5.12.2019).

4.4 Methodological starting points and data analysis

The scope of this research combines museum studies and organizational anthropology, and in the latter, the researchers have mainly used the ethnographic method since 2010 (Czarniawska 2012: 127). As Morse, Bethany and Harvey Richardson (2018: 112) suggest, approaching the museum as an organization presents significant scope to expand museum research by recovering "some of the concerns of 'old' as a necessary step to understanding contemporary museum functions". Using the ethnographic method is relevant, because organizations may simply "adopt and signal their alignment with political agendas", but approaching the museum as 'peopled' is useful "in addressing the notion of change in museums" (Morse *et al.* 2018: 116).

Although I had a general idea based on the theoretical literature about what changes have taken place in the global museum landscape, I was open to the possibility that the situation in museums I study might be different. Thus, I support my theoretical-methodological approach with a broader literature on the paradigm of the new museology, but the narrower theoretical focus comes from empirical data described above. The general methodological approach I used throughout was qualitative text analysis in line with research questions.

During the fieldwork I audio-recorded each interview and made written notes as well. Before analysing I transcribed the interviews, also indicating the places of expression of emotions inside the text. Next, I coded transcriptions into categories (themes), identified the main and sub-themes, then summarized and compared and looked how the data were related to each other. Quotations from interviews explaining the conclusions have been used as examples in presenting the analysis. Consciously, the quotations from the interviews are more abundantly present in Article III, which focuses on narrated discourses.

In order to test the validity of the classical curator concept and its representation in the museums under study, I used qualitative content analysis (Bernard 2006: 492). I also used deductive coding to check the possible change in the organizational structure by analysing the content of documents and websites. Building on content analysis and the deductive approach, Article I examined: 1) the appearance of the so-called second museum revolution in the structure of representative museums (van Mensch 2004), and 2) the manifestation of museum's three main functions according to the PRC model formulated by the Reinwardt Academy (see Figure 1; Maroević 1998: 224).

For the most part, however, I used a grounded theory approach to discovering concepts and building models based on closer reading of the text (Bernard 2006: 492). Thus, I identified themes in transcribed texts and coded the presence and absence of those themes in the texts by using inductive coding. The grounded theory approach outlined the main tasks of the curators related to museum collections in Article I, and two models of exhibition production were derived using grounded theory in Article II.

Discourse analysis was used for Article III. I followed the concept of giving discursive meaning to analyse the curators' perception of identity and the role played in the workplace. In doing so, I proceeded from the role theory used in organizational studies and concepts of role conflict and role ambiguity common in this theory (Kahn *et al.* 1964; Wickham and Parker 2007; Schmidt *et al.* 2014). In this study, identity is understood as a developing learning process involving emotions, constructed and negotiated in social interaction (Geijsel and Meijers 2005; Saayman and Crafford 2011; Ylijoki and Ursin 2013).

Table 1. Thematic composition of museum collections

Museum and main source of information	**Collections**
Estonian National Museum (*Eesti Rahva Muuseum*) Collections on the museum website: https://www.erm.ee/en/content/collections (in English) https://erm.ee/et/content/kogud (in Estonian)	Artefacts: Estonian, Finno-Ugric, foreign nations, cultural history, art. Archive: various sub-collections of manuscript materials, drawings, photos and negatives, postcards. Audiovisual materials. The collections of the Postal Museum in 2008, the Heimtali Museum in 2009 and the Tartu County Museum in 2013 have been added to the collections of the ENM. The museum has a library and some auxiliary collections
Estonian History Museum (*Eesti Ajaloomuuseum*) Collections on the museum website: https://www.ajaloomuuseum.ee/visiting/collections (in English, abbreviated version compared to the Estonian one) https://www.ajaloomuuseum.ee/muuseumist/kogud-ja-teadus/eesti-ajaloomuuseumi-kogu (in Estonian)	Archaeology, numismatics (also medals), seals and stamps, weapons, textiles, applied art, foreign ethnology, cultural history (incl. ethnography and furniture collection), art, photos and negatives, publications, documents, badges. The collection of the Film Museum established in 2006 has been added, as well as the collection of the Theatre and Music Museum in 2019, and the collection of the Estonian Museum of Economy in 2016.

Museum and main source of information	Collections
National History Museum of Latvia (*Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs)* Collections on the museum website: http://lnvm.lv/en/?page_id=42 (in English) http://lnvm.lv/?page_id=16088 (in Latvian)	The museum's collections are divided between thematic departments: 1) Archaeology (both objects and documentation of archaeological excavations), 2) Ethnography (both objects and fieldwork materials), 3) History (documents, maps, memoirs, books, photographs and negatives, household items, textiles, religious art, paintings), 4) Numismatics (coins, banknotes, medals, and paranumismatica)
National Museum of Lithuania (*Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus)* Collections on the museum website: http://www.lnm.lt/en/ (in English) http://www.lnm.lt/ (in Lithuanian)	The museum's collections are divided between thematic departments: 1) Archaeology, 2) History (Lithuanians in exile, deportation, resistance, souvenirs, sphragistics, textiles, written sources and cartography, historical objects), 3) Ethnic culture (clothing, furniture, tools, household utensils, iron grave crosses, sculptures, textile), 4) iconography (graphics, painting, sculpture, photos and negatives, postcards, philately, posters and architectural drawings), 5) numismatics (incl. medals, phaleristics, maps).
National Museum of Finland (*Suomen Kansallismuseo)* Collections on the museum website: https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/en/kansallismuseo (in English) https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/fi/kansallismuseo (in Finnish)	History, Finno-Ugric, ethnography, coins, independence period, and the Maritime Museum collection. The Independence period collection was established in 2017 to document the phenomena of the 20th and 21st centuries. Before, the objects of recent Finnish history were divided between historical and ethnographic collections.

Table 2. Interviewees

Museum	**Dates**	**Interviewees' codes**	**Characteristics of interviewees**
Estonian National Museum (*Eesti Rahva Muuseum*)	Nov 2016; Mar–Apr 2017; Mar 2018; Sep–Oct 2018; Feb 2019	ENM A, ENM B, ENM C, ENM D, ENM E, ENM F, ENM G; ENM H, ENM I, ENM J, ENM K, ENM L, ENM M	13 individuals: 10 research/collections (incl 3 managers); 1 exhibitions and outreach management; 1 education; 1 design
Estonian History Museum (*Eesti Ajaloomuuseum*)	Oct 2017; Nov 2018	EHM A, EHM B, EHM C, EHM D, EHM E, EHM F, EHM G, EHM H, EHM I	9 individuals: 5 research/collections (incl 1 manager); 2 exhibitions and outreach management; 1 education; 1 design
National History Museum of Latvia (*Latvijas Nacionālais Vēstures Muzejs*)	Nov 2017: Dec 2018	NHML A (aka* NHML G), NHML B, NHML C, NHML D (aka NHML H), NHML E, NHML F, NHML I	7 individuals: 4 research/collections/ (incl 2 managers); 2 education/exhibitions management; 1 design
National Museum of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Nacionalinis Muziejus*)	Mar 2018; Oct 2018	NML A, NML B, NML C (aka NML H), NML D, NML E, NML F, NML G, NML H, NML I, NML J	10 individuals: 6 research/collections (incl 2 managers); 3 education; 1 design
National Museum of Finland (*Suomen Kansallismuseo*)	Jan 2018; Jan 2019	NMF A, NMF B, NMF C, NMF D, NMF E	5 individuals: 3 research/collections; 2 education/exhibitions (incl 2 managers)

*aka – these are the museum staff who were interviewed twice.

5. SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES

The dissertation consists of three articles, the first of which was published in 2018 and two in 2020. The three articles form a whole that covers the three main areas of museum work: preservation (collection management), research, and communication. These areas or functions of the museum were also included in the main tasks of the classical curator. Together, the three articles provide a picture of the changing role of the classical curator in a situation where the focus of museums has shifted. The holistic concept is supported by the compactness of the material collection: fieldwork and interviews conducted to write these articles took place over a period of two and a half years, from autumn 2016 to spring 2019. The purpose of this timing was to capture the situation in a rapidly changing museum landscape.

The first article focuses on the aspect of curators' work with collections, the second on communication, and more narrowly exhibitions, and the third on research. The first article can also be seen as an introduction to all three. It provides a more thorough overview of the structure of the museums in question and the timeline of changes in the organization of work, and the job titles of the employees in the field of research and collections. The first article also deals in more detail with the idea of new museology, which gave rise to major changes in the global museum landscape. The second article addresses one of the most creative fields of museum work which also is most visible outside the museum – making exhibitions and emphasizing the field of communication. The third and final article focuses on the highly controversial topic of curator's identity in the framework of research activities at the museum. Understandably, the themes of the three articles are intertwined, as is the nature of museum work.

Article I

Reidla, Jana 2018. Curators With and Without Collections: A Comparative Study of Changes in the Curator's Work at National Museums in Finland and in the Baltic States. – *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics, 12 (*2): 115–138. DOI: 10.2478/jef-2018-0014

The aim of the article was to analyse the changes that have taken place in the last few decades in the main functions of the museum (preservation, research, and communication) and in the work of the curator. The article focused on the structural changes of the museum and the connection of the position of curator with museum collections in the three Baltic states and Finland. The first question was whether the so-called classical curator, who performs all the basic functions of a museum, still exists. Secondly, I asked if and what kinds of changes have taken place. Of the possible changes, I was particularly interested in those related to the organizational structure and the reorganization of the tasks and titles of

curators. However, the main questions of the article concerned the curator's work with collections: is it similar or different in the four neighbouring countries and how? Is it possible to compare the dynamics of change or to point out the impact of new museology on changes in the work with collections?

To find the answers to the questions, I formed a sample of five museums. The sample included the central cultural history museums of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland: National History Museum of Latvia, the National Museum of Lithuania, the Estonian History Museum, the Estonian National Museum and the National Museum of Finland. My assumption was that as these central museums have a similar position and mission in their country and they have collections covering similar themes, they are comparable. As I approached the research questions with ethnographic methods, I started my research with fieldwork and semi-structured interviews in all these museums from November 2017 to March 2018. In the article, I also used fieldwork and interview materials from the Estonian National Museum a year earlier – from November 2016 to April 2017. I used museum websites and working documents as additional sources to get an overview of the museums.

The article was framed by the idea of new museology and the shifting concept of the classical curator, who preserves, studies, and mediates the museum collections. As a result of the idea of new museology there has been a paradigm shift in the museum landscape worldwide, in short, museums have begun to pay more attention to the development of the communication function and social responsibility. Thus, the new museum puts the response to the needs of society in the foreground, while in the past the collection was the focus of museum work. Corresponding changes are also reflected in the duties and titles of museum professionals. Aligning with the trend of changes, the emphasis on the role, position and definition of the classical curator has shifted. At the same time, it has not been studied how this may have reflected in the museum landscape of the Baltic states and Finland, especially using the perspective of substantive staff.

Thus, I looked for changes in the work organization of the museums in my sample. By this I meant the formation of specialized departments based on functions; the shaping of professions towards greater specialization; change in the attitude towards the importance of the collections for museum relevance; and a shift in emphasis of the museum's core functions. To do this, it was necessary to get an overview of the structure of each institution and to decode the actual tasks behind the job titles.

As the central aim of the article was to analyse the relations of the curators of the five museums with the collections, the first result of the analysis is revealed in the structure of the article. The museums are divided into two groups: 1) museums where curators have a direct responsibility to maintain collections, so I called them "curators with collections" (Estonian History Museum, National Museum of Lithuania and National Museum of Finland), and 2) museums where curators are somewhat vaguely connected with collections, I called them "curators without collections" (National History Museum of Latvia and Estonian National Museum).

Secondly, when I was looking for the "classical curator", it became clear that professionals with research potential can hold a variety of job titles in a museum, mostly curator, researcher, collector, researcher-curator. Their specific tasks depend on how the work is arranged at the organization. In museums where "curators are with collections", activities directly related to the management of collections are important in their tasks: acquisition of collections, loaning of artefacts and their scientific description, entering data to the information system, serving and consulting of visitors. At the same time, museums put their own emphases on these tasks. For example, the task of physical preservation and cleaning of the repository was emphasized at the Estonian History Museum and National Museum of Lithuania, not at the National Museum of Finland. Instead, the latter emphasized the task of using social media in making collections available.

Thirdly, the collections were not considered insignificant in any of the cases examined, in particular as regards their physical preservation and description. The entry of data into the public electronic information system was important everywhere except the National Museum of Lithuania, where only the museum's own information system was used. However, although the rise of the communication function has not diminished the importance of preserving collections, it has an indirect impact on collections through an increase in communication activities as digitization and filling online databases. The enlarged communication departments do not perform these tasks themselves. Thus, tasks enabling to increase the accessibility of the collections are in the competence of the collection keepers and curators. This is one aspect due to which the work overload of curators has emerged. Such overload was especially noticeable in the case of the National Museum of Finland and Estonian History Museum, but there was no such overload in the National Museum of Lithuania, where increasing the access to the collections was not prioritized.

Fourth, greater specialization in collection-related jobs occurred in museums where "curators are without collections". In such cases, curators were primarily considered as researchers writing scholarly texts and making exhibitions, thus, implementing the research and communication function of the museum. In the case of specialization, the care of the collections, the entry of basic data on the artefacts into the databases, is given to other professionals, usually the collection keepers. This kind of work arrangements indicate the importance of research from the point of view of the museum's management, as their aim is to reduce the curators' time spent on collections.

Fifth, in the case of a classical curator, if the specialization of the positions has not been carried out, individual specialization takes place periodically: during a certain period, most of the working day is spent preparing the exhibition, doing research for publication, or describing and supplementing the collections.

Sixth, nowadays, whether or not specialization has been carried out, curators feel a similar fragmentation of tasks and a blurring of the boundaries between tasks. The general movement of the museum towards social responsibility and thematic flexibility has expanded the scope of museums – and at the same time forced curators to increase their multifunctionality.

In summary, the impact of the new museology is manifest in museums, where the importance of the field of communication has increased in the organizational structure (Estonian History Museum, Estonian National Museum, National Museum of Finland). The emphasis on the communication function has brought related tasks on the foreground in the departments related to the collections, and overloaded curators with tasks. Functional segregation of duties ("curators without collections") is one solution to this problem. Given that the functions of the museum are closely intertwined (as presented in the PRC model), the functional division of tasks may present a challenge to the functional structure that needs to be analysed in the future.

Article II

Reidla, Jana. 2020. Who Is Leading the Project? A Comparative Study of Exhibition Production Practices at National Museums in Finland and the Baltic States. – *Museum and Society*, 18 (4): 368–385.
DOI: 10.29311/mas.v18i4.3456.

The article deals with the importance of the function of communication within museum, showing how it is related to the changing position of the curator in the production of exhibitions. The aim of the article is to identify whether and what changes have taken place in the production of the exhibition, taking into account the general changes in the museum's paradigm. I was interested in the possible change in the responsibilities of the curator working as a researcher in the museum with the expanded team, and changes of leading position in the practice of exhibition production. The focus was on authority tensions and other challenges in the teamwork relationship between curators and designers.

For this purpose, I used the same sample of five museums as in the first article (National History Museum of Latvia, the National Museum of Lithuania, Estonian History Museum, Estonian National Museum, National Museum of Finland). I approached the research questions with ethnographic methods, conducting fieldwork and semi-structured interviews in all these museums from September 2018 to February 2019. I also used materials from two previous cycles of fieldwork and interviews conducted in all these museums from November 2017 to March 2018 and only at the Estonian National Museum from November 2016 to April 2017.

In Western Europe and North America, there have been changes in exhibition curation practices since the late 1980s. These developments have mainly consisted of the introduction of an extended project-based approach: the formation of multi-skilled exhibition teams to create multidisciplinary exhibitions, and the implementation of a horizontal management model instead of a hierarchical one. Other necessary changes have also been made in the organizational structure of museums to meet the goals of the new museology, giving priority to the development of the field of communication. The interviews indicated that similar changes

have to some extent reached the central cultural history museums of the Baltic states and Finland.

In my analysis, I found that the museums under study can be divided into two groups according to the dominant model of exhibition preparation: A) a curator-driven exhibition project and B) a manager-driven exhibition project. In the curator-driven case, the main responsibility for the concept and decision-making power in the production of the exhibition lies with the leading curator who is also familiar with the collections. In the case of manager-driven project, the project manager has the authority of decision-making. At the same time, the project manager does not have to know the collections. Often the project manager primarily represents the goals and competences in the field of communication. As I found out, in three of the museums studied (Estonian History Museum, Estonian National Museum, National Museum of Finland), the transition to a manager-driven model occurred in the first decade of the 21st century, and in two museums (National History Museum of Latvia and National Museum of Lithuania) the transition has not yet taken place.

In this article, several conclusions were connected with the prioritization of the field of museum communication. The transition to a manager-driven model for the production of exhibitions was found to be in line with the prioritization of the communication function. Bringing the communication function to the foreground means that the communication departments are expanding for performing various functions. Traditional museum knowledge-sharing activities such as exhibitions, educational programs, events, and publications will remain but will be supplemented with a wider range of visitor service and product marketing activities (rental of museum space, food and beverage sales, retail outlets).

The transition to a manager-driven model has been accompanied by the changes in the exhibitions' conceptual side. The main change concerns the starting point of the exhibition – whether it is the collections or an idea. In other words, is the concept being developed from collections towards an idea that fascinates the visitor, or is the starting point an interesting idea that collections may not be able to support? Exhibition projects based on an idea have been mainly initiated by communication departments. If the collections (and research) departments do not follow the idea of the communication department, then the communication department will look for curators from outside and the participation of the museum's own curators in exhibition projects will decrease. My research revealed that museum's own curators are not fundamentally opposed to idea-based exhibitions, so they could be encouraged to participate in brainstorming, where they can also draw on their expertise on collections.

Prioritized development of the field of communication (including marketing) is not just about the importance of the principles of the new museology, but it is also about the growing need of museums to earn the own revenue. Museum communication staff are considered to be experts in earning the revenue. Due to the growing political pressure on museums to operate as business entities, the authority of the communication (marketing) field within the museum has grown. Thus, although the communications department does not have hierarchical power, their

arguments have a cognitively stronger authority, which is accepted by curators and managers as unavoidable.

The three main conclusions I made regarding the two different models in the production of the exhibition are as follows:

1) Although excessive hierarchy of leadership, as well as one-sided skills due to the small size of the team have been considered to be the weakness of the curator-driven model, my research also showed the strengths of this model. An experienced and multifunctional curator can avoid the concept from blurring. Decision-making is faster as the responsibility clearly lies with the leading curator, who is the author of the concept. The rest of the team, including the designers, is a "helping force" who is consulted if necessary, but who do not question the authority of leading curator. The key factor here is that a professional who feels responsible for the result also has the substantive ability to implement a concept.

2) In the case of manager-driven model, responsibility is shared between members of the extended team from different professional backgrounds. The key player in this model is the project manager, who may, but rather often does not have a researcher background. As the design of the exhibition is considered vital in the end result, great power is given to the designers by the project manager. This may create conditions for power struggle as the question is whose views are supported by the project managers. If the project manager repeatedly makes a decision preferring the designer's point of view, the researchers in the role of curator will feel that their competence is not trusted. In the end, this is demotivating for the curators and prevents them from contributing with full capacity. As a result, the museum's own curators are losing interest in participating in the creation of exhibitions and offering ideas. Consequently, they will only be involved in exhibition projects as consultants recommending artefacts from the collections.

3) Although the manager-driven model has the advantage of a democratic governance and a multi-skilled team, the teams have grown so large that that decision-making may no longer be transparent. In particular, decision-making hierarchy within these teams can be difficult to determine. The present case studies showed such perceived hierarchies when researchers in a curatorial role could not communicate directly with designers or when the project managers' decisions exceeded their competence.

The contribution of this article was that, besides reasoning the expansion of the communication function with the need to be more open for visitors, it highlighted the growing need for museums to compete in the entertainment market. In the same line, the authority of communication in the decision-making process has expanded. As a result, in the museum, the position of a researcher in the role of curator may become uncertain and the people demotivated. The article contributed to the goal of recognizing the reasons that demotivate museum researchers to act as curators, so that in the future museums might make optimum use of their potential.

Article III

Reidla, Jana. 2020. Identity and the Controversial Experiences of Museum Researchers: The Case of the National Museums of Finland and the Baltic States. – *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 14 (2): 99–122.
DOI: 10.2478/jef-2020-0018.

The article focuses on research in the museum, looking at it as one of the three main functions of a museum, alongside the preservation of collections and communication. It is known from the museum literature worldwide that the focus of museums on the needs of visitors has led curators (regardless of their exact job title) to feel themselves marginalized as researchers. That is why I asked how the changes have affected the researchers' sense of professional identity and motivation in Baltic and Finnish museums. The main aim was to guide employers and culture policy makers to better understand the museum researchers' professional identity. Explaining the impact of the current situation should help to rebuild dialogue, restore the motivation of researchers, and make better use of the potential of both researchers and museum collections. For this purpose, I focused on researchers' self-reflection: how they understand their job responsibilities and what are their expectations towards their professional role. It turned out that two important patterns of discourse are revealed by researchers in museums who have undergone changes in relation to their professional identities as they try to adapt to change.

To answer the questions and identify the main discourses, I used researchers' subjective self-reflection, as expressed in interviews conducted in five museums – National History Museum of Latvia, the National Museum of Lithuania, the Estonian History Museum, the Estonian National Museum and the National Museum of Finland – from November 2017 to February 2019 and only Estonian National Museum from November 2016 to April 2017. The theoretical starting point of the analysis were the concepts of role ambiguity and role conflict, which are used in organizational theory, and the concept of identity as an evolving learning process that involves emotions and is constructed and agreed upon in social communication.

In museums, where changes have been made towards the importance of communication and visitor-orientation, there have been changes in the tasks and perception of the position of employees with research potential. The main problem is that the diversity of tasks assigned to researchers has increased, but the power to influence the museum's goals and activities has diminished. This practice has led to internal conflicts and uncertainty among researchers about their professional role and identity. The data showed that changes in the position of researcher are felt more strongly in the museums studied in Estonia and Finland. Similar changes in the position of the researcher were not felt so sharply in the Latvian case, and the role conflict or ambiguity did not rise as an important issue in the Lithuanian case.

Two important discourses emerged through which museum researchers explain the situation in their professional identities as they try to adapt to change. The discourses that express the contradictory position, role conflict and ambiguity of the researcher are as follows:

1) In museums where academic achievements are emphasized, researchers should focus on academic achievement, but their role requires communication activities. Researchers perceive the contradiction in the fact that an area that requires research – curating exhibitions and other mediation activities – do not qualify as research. While curators perceive that communication activities expect knowledge about museum collections, the museum's academic direction does not support increasing expertise in collections. In connection with this, the research of the collections has been marginalized in the activities of the museum.

2) In museums where the openness of collections is a priority, researchers feel that their contribution to academic research at the institutional level is not important. Researchers perceive their primary role as service providers for collection visitors. As a result, academic research has been relegated to the background alongside the role of an expert in museum collections.

Based on the data, I placed Estonian National Museum and National History Museum of Latvia in the group of museums where research achievements are considered more important, and National Museum of Finland and Estonian History Museum in the group of museums where the tasks of maintaining and mediating collections are given priority. The conservative National Museum of Lithuania, which continues with the classical curator model, differed from both groups, because the preservation and research of collections are equally important there, but the openness and mediation of collections are not in the foreground. Based on this, the case of Lithuania does not fit well into the framework of either groups, although with certain concessions, I placed it in a group in which working with collections is emphasized at institutional level.

Regardless of the expectations that museum researchers perceived as priorities of the institution, they defined themselves in comparison with the academic researchers. From the point of view of professional identity, museum researchers considered the special relations with collections their main difference from academic staff. Nevertheless, it was important for them to reflect on research goals in the institution's development plan and resources, and they recognized the need to perform their tasks with professional thoroughness. With such a sense of identity, it is understandable that researchers are not motivated to limit themselves to service-oriented work in museums; their potential is to provide knowledge-based interpretations and generalizations about museum themes and collections. It was important to them to what extent the research objectives were reflected both in the institution's development plan and in terms of resources, and they considered it essential to carry out their tasks in a professional manner in order to maintain the credibility of the output.

In this article, I concluded that the role conflict of the researcher and the uncertainty about institutional expectations make researchers demotivated in the role of the substantive expert. At the same time, museums cannot afford to

relinquish the role of expertise, as this will ultimately affect the relevance of museums to society to the point of losing credibility. Contrary to the widespread belief that there is a deep and insurmountable conflict between the function of preservation of collections and the functions of communication with the public, and that this conflict is caused by too rigid curators, my study shows that the inherent contradiction is elsewhere. The main problem is the gap that manifests itself in the inability to reconcile research with the specifics of the museum. Looking at the importance of the museum for society, it can be seen that applied science is increasingly preferred in cultural politics. However, applied science is often underestimated in the academic context. In this context, there is a gap between the academic ambitions of the museum institution and its staff and the need to compete in the leisure market. In short, the credible expertise associated with the identity of researchers conflicts with the leisure industry model that museums are forced to follow.

The article contributed to reflecting the "voice" of researchers, because once institutional change has taken place, staff who have to meet conflicting goals will need more management support. Knowledge-based mediation activities should be valued more by cultural policy-makers. This requires a complex assessment of the role of the researcher at the level of the museum's management – neither an exhibition nor a consultation can exist separately from the research. Cultural policy should not prioritize mercantile goals if museums are expected to stay relevant to society in the fields of education and culture.

6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The main goal of the study was to highlight the changes in the profession of a museum curator in recent decades on the example of five central cultural history museums in the Baltic states and Finland. The main sources for this were interviews with the museums' curatorial staff, additional sources were the museums' websites and working documents. The changes were analysed in the context of the new museum paradigm, but also the influences of neoliberal economic and culture policies and the need for museums to participate in the entertainment industry were taken into account. These factors have led museums to increase the share of the communication function in addition to traditional museum functions which were focused on preservation and research of collections. The dissertation contributes to illuminating the topic of how the emphasis on the function of communication in museums has influenced the work of curators and their perception of their role at work and what conclusions can be drawn from this in the management of museum policy. This way the study addresses the situation concerning the staff relationships and changes in the emphases on tasks, the occurrence of which is often not recorded in official documents and which has so far been a neglected field in museum studies.

The profession of curator, which was originally, and until the end of the 20th century, at the centre of all museum activities, has undergone development in the Western world over the last thirty years. When the new museology introduced criticism of the curator's excessive authority (see Gray 2015: 151), today the re-evaluation of the curator has begun, looking for a new level of the profession (see Thomas 2020). In the contemporary function-based organizational structure, the museum's staff has diversified, curators have specialized and job titles have changed. However, in practice the classical curator has not disappeared completely (as predicted by van Mensch 2004: 5), but they have adapted to the paradigm of the new museum. What curators perceive as a threat – that they are required to become mediators and multi-tasking generalists (Nielsen 2014: 23) –, may, on the other hand, be considered a new level of developmental spiral that aligns them with the profession of classical curator. On this new level some new tools are available – online media, electronic databases, support in the form of functional departments (marketing, communication, exhibition production, etc.).

6.1 Main conclusions

There are five main conclusions drawn from the study, which I will introduce below. Throughout the dissertation I have used the concept of curator, which native language translate differently and encompasses a range of tasks within the studied museums. My first conclusion was related to the approach to classical curator's profession. When I was looking for a classical curator, it turned out that the content professionals, whose tasks correspond to the concept of a classical curator, work at the Estonian History Museum, National Museum of Finland and National

Museum of Lithuania. They are professionals with research potential, and their tasks cover managing collections, research and making exhibitions. However, although all the tasks of a classical curator were represented (Article I), the emphasis on the duties was different. The dynamics referred to the reduction of the share of research and curation in the tasks, especially in the case of the National Museum of Finland and Estonian History Museum. I titled this group "curators with collections" since the responsibility for organizing the collections (tasks such as describing artefacts and documents, entering data into the information system, serving visitors in the repository and by e-mails etc.) were similar. The second group, represented by the Estonian National Museum and the National History Museum of Latvia, differed in that curators were more specialized, their link to their collections was weaker. I titled this group "curators without collections" since the responsibility for the role of the collection expert was put on the professionals called collection keepers (Article I). Thus, they were acting as specialized curators (specialization is reflected in job titles such as researcher, researcher-curator, curator). I must mention that the title of collection keeper can also be found in the museums of the first group, but there is a very fluid line of responsibility between the curator and the collection keeper. In the case of the second group, the biggest difference between the keeper and the curator is the curator's obligation to carry out academic research, so such a curator is essentially a researcher or researcher-curator.

The discussion arose here that although specialized curators should have time to focus on academic work, they felt overwhelmed as classical curators. Whether or not specialization has been carried out, curators feel a similar fragmentation of tasks and a blurring of the boundaries between tasks. This is where the interplay of museum functions and the potential abilities of the curator become apparent. Changes in museum work, where the museum has paid more attention to the function of communication and expanded the relevant departments, have indirectly increased the tasks of curators (both in making the collections accessible for public and communicating directly with the audiences). So, it is still challenging to make the curator's work more coherent through a specialization measure.

Secondly, in addition to comparing the concept of the curator, I compared the structural changes in the museums under study (Article I). In theory (van Mensch 2004), the direction of development has shifted from a collection-based structure to a function-based structure. There was no pure collection-based model in the museums under study, but the structure was partly collection-based in the case of Latvia, Lithuania and Finland. Among them, in the Lithuanian and Latvian cases, the communication function was not emphasized in the structure. Communication and marketing tasks are often solved by additional training of substantial staff, due to a tight budget, because "real" marketers cannot be hired. Therefore, the structure will not be extended to the communications department, but the corresponding position is included in another department (mostly of exhibitions or administration) as was addressed in Article II and subsection 3.3 of introductory section.

The dynamics of organization structure indicate that the need for involvement of audiences and open museum communication has been prioritized in the

Estonian and Finnish cases during the last decade, as organization structures have been expanded to include communication, marketing and other "new" professionals. Attempts are made to reach the audience with various idea exhibitions, externally invited curators and even externally commissioned exhibition projects. For those functions a new unit covering various communication and marketing needs has been created alongside collections, research, and administration. Thus, briefly, my second conclusion was that in the Latvian and Lithuanian cases, the function of collections and science was at the heart of museum work, whereas in the Estonian and Finnish cases, the function of communication was in the foreground of activities.

Thirdly, I concluded that the impact of the new museology on collections is manifest in museums, where the importance of the field of communication has increased in the organizational structure (Estonian History Museum, Estonian National Museum, National Museum of Finland). Regarding the impact of new museology on changing practices in preserving collections I can argue that the collections were considered significant in all of the cases examined, consequently, the rise of the communication function has not diminished the importance of preserving collections. On the contrary, it has increased the importance of collections in terms of their communicative value with the public. At least the instrumental value of collections, characterized by the digitization of collections, has increased. At the same time, the dynamics showed a decrease in the use of objects in both exhibitions (Article II) and research (Article III), which, however, implies a decrease of the substantive importance of collections. In Lithuania, where the communication function was in the background compared to others, the same was true for opening collections to external users. Promoting collections to invite users was not considered important. This does not mean that the museum did not value the collections, as the ambition of the museum was mainly to publish the collections and use them in exhibitions. Also, the entry of data into the public electronic information system was important everywhere except the National Museum of Lithuania, where only the museum's own information system was used.

As I outlined in the Articles I and III, the rise of the communication function has an indirect impact on collections through an increase in communication activities such as digitization and filling online databases. The enlarged communication departments do not perform these tasks themselves. Thus, tasks enabling increases in accessibility of the collections are in the competence of the content workers. This is one aspect due to which the overload of curators has emerged. Such an overload was especially noticeable in the case of the National Museum of Finland and Estonian History Museum.

The fourth conclusion is that ideals of a social and communicative museum are nowadays largely intertwined with the market-driven logic of museum management. Such a trend is reflected in the manager-driven model of producing exhibitions, in which the exhibition has been turned primarily into a tool of the communication department and is not much of a communication tool for museum research (Article II). Museums' focus on the market economy has turned visitor numbers into 'product sales numbers', which is a more important quantitative

indicator of performance than qualitative individual knowledge sharing. In the case of imbalances in management decisions, ignoring scientific arguments in museum administration and museum policy decision-making becomes a problem. Due to the lack of training in museum discipline, administrative staff may have a different understanding of the museum's purpose than curatorial staff (Article II). Thus, instead of developing the research field and collections, the planning of activities is based on the forecast of sales numbers. As a result, educational activities are buried under entertainment activities. The described trend is especially characteristic in the case of Estonian museums, which is not surprising considering the neoliberal cultural policy of the Estonian state.

The consequences of the power of merchantability need to be discussed in terms of balance and imbalance of decision-making. One problem here is that balance and democratic division of decision-making power between the various professionals may become illusory. This can be deduced from the stronger impact of the arguments of the communication experts due to the museum's vital need to earn revenue. Based on economic considerations, professions dealing with marketing, economic development, outreach etc. have more relevant decision-making power than curators. It concerns especially exhibition topics and planning of other content creation activities. Within the extended exhibition team, the problem, at least in Estonia, is that the museum-working researcher in a role of curator no longer believes in the validity of their own arguments when debating with a designer, IT-developer or marketer. Curators say they are ignored by their own administration as well (Article II). On the other hand, recognizing that "the museum must make money", curators have begun to stifle their creativity and ideas as non-marketing, which has resulted in curators' decline of creativity and initiative. Accordingly, the situation where the activities of curators are not relevant in terms of sale, has contributed to the reduction of their authority.

In the context of the comparative analysis, these conclusions apply primarily to the Estonian cases, but also to Finland. As shown by the results of earning own revenue presented in Subchapter 4.3, in the case of Latvia and Lithuania, earned revenue is marginal, so the merchandise approach to museum is still insignificant. The organization of communication in these museums is also left to the content staff. At the same time, the ambiguity of the curators' professional identity was less noticeable in these museums.

Consequently, the key reason diminishing curators' authority is not their lack of ability to communicate, but rather that the realization of their competence is not successful in terms of earning revenue on which the museums' budgets are depending (largely in the Estonian cases). While expertise in collections is consistently appreciated within society, it is of little importance to museums from a management point of view (Article III).

The fifth conclusion, directly related to the previous, is that the role conflict of the curator and the ambiguity of institutional expectations have demotivated curators in the role of the substantive expert (Article III). Traditionally, exhibitions have been based on the results of research, newer trends suggest treating exhibitions as a research process (Thomas 2010; Bjerregaard 2019; Seikh 2019). In

both approaches, the background of the curator's research activities is important. As the topics of the exhibitions are chosen by marketing, sales and communication professionals, the role of researchers in shaping research topics will be reduced. The curator's perceived marginality stems rather from a prevailing commercial point of view.

In many ways, the debate over the museum's authority and need for democratizing and power-sharing has been related to questions about the authority of the curator (see Longair 2015). More recently some scholars have pointed out that curators who can be both successful researchers and smooth mediators are valued today (see in Schorch and McCarthy 2020; Nielsen 2017). This is why in the introductory Chapter 3 of the dissertation I paid so much attention to the curators' educational background and the skills and training required of and provided to them. I suggest that the gap between the various fields of the museum can be overcome, if the curators, who have an education in the scientific discipline corresponding to the museum, are additionally trained in other specialties – be it museology, pedagogy, marketing, communication, or administration. However, my research showed (especially Article III) that curators already play a crucial role in mediating a museum in variable ways. Curators are indispensable when it comes to providing scientifically valid data about artefacts, to write popularizing texts about both collections and exhibitions, give interviews to the media, consult with institutions and individuals. This is an activity in which a communication specialist cannot replace a curator as substantial expert.

The initial new museology complaints that curators did not fit in with the basic principles of the new museum, as being too authoritarian or narrow-minded in interpretation and methods (see Chapter 2, especially 2.2.1), are unconvincing today. I therefore argue that a curator's authority is no longer an issue to be combatted. The pendulum has moved in the opposite direction, where the curator working at the museum loses the initiative and responsibility in making exhibitions, because they are not considered as an authority by the decision-makers when new exhibitions are planned. In order to rebalance the situation, I will present some suggestions to policy makers below.

6.2 Practical recommendations for policy makers

To value the curator's research work with collections, both at the level of scientific research, systematization and description. Although entering, refining, and updating information which is necessary to make collections accessible online may seem simple, non-academic, and time-consuming, it is similar to any other expert role that a curator can perform with their existing educational background. A recent museum survey in Estonia (Kõresaar *et al.* 2021) highlighted many quality issues in cataloguing objects, suggesting that the input of content professionals is important. This work should not be classified as technical support work that is not related to the researcher's competence. Also, quantitative indicators are not enough to evaluate its results (see also Article III). At the same

time, the content worker should not be too narrowly focused on collections, which is why academic research should also be encouraged and evaluated.

To value the curator's ability to communicate the museum. Museum communication, which includes education, meaning making and interpretation as the central themes, is "the articulation of understandings" (Nielsen 2017: 443). Despite the communication specialists who have been recruited to museums, the respective tasks have become inevitably the responsibility of the researchers working in the museums as curators. Thus, the curator is not left out of community involvement or marketing activities. Curators should be given more confidence, given equal responsibility in planning and implementing the content of the mediation activities. Above all, the curator is the creator of the mediated content in the museum. When researching and developing collections, they are able to interpret artefacts, write about them, give lectures and make exhibitions. It is time to start taking exhibitions into account in the evaluation of curators' results in the field of research.

Specify the necessary training for substantive staff and organize a system of corresponding job titles. This is especially valid in the case of Estonia, where there are no professional standards or attestations for substantial staff. The establishment of attestations and introduction of a system of job titles could be useful for raising the prestige of the profession of content worker, contributing for a more precise definition of identity.

Curators need encouragement to open up to the creative side. In addition to being encouraged by management, employees also need to be understood. Perhaps solidarity is the key word to take from the old museum paradigm, where the directors themselves were scholars of the discipline corresponding to the museum's collections. They therefore understood the sense of identity of the substantive staff: their need for deeper research in order to maintain credibility, the need to check the facts and to plan the work. If the museum management follows the business model, the pursuit of efficiency puts pressure on creative freedom and prohibits the risks of experimentation. There is a risk that efficiency-oriented marketing staff will not share the same values as curatorial staff, so the management has a responsibility to keep the balance here. If only revenue and an attractive product are given importance, the replacement of the research department with the audience entertainment department may become a more extreme expression of this trend.

These arguments can be a starting point for the institution in organizing its work and shaping its role as curator. Even more important is what cultural policy makers can learn from this if they want museums to remain important to society in the field of education and culture, as prioritizing mercantile goals does not provide a sustainable basis. A museum can lose its credibility in society if researchers become insecure or unmotivated or refuse to contribute to the museum's goals. If the curator's expertise is brought back to the heart of the museum, as Thomas (2016: 141) points out, the museum has hope to maintain its reputation as an institution of interest to society.

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ARTICLES

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Kuraator eksperdi ja vahendajana uue muuseumi paradigmas. Baltimaade ja Soome rahvusmuuseumide võrdlev uurimus

Doktoritöö keskmes on muuseumitöötaja, kelle üldistatud ametinimetus on kuraator. Tänapäeval on muuseumimaastikul toimunud ametinimetuste mitmekesistumise tõttu ühest terminit raske leida. Rohkem ja vähem kattuvate tööülesannetega leidub Baltimaade ja Soome muuseumides nii teadureid, kuraatoreid, kuraator-koguhoidjaid, teadur-kuraatoreid ja muude nimetustega sisulisi spetsialiste. Väitekirjas kasutasin teadustööks vajaliku haridusega muuseumitöötaja kohta mõistet kuraator (ingl k *curator*), millel on inglise kultuuriruumis pikk traditsioon. Kuraatori ametinimetust kasutatakse aina enam ka Eesti muuseumides ning sisuliselt vastab see siin muuseumis töötavale teadurile või teadur-koguhoidjale (vt Reidla 2019). Ajalooliselt täitis kuraator ingliskeelses kultuuriruumis 19. ja 20. sajandil muuseumi kõiki põhifunktsioone, milleks Reinwardti akadeemia sõnastuses on säilitamine, uurimine ja kommunikatsioon (Desvallées ja Mairesse 2010: 29). Uue muuseumi paradigmas ei ole klassikaline kuraator enam iseenesestmõistetav nähtus tänu muuseumi ametikohtade kasvavale spetsialiseerumisele.

Tänaseks muuseumimaastikul valdavalt aset leidnud paradigmamuutus sai alguse 1970. ja 1980. aastatel nn uue museoloogia ideest, mis vastandus vanale, 19. sajandi muuseumiideaali kandvale muuseumile. Uue museoloogia kontseptsioon pärineb Prantsusmaalt, kus keskenduti uut tüüpi muuseumide, nagu ökomuuseumid (ingl k *eco museums*), sotsiaalsed muuseumid, teadus- ja kultuurikeskused – arendamisele (Desvallées ja Mairesse 2010: 55). Briti traditsioonis tõsteti uue museoloogia raames esile kriitiline diskursus muuseumide sotsiaalsest ja poliitilisest rollist (Vergo 1989; Desvallées ja Mairesse 2010: 55) ja selline lähenemine levis muuseumiuuringutes edasi üleilmselt. Uue museoloogiaga rõhutati muuseumide sotsiaalset rolli ja interdistsiplinaarset olemust, pandi muuseume otsima uusi väljendus- ja suhtlemisviise. Aastakümneid kestnud muuseumide ümberkujundamise protsess on tänaseks vähendanud nende konservatiivsust ja elitaarsust ning esiplaanile tõstnud demokraatliku ja avatud suhtlemise ühiskonnaga. Publiku erinevate vajaduste arvesse võtmine, külastajate kaasamine nii teadmiste ja näituste loomisesse kui neist osa saamisesse, mitmekesised haridusprogrammid ja aktiivne suhtlemine on muuseumide jaoks muutunud uueks normaalsuseks. Erinevalt klassikalisest muuseumist ei ole uues paradigmas institutsiooni eksistentsi keskmes enam muuseumikogud, vaid publik ehk kogukond, kelle jaoks muuseum tegutseb. Kuigi uue muuseumi paradigma on tänaseks üleilmselt tuntud, ei ole selle praktikas rakendamine toimunud ühetaoliselt.

Doktoritöö käsitleb uue muuseumi paradigma omaksvõtu dünaamikat ja mõju kuraatori ametile Baltimaade ja Soome kesksete kultuuriajaloo muuseumide näitel. Analüüsisin toimunud muutusi uue muuseumi paradigma kontekstis, lisaks võtsin

arvesse neoliberaalse majandus- teadus- ja kultuuripoliitika mõjusid. Need tegurid on mõjutanud rõhuasetusi muuseumi funktsioonides ning kujundanud ümber tööülesandeid ja ametite profiili. Uues paradigmas on muuseumitöös esiplaanil külastajate teenindamisega seotud tegevused, mitmesugused administratiivsed ning turunduslikud ja avaliku suhtlemisega seotud ülesanded, mis koonduvad kommunikatsiooni valdkonna alla. Võrdleva analüüsi keskmes on peamiselt viimasel aastakümnel toimunud nihked Eesti, Läti, Leedu ja Soome muuseumide valdkonnas. Need riigid ei olnud uue museoloogia idee algatajad, kuid on sellest mõjutatud ja uue muuseumi paradigma omaks võtnud igaüks mingil määral omal moel.

Doktoritöö peamine eesmärk on uurida muutusi asutuse töökorralduses ja struktuuris uue muuseumiparadigma kontekstis. Täpsemalt pöörasin tähelepanu sellele, kuidas kommunikatsiooni valdkonna esiplaanile seadmine on mõjutanud kuraatorite tööd ja rollitaju ning milliseid järeldusi saab sellest muuseumipoliitika juhtimisel teha. Seega panustab väitekiri muuseumisiseste töösuhete uurimisse, mille esinemist ametlikes dokumentides sageli ei registreerita ja mis on muuseumi uurimises paljuski unarusse jäetud (vt Morse *et al.* 2018). Küsimusele kuraatori rollist ja muutustest selles lähenen doktoritöös kuraatori kolme vastutusvaldkonna kaudu: 1) kuraator kui kogude hoidja, 2) kuraator kui teadur ja 3) kuraator kui muuseumi sisuliste teemade vahendaja ühiskonnale.

Esiteks uurisin, kuidas oli võrreldavates muuseumides lahendatud kogude hoidmise, uurimise ja vahendamise funktsiooni täitmine (klassikalise kuraatori ja spetsialiseerunud kuraatori tööülesannete kaudu) ning kuidas töökorralduse dünaamika avaldus organisatsiooni struktuuris. Teiseks selgitasin, kuidas kuraatorid tajuvad oma rolli sisulise eksperdi ja vahendajana ning kuidas muutunud paradigma on mõjutanud kuraatori kui muuseumis töötava teadlase erialast identiteeti ja töömotivatsiooni, tuues esile just kuraatorite vaatenurga. Kolmandaks analüüsisin, kuidas on kommunikatsioonifunktsiooni tähtsuse rõhutamine mõjutanud teiste põhifunktsioonide täitmist.

Väitekiri põhineb etnograafilisel meetodil, välitööde materjalide kvalitatiivsel sisuanalüüsil. Kokkuseks allikaks olid välitöödel tehtud intervjuud Eesti Ajaloomuuseumi, Eesti Rahva Muuseumi, Läti Rahvusliku Ajaloomuuseumi (*Latvijas Nacionālais vēstures muzejs)*, Soome Rahvusmuuseumi (*Suomen Kansallismuseo*) ja Leedu Rahvusmuuseumi (*Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus)* töötajatega aastatel 2016–2019. Lisaks kasutasin allikana uuritavate muuseumide veebilehti ja töödokumente. Kuigi muuseumide suurus ja traditsioonid on mõnevõrra erinevad, on nad omavahel võrreldavad: tegemist on oma riigi kesksete rahvusmuuseumidega, mis on omandivormilt riiklikud ja kogude koosseisult kultuuriloolised. Võrdlusse on kaasatud Eestist kaks muuseumi, kuna nende kogud täiendavad teineteist: Eesti Rahva Muuseum säilitab Eesti ja soome-ugri suurimat kultuuriloolist kollektsiooni, kus domineerib vana talupojakultuuri materjal, samas kui Eesti Ajaloomuuseum kogud sisaldavad arheoloogilist, numismaatilist, keskaegset materjali ning kajastavad ka uus- ja lähiajaloo poliitilist ajalugu.

Väitekiri on üles ehitatud kaheosalisena, koosnedes sissejuhatavast osast ja kolmest avaldatud teadusartiklist. Sissejuhatav osa jaguneb kuueks peatükiks,

mis avavad uurimisprobleemi, pakuvad uurimistööle raamistiku ja edastavad kokkuvõtva arutelu. Sissejuhatav osa aitab mõista võrreldavate riikide muuseumide seisukorda nii globaalse muuseumimaastiku muutuste kontekstis kui ka kohaliku kultuuri ja muuseumipoliitika taustal.

Esimeses peatükis tutvustan uurimisprobleemi ning selgitan kuraatori mõistet ning alates 20. sajandi lõpust muutuma hakanud rõhuasetusi muuseumi funktsioonides ja nende mõju kuraatori elukutsele. Kuraatori mõiste puhul eristan klassikalist ja spetsialiseerunud kuraatorit. Klassikalise kuraatorina mõistan muuseumi sisutöötajat, kes on kõrghariduse omandanud muuseumi teemale vastavas teadusdistsipliinis ja kelle tööülesanded hõlmavad muuseumi kogude hooldamist, uurimist ja avalikkusele vahendamist. Klassikalise kuraatori kui sisulise eksperdi pädevuses on teha ettepanekuid muuseumikogude täiendamise, museaalide kogudest väljaarvamise kohta, ning nende dokumenteerimine (dateerimine jm määratlused). Lisaks museaalide teaduslikule kirjeldamisele on klassikalise kuraatori pädevuses teadustöö ja selle tulemuste avaldamine nii akadeemilises kui populaarses vormis. Kuraatoril võib olla administratiivseid või näitusetegemise ülesandeid ja ta peab olema kursis museaalide säilitamise üldiste põhimõtetega. Spetsialiseerunud kuraator keskendub kitsamale töövaldkonnale (näitusetegemine, populariseerimine, teadustöö vms) ja see võib väljenduda ka ametinimetuses (teadur, koguhoidja, teadur-kuraator vms).

Teises peatükis annan ülevaate uue muuseumi paradigmast ning selle arengust. Avan teemat vastavate mõistete ja kontseptsioonide kaudu, mida peetakse oluliseks viimaste aastakümnete muuseumiuuringutes. Esimene oluline mõiste on muuseum kui suhtleja ja teadmiste vahendaja (ingl k *communicator*). Muuseum tegeleb teadmiste vahendamisel nii õpetamisega kui ka tähenduse loomise ja tõlgendamisega (Nielsen 2017). See hõlmab konstruktivistlikku lähenemist haridustööle, milles võimaldatakse õppijal konstrueerida enda jaoks uusi teadmisi, lähtudes teema erinevatest aspektidest ning õppija varasematest teadmistest ja kogemustest (Hein 2007; Hooper-Greenhill 2000). Muuseum ei esinda enam ühte kitsast "autoriteedi häält", vaid aitab teemasid avada erinevatest vaatepunktidest, vältimata sealhulgas ka vastuolulisi teemasid (Marstine 2006). Teadmiste vahendamisel ei pea muuseumid avalikkust enam homogeenseks ja passiivseks massiks vaid arvestatakse publiku erineva tausta ja mitmekesiste huvidega (Macdonald 2006: 8). Teiseks on uues muuseumis oluline koht osalusmuuseumi (ingl k *participatory museum*) kontseptsioonil, mille peamine autor on museoloog Nina Simon. Selle järgi on muuseum koosloomises osalemist pakkuv asutus, pakkudes platvormi erinevatele kasutajatele, kes tegutsevad sisu loojate, levitajate, tarbijate, kriitikute ja koostööpartneritena (Simon 2012: 331). Kolmandana on oluline sotsiaalselt kaasava muuseumi (ingl k *socially inclusive museum*) kontseptsioon, mille on esile tõstnud museoloog Richard Sandell (1998, 2002). Senisest suuremat sotsiaalsete teemade käsitlemist muuseumides pidas oluliseks ka Peter Vergo (1989) uue museoloogia idee algusfaasis. Järgnevalt on muuseumid kasvavalt süvenenud sotsiaalse ebavõrdsuse probleemidesse, et olla päevakajalised, mõjutada ühiskonnas aktuaalseid sotsiaalseid teemasid. Kaasamisega on tihedalt seotud kogukonnaga koos tegutsemine (ingl k *community practice)*,

eeskätt autoriteedi jagamine näituste kureerimisel ja kogude haldamisel. Selle kontseptsiooni eestkõnelejad on Viv Golding ja Wayne Modest (2013), kes rõhutavad muuseumi rolli kultuuridevahelise mõistmise edendajana. Kogukonnaga koos tegutsemises nähakse eeskätt kuraatori võimu jagamist põlisrahvaste esindajatega, nende kaasamist näituste ja kogude interpreteerimisse. Selle protsessi tulemusel on tänaseks paljudes muuseumides, kus leidub koloniaalset pärandit, põlisrahvaste esindajate kaasamine nii töötajate kui koostööpartneritena muutunud valdavaks (Greene 2015, Thomas 2020).

Kaasamise ja koostööga on vahetult seotud ka muuseumis sisalduvale teabele ligipääsu laiem avamine, mille sihina nähakse muuseumide demokratiseerimist. Avatus võimaldab kutsuda külastajaid aktiivseks osalejaks ning suurendab nende sidet kultuuripärandiga. Sel eesmärgil on eriti viimasel kümnendil panustatud kogude digiteerimisse (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt ja Aljas 2011). Muuseumidest on saanud hübriidruumid, mis koosnevad nii füüsilisest kui ka veebikeskkonnast, kus põimuvad distsipliinide ja meediumide piirid ning milles külastajad võivad vaidlustada nähtut ja osaleda kaasloojana (Barnes ja McPherson 2019). Kõigi eelpoolnimetatud kontseptsioonide ja protsesside kvintessents on relevantne muuseum – vana muuseumi uuestisünd selliselt, et olla ühiskonna jaoks oluline. Kokkuvõttes on muuseumidele lisandunud varasemast märgatavalt suurem sotsiaalne mõõde nii näituste tegemisel kui töös kogudega, mis mõjutab kuraatori ameti erinevaid tahke.

Lisaks analüüsin teises peatükis kolme peamist tegurit, mis on muuseumitööd ja kuraatori ametit mõjutanud alates 20. sajandi lõpust, kuid eriti viimasel paaril aastakümnel: 1) uus museoloogia, mis suunas muuseume sotsiaalselt vastutustundlikuma tegevuse poole ja aktiivsema kommunikatsiooni rakendamisele; 2) teadusdistsipliinide areng, mis viis uute uurimisteemade ja -meetoditeni ülikoolides ning põhjustas muuseumi ja akadeemilise teadustöö kaugenemise teineteisest; 3) neoliberaalne juhtimismudel ja sellega kaasnev uue avaliku haldusjuhtimise (ingl k *New Public Management)* meetod, mis on mõjutanud ka teadus-, haridus- ja kultuuripoliitikaid. Uus haldusjuhtimine eeldab, et avaliku sektori organisatsioonid peavad muutuma vastutustundlikumaks, tõhusamaks, ettevõtlikumaks ning rakendab meetodeid avalike teenuste tulemuslikkuse mõõtmiseks (Osborne 2006, Guthrie *et al.* 2014). Neoliberaalse poliitika ajastul on peamised ühiskonna kujundamise vahendid konkurents vabaturul, finantskapitalism ja majanduse globaliseerumine. Sellega seoses on neoliberaalses ühiskonnamudelis poliitiliste otsuste prioriteediks riigi majandusliku konkurentsivõime tõstmine (Sevänen ja Häyrynen 2018).

Konkurentsivõime tähtsustamine ja turupõhised otsused on viimastel aastakümnetel hakanud ümber kujundama muuseumitegevuse prioriteete (Anderson 2005; Ekström 2020). Muuseumide osalemist meelelahutusturul on inglise keeles hakatud nimetama *edutainment*, mis viitab haridusliku ja lõbustava sümbioosile. Selle suuna pooldajad soovitavad, et traditsioonilistest harivatest tegevustest ei tohiks loobuda, aga lisada tuleks ärilised teenused (Barnes ja McPherson 2019: 259). Teenuste laiendamine mõjutab paratamatult ka kuraatorite tööülesandeid. Turumajanduslikud prioriteedid kajastuvad muuseumide teaduse- ja näituse-

poliitilistes valikutes. Kuigi Soome ja Baltimaade ajalooline taust on mõnevõrra erinev, tegutsevad tänapäeval kõik neli riiki kapitalistliku vabaturumajanduse keskkonnas. Alates 2000. aastatest on kooskõlas üleilmsete arengutega ka nende riikide kultuuripoliitikas hakatud rõhutama liberaalse turumajanduse rolli ja uue avaliku halduspoliitika olulisust, mis peaks avaliku sektori kulutõhusamaks muutma. Sarnaselt on vaadeldavad riigid liikunud ka avatud infoühiskonna poole. Samas, nii Soome kui Baltimaade kunsti- ja kultuuriinimeste majanduslikku toimetulekut mõjutab kodumaise kultuurituru väiksus ja suhteliselt väike kultuurieksportdi maht (vt Lauristin 2015: 237; Häyrynen 2018: 169). Seda enam sõltub nendes riikides kultuurielu riiklikust kultuuripoliitikast.

Sissejuhatava osa kolmandas peatükis käsitlen vaadeldavate riikide majandus-, kultuuri- ja muuseumipoliitikat, ning lühidalt ka haridus- ja teaduspoliitikat ning muuseumitöötajate haridust, mis koos annab vajaliku konteksti väitekirja järeldustele. Muuseumipoliitikat käsitledes annan ülevaate vaatluse all oleva nelja riigi muuseumipoliitika dokumentidest ja poliitika peamistest suundumustest. Baltimaades algasid muuseumivaldkonnas muutused pärast 1991. aastat, kui riikide iseseisvus taastati. Nõukogude perioodi mõju muuseumidele oli olnud marginaliseeriv, materiaalne baas oli nõrk. Baltimaade raske majanduslik olukord 1990. aastate alguses jättis muuseumid vähemalt kaheks aastakümneks väga haavatavasse olukorda, normaliseerides muuseumivaldkonnas nii madalad palgad kui ka askeetliku töökeskkonna. Ehkki materiaalsed tingimused jäid aastateks samaks, aktiveerus kiiresti muuseumitöötajate algatatud rahvusvaheline suhtlus, mida kasutati enese harimiseks ja lääne kolleegidega suhtlemiseks. Mõne aastaga korraldati muuseumimaastiku seadusandlus ja koostöö ümber Lääne muuseumipraktika ja -teooriate eeskujul, liituti Rahvusvahelise Muuseumiühinguga (ICOM), Euroopa muuseumiorganisatsioonide võrgustikuga (NEMO), Euroopa muuseumifoorumiga jne. Soome muuseumimaastikul nii suurt madalseisu ei olnud tekkinud ja ka järsku pööret 1990. aastatel ei toimunud.

Vaadeldavate riikide viimase kümnendi muuseumipoliitikat oli võimalik esitada erineva analüüsitasemega, kuna see sõltus olemasolevast materjalist, seni tehtud analüüsidest. Soomes korraldab muuseumivaldkonda haridus- ja kultuuriministeerium, Balti riikides kultuuriministeerium. Sarnaselt majanduspoliitikaga on ka muuseumipoliitika juhtimine Eestis üsna liberaalne, eriti võrreldes Läti ja Leeduga. Eestis on riik viimase kümne aasta jooksul vähendanud otsest haldamist, muutes mitmed muuseumid sihtasutusteks, lisaks puudub muuseumide akrediteerimise või hindamise süsteem. Lätis korraldab kultuuriministeerium riigi ja omavalitsuste muuseumide akrediteerimist, Leedus rahvuslike ja riigimuuseumide hindamist, Soomes rakendatakse hindamist kõigile professionaalselt juhitud muuseumitele (st muuseumid, kus on vähemalt kaks täistööajaga töötajat).

Muuseumide liigitamise põhimõtetelt erineb Eesti sellega, et muuseumide süsteem toetub eeskätt omandivormile ja hoidutakse hierarhiate määratlemisest. Soomes, Leedus ja Lätis on mõned muuseumid hierarhias kesksemal kohal. See tähendab, osa muuseume on nimetatud rahvusmuuseumiks, kuna nende kogud on sisult eriti laia haardega ning riigi ja rahva jaoks kõige väärtuslikumad. Eestis

ametlikult sellist vahet ei tehta ja muuseumipoliitika kujundajad ei ole rahvusmuuseumi "tiitli" omistamist ühelegi muuseumile vajalikuks pidanud. Kui Soome, Läti ja Leedu muuseumide süsteemis eristatakse piirkondlikke muuseume, mis toetavad ja juhendavad oma piirkonna väiksemate muuseumide tegevust, siis Eestis on maakonnamuuseumide definitsioonist loobutud. Sisuliselt on endised maakonnamuuseumid siiski "piirkondlikud" ja poliitikakujundajad eeldavad piirkondlikelt muuseumidelt väiksemate juhendamise jätkumist vabatahtlikkuse põhimõttel. Kõige suurem on erinevus Leedu muuseumide tegevuse ja struktuuri üksikasjaliku seadusandliku reguleerimise ja Eesti võimalikult vähe sekkuva muuseumipoliitika vahel.

Omatulu teenimise eesmärk Eesti ja Soome muuseumipoliitikas selgelt väljendunud teema, mida Soome puhul rõhutatakse ka värskemas muuseumipoliitika programmis (Mattila 2018). Eesti muuseumidele eraldi arengudokumenti pärast eelmist (21. sajandi Eesti muuseumid 2006) pole koostatud, aga praktikas muutus turumajanduse mõju muuseumidele aktuaalsemaks koos sihtasutuste loomise kiirendamisega 2010. aastate teisest poolest. Üks olulisi kultuuriministeeriumi väljendatud argumente uue omandivormi kasuks oli paindlikkus institutsiooni vara kasutamisel ja omatulu teenimisel (Reismaa 2015). Eestis muuseumipoliitikas pööratakse palju tähelepanu majandamise efektiivsusele ja tõhusale juhtimisele. Läti ja Leedu muuseumisektor on teadlastelt saanud soovituse muuta pakutavad teenused kliendisõbralikumaks (Šimanskienė *et al.* 2017), muuseumipoliitikates rõhutatakse näituste kaasajastamise ja kultuuripärandi aktiivsema kasutamise vajadust rohkem kui majandustegevusi. Leedu ja Läti muuseumipoliitika kajastab muuseumi erinevaid tegevusi peaaegu võrdselt; Läti poliitikas märgitakse, et sisulisi tegevusi ei tohi vahendavate kõrval unarusse jätta.

Praktikas on Soome, Läti ja Leedu suurtes rahvusmuuseumides viimastel aastatel alanud näituste ajakohastamine, neist kõige vähem on muutunud Leedu rahvusmuuseumi organisatsioonisisene töökorraldus ja näitusetegevus. Eestis on üle kümne aasta harjutatud moodsate ja atraktiivsete näituste loomist, muuseumipoodide laiendamist ja muude teenuste pakkumist. Alates 2000. aastate teisest poolest Eesti kultuuripoliitika olnud investeeringute näol suurtele riigimuuseumidele soodne, nende konkurentsivõimesse on tehtud märkimisväärseid investeeringuid, suurendades atraktiivsust külastajate jaoks. Valminud on muuseumihooneid, renoveeritud vanu, loodud heal tasemel disainitud ja atraktiivsete tehnoloogiliste lahendustega näitusi. 2010. aastate teisel poolel jõudis kätte etapp, mil riik loodab investeeringutelt tulemusi – peamiselt muuseumide omatulu teenimise näol. Seega, Eesti alustas muuseumiuuendusi atraktiivsemalt küljelt – näituste ja eksponeerimiskohtade moderniseerimisest ning on saavutanud sellega kodumaist ja rahvusvahelist tunnustust. Samal ajal on Soomes ja Lätis viimastel aastatel valminud suured kaasaegsed pärandihoidlad, mida Eestis alles kavandatakse. Nüüd, kui Eesti ja Soome on aastatel 2016–2021 uuendanud oma kesksete kultuuriloomuuseumide püsinäitusi, võivad Leedu ja Läti seda saavutust ületada veelgi kaasaegsemate ja uuenduslikumate püsinäitustega.

Haridus on muuseumitöötaja professionaalse identiteediga tihedalt seotud. Muuseumi töötajaskond ühendab akadeemiliste ja mitteakadeemiliste erialade

esindajaid, selles kajastub muuseumitöö interdistsiplinaarsus. Interdistsiplinaarsus avaldub ka sisulise töötaja akadeemilise tausta ning käsitöö ja materjalide tundmise vajaduse põimumises. Täiendav vajadus museoloogia alase koolituse järele peegeldab muuseumitöötajalt oodatava hariduse duaalsust. See tähendab, ideaalsel juhul koolitatakse muuseumitöötajat kahel tasemel: 1) teadusdistsipliini (ajalugu, arheoloogia, etnoloogia jne) või muu eriala (turundus, kommunikatsioon, infoteadused, pedagoogika, konserveerimine jne) kõrgharidus ning 2) museoloogiaalane haridus. Sellegipoolest peetakse Soomes, Lätis ja Leedus, kus on võimalik museoloogiat õppida teaduskraadi tasemel, museoloogia õpetamist ebapiisavaks selle liigse teoreetilisuse ja erioskuste puuduliku omandamise tõttu. See kinnitab muuseumi sisulise töö eripära, mille jaoks formaalsest haridusest ei piisa. Lisaks nõutavatele teadmistele ja haridustasemele on muuseumitöös viimasel ajal rohkem tähtsustama hakatud üldoskusi nagu projektijuhtimine, IT-oskused, teabematerjalide kujundamisoskused jms. Sotsiaalsetest oskustest peetakse sisutöötajatele kõige tähtsamaks suhtlusoskust.

Neljandas peatükis avan läbiviidud välitööde konteksti. Väitekiri põhineb etnograafilisel meetodil ja keskseks allikaks olid välitöödel tehtud intervjuud. Analüüsin enda varasema muuseumitöö kogemuse ja võõrkeele vahendusel tehtud intervjuude mõju andmetele. Igast uuritavast muuseumist annan ülevaate nii välitööde protsessist kui ka muuseumi üldisest olukorrast välitööde ajal. Lisan muuseumi ulatust ja profiili iseloomustavad andmed aastate 2017 ja 2018 lõikes (peahoone asukoht ja filiaalide olemasolu, avatud püsinäitused, töötajate arv, eelarve ja omatulud, organisatsiooni struktuuri kirjeldus).

Viiendas peatükis tutvustan väitekirja osaks olevat kolme artiklit (vt Reidla 2018; 2020a; 2020b). Kolm artiklit moodustavad terviku, mis hõlmab muuseumitöö kolme peamist valdkonda: kogude hoidmine, uurimistöö ja kommunikatsioon. Artiklite komplekt iseloomustab klassikalise kuraatori rolli muutumist uues paradigmas, kus muuseumide fookus on nihkunud kogude alaselt autoriteedi rollilt ühiskonnaga suhtlemisele. Esimest artiklit (Reidla 2018) võib vaadelda ka kõigi kolme sissejuhatusena, kuivõrd see annab põhjalikuma ülevaate kõnealuste muuseumide struktuurist ja töökorralduse muutustest ajas ning teadus- ja kogumisvaldkonna töötajate ametinimetustest. Esimene artikkel käsitleb üksikasjalikumalt ka uue museoloogia ideed, mis tõi üleilmsele muuseumimaastikule suuri muutusi. Teine artikkel (Reidla 2020a) käsitleb muuseumitöö ühte loovamat valdkonda, mis on ka muuseumist väljapoole kõige nähtavam – näituste tegemist ja kommunikatsioonivaldkonna tähtsustamist. Kolmas artikkel (Reidla 2020b) keskendub väga vastuolulisele kuraatori identiteedi teemale, uurides kuraatorit kui teadlast ja sisulist eksperti muuseumis. Mõistetavalt on kolme artikli teemad põimunud, nagu muuseumitöö olemus ja kuraatori töövaldkond ise.

Kuuendas peatükis esitan väitekirja viis peamist järeldust ja mõned soovitused muuseumipoliitika kujundajatele. Esimene järeldus puudutab klassikalise kuraatori kirjeldusele vastava ametikoha esinemist uuritud muuseumides. Sisulised eksperdid, kelle ülesanded kohanduvad klassikalise kuraatori mõistega, töötasid Eesti Ajaloomuuseumis, Soome Rahvusmuuseumis ja Leedu Rahvusmuuseumis.

Nad olid teadustöö võimekusega spetsialistid, kelle ülesanded hõlmasid kogude haldamist, uurimistööd ja näituste tegemist. Kuigi klassikalise kuraatori kõik ülesanded (kogude haldamine, uurimistöö, ja selle vahendamine näituste jm kaudu) olid esindatud, olid rõhuasetused eri muuseumides erinevad. Dünaamika viitas uurimistöö ja näituste kureerimise osakaalu vähenemisele ülesannetes, eriti Soome Rahvusmuuseumi ja Eesti Ajaloomuuseumi puhul. Nimetasin selle rühma "kogudega kuraatoriteks", kuna vastutus kogude korraldamise eest (museaalide kirjeldamine, andmete sisestamine infosüsteemi, külastajate teenindamine hoidlas ja e-kirjade kaudu jne) olid sarnased. Teine rühm, mida esindasid Eesti Rahva Muuseum ja Läti Rahvuslik Ajaloomuuseum, erinesid kuraatorite mõningase spetsialiseerumise poolest ja nende tööalane seos kindlate kogudega oli nõrgem. Seda rühma nimetasin "kogudeta kuraatorid", kuna kogude eksperdi roll oli neis muuseumides jäetud pigem koguhoidjatele. "Kogudeta kuraatorite" rühmas on spetsialiseerunud kuraatori suurim erinevus koguhoidjast akadeemilise teadustöö kohustus, sellise kuraatori ametinimetus on sageli 'teadur'. Lisaks selgus, et sõltumata sellest, kas spetsialiseerumine on toimunud või mitte, tunnetasid kuraatorid ülesannete sarnast killustumist ja ülesannete vaheliste piiride hägustumist. Olukorras, kus muuseum pöörab rohkem tähelepanu kommunikatsiooni funktsioonile ja on laiendatud vastavaid osakondi, on kaudselt suurenenud kuraatorite ülesanded – nii kogude avalikkusele kättesaadavaks muutmisel kui ka otsesuhtlusel publikuga.

Teine järeldus puudutab muutusi muuseumide struktuuris ja eri funktsioonide tähtsustamises. Van Menschi (2004) järgi liiguvad muuseumid alates 20. sajandi lõpust kogudel põhinevalt struktuurilt funktsioonipõhisele struktuuri poole. Uuritavates muuseumides puhast kogudepõhist mudelit ei ilmnenud, kuid osaliselt oli struktuur Läti, Leedu ja Soome puhul kogudepõhine. Organisatsioonistruktuuri dünaamika näitab, et publiku kaasamise ja avatud muuseumikommunikatsiooni eesmärk on viimase kümne aasta jooksul olnud Eesti ja Soome puhul esmatähtsal kohal, seal uuritud kolme muuseumi organisatsiooni on täiendatud kommunikatsiooni, turunduse ja muude vastavate spetsialistidega, loodud täiendavaid struktuuriüksusi. Publikuni püütakse jõuda erinevate ideenäituste, väljast kutsutud kuraatorite ja tellitud näituseprojektidega. Leedu ja Läti puhul ei ole laiendatud struktuuri kommunikatsiooniosakonna võrra, vaid loodud vastav ametikoht, mis kuulub enamasti näituste osakonna või administratsiooni koosseisu. Kommunikatsiooni- ja turundusfunktsiooni täitmine oli lahendatud sisutöötajate täiendava koolitamisega. Seega, kui Läti ja Leedu puhul oli muuseumitöö keskmes kogude haldamise ja uurimise funktsioon, siis Eesti ja Soome puhul oli tegevuse esiplaanil kommunikatsiooni funktsioon.

Kolmandaks jõudsin järeldusele, et uue museoloogia mõju kogudele on enam märgatav muuseumides, kus kommunikatsioonivaldkonna tähtsus on organisatsiooni struktuuris suurenenud (Eesti Ajaloomuuseum, Eesti Rahva Muuseum, Soome Rahvusmuuseum). Uue museoloogia mõjus kogude haldamisele dünaamikale on märgata, et otseselt ei ole huvi kogude säilitamise ja haldamise vastu vähenenud, säilitamine on oluline ja on suurenenud kogude tähtsus avalikkusele suunatud kommunikatsioonis. Vähemalt on tõusnud kogude instrumentaalne

väärtus, mida iseloomustab kogude digiteerimine. Samal ajal näitas dünaamika museaalide kasutamise vähenemist nii näitustel kui ka teadustöös, millest järeldub kogude sisulise tähtsuse vähenemine. Üks vastuolu ilmnes selles, et kogude ligipääsetavuse suurendamine on muuseumikommunikatsiooni vahend, samas praktikas ei täida vastavaid ülesandeid laienenud kommunikatsiooniosakonnad, vaid sisutöötajad – kuraatorid. See on üks põhjusi, mille tõttu kuraatorid on tööga ülekoormatud, mis oli eriti märgatav Soome Rahvusmuuseumis ja Eesti Ajaloomuuseumis. Leedu Rahvusmuuseumis, kus kommunikatsioonifunktsioon oli teiste tegevustega võrreldes tagaplaanil, tähtsustati vähem ka kogude avamist välistele kasutajatele, ka andmete kandmist avalikku elektroonilisse infosüsteemi ei peetud oluliseks. Leedu Rahvusmuuseum väärtustas kogusid sel teel, et neid ise (esimesena) publitseerida ja näitustel kasutada.

Väitekirja neljas järeldus on, et sotsiaalse ja suhtleva muuseumi ideaalid on tänapäeval suuresti põimunud juhtimisotsuste tegemisel turupõhise loogika järgimisega. Selline suundumus kajastub projektijuhi korraldatud näituste tootmise mudelis, kus näitus on muudetud peamiselt kommunikatsiooniosakonna tööriistaks omatulu teenimisel, aga ole enam sisuliste spetsialistide teadustöö vahendamise koht. Muuseumide keskendumine turumajandusele on muutnud külastajad klientideks, neile müüdud piletid "toodete müüginumbriteks", olulisemaks peetakse tulemuslikkuse kvantitatiivseid näitajaid kui kvalitatiivset individuaalset teadmiste jagamist. Muuseumi sisule vastava teadusdistsipliini alase hariduse puudumise tõttu võib administratsioon muuseumi eesmärgist hoopis teisiti aru saada kui sisulised töötajad. Sel juhul kavandatakse tegevused teaduse ja kogude arendamise asemel müüginumbrite prognoosi põhjal ja haridustegevused võivad mattuda meelelahutustegevuste alla. Kuraatorid tunnetavad probleemina enda argumentide ignoreerimist muuseumi töö korraldamises ja muuseumipoliitika otsuste tegemisel. Kirjeldatud suundumus on eriti iseloomulik Eesti muuseumidele.

Ilmnes ka, et otsustamise demokraatia tasakaal erinevate muuseumi valdkondade spetsialistide vahel võib osutuda illusoorseks. Seda ajendab muuseumi jaoks eluliselt tähtsaks muutunud omatulu teenimise vajadus. Majanduslikest kaalutlustest lähtuvalt on turunduse, müügi jm kommunikatsioonispetsialistidel olulisem otsustusõigus kui kuraatoritel ka sellistes küsimustes nagu näitusteemade ja muude sisuloome tegevuste kavandamine. Laiendatud näitusemeeskonnas on vähemalt Eestis probleemiks see, et kuraatorirollis olev sisuekspert ei usu ka ise enam enda argumentide paikapidavusse, kui väitleb disaineri, IT-arendaja või turundusspetsialistiga. Kuraatorite sõnul ignoreerib neid ka nende enda administratsioon. Tunnistades, et "muuseum peab raha teenima", on kuraatorid hakanud oma loovust ja ideid kui mitte-kaubanduslikke vaka all hoidma, mille tulemuseks on loovuse ja initsiatiivi langus. Võrdleva analüüsi kontekstis kehtivad neljandana toodud järeldused peamiselt Eesti juhtumite, aga ka Soome kohta. Nagu näitavad omatulu teenimise tulemused, on Läti ja Leedu puhul teenitud tulu seni olnud marginaalne, seega on turumajanduslik lähenemine muuseumile seal veel tagaplaanil. Samal ajal olid ka kuraatorite ametialase

identiteedi ebaselgus ja kolleegide vahelised konfliktid neis muuseumides vähem märgatavad.

Viies järeldus, mis on otseselt seotud eelmisega, puudutab kuraatori rollikonflikti ja rolli ebamäärasust institutsiooni ootuste osas. Rollikonflikt ja -ebamäärasus vähendavad kuraatorite motiveeritust sisulise eksperdi ja muuseumi vahendajana tegutsemisel. Kuna uues muuseumiparadigmas on levimas suund, et näituste teemad valivad turundus-, müügi- ja kommunikatsioonispetsialistid, väheneb teadlaste roll näituse- ja uurimisteemade kujundamisel. Samas, viimastel aastatel on muuseumi-uurijad hakanud rõhutama, et kuraatorid võivad olla nii edukad teadlased kui ka sujuvad vahendajad ning see ongi nende kompetentsi täielikum rakendamine (Schorch ja McCarthy 2020; Nielsen 2017). Seetõttu pöörasin väitekirja sissejuhatuse 3. peatükis palju tähelepanu kuraatorite professionaalsusele ja hariduslikule taustale. Pakun, et muuseumi eri valdkondade vahelist lõhet saab ületada, kui kuraatoreid, kellel on muuseumile vastava teadusharu põhiharidus, koolitatakse täiendavalt teistel erialadel – olgu selleks siis museoloogia, pedagoogika, turundus, kommunikatsioon või administreerimine. Minu uurimus näitas, et kuraatoritel on muuseumi vahendamisel mitmel viisil ülioluline roll: nad on eksperdid, kui on vaja museaalide kohta teaduslikult põhjendatud andmeid esitada, nii kogude kui ka näituste kohta populaarseid tekste kirjutada, loengutega esineda, meediale intervjuusid anda, asutusi ja üksikisikuid konsulteerida. See on tegevus, milles kommunikatsioonispetsialist ei saa asendada kuraatorit kui sisulist eksperti.

Kunagised uue museoloogia ideedest kantud kaebused selle kohta, et kuraatorid ei sobi uue muuseumi aluspõhimõtetega, kuna tõlgendamise ja meetodite osas on nad liiga autoritaarsed või kitsarinnalised, ei ole tänapäeval enam veenvad. Seetõttu väidan, et kuraatori autoriteet ei ole enam probleem, millega võidelda. Pendel on liikunud vastupidises suunas, kus muuseumis töötav kuraator on kaotamas initsiatiivi ja vastutust sisuliste tegevuste, sh näituste tegemisel, sest tegevusplaanide kavandamisel ei pea otsustajad teda autoriteediks. Olukorra tasakaalustamiseks esitan järgnevalt poliitikakujundajatele mõned ettepanekud.

Esimene praktiline soovitus poliitikakujundajatele on väärtustada kuraatori tööd kogudega nii teadusuuringute, süstematiseerimise kui kirjeldamise tasandil. Kuigi kogude võrgus kättesaadavaks tegemiseks vajaliku teabe sisestamine, täpsustamine ja ajakohastamine võib tunduda lihtne, mitteakadeemiline ja aeganõudev, sarnaneb see mis tahes muu eksperdi rolliga, mida kuraator saab täita haridustausta ja töökogemuse tõttu. Värske muuseumiuuring Eestis (vt Kõresaar jt 2021) leidis mitmeid kvaliteediprobleeme museaalide andmebaasi täitmisel, viidates, et sisuliste töötajate panus on oluline. Seda tööd ei tohiks liigitada uurija kompetentsi mittevajavaks tehnilise toe tööks. Samuti ei piisa kvantitatiivsetest näitajatest taolise töö tulemuste hindamiseks. Samas ei tohiks kuraator üksnes kogude andmebaasile keskenduda, seetõttu tuleb ka akadeemilist tegevust soodustada ja hinnata.

Teiseks soovitan väärtustada kuraatori võimet muuseumi sisu vahendada. Vaatamata muuseumidesse värvatud kommunikatsioonispetsialistidele on vastavatest ülesannetest paratamatult saanud ka muuseumides kuraatoritena töötavate

teadlaste vastutus. Seega ei jää kuraator kogukonna kaasamisest ega turundustegevustest kõrvale. Eelkõige on kuraator muuseumis vahendatava sisu looja, aga talle tuleks motivatsiooni suurendamiseks anda võrdset vastutust vahendamise tegevuste sisu kavandamisel ja rakendamisel. Kogude uurimisel ja arendamisel on neil võimalik museaale tõlgendada, neist kirjutada, loenguid pidada ja näitusi teha. Samuti oleks vaja hakata näitusi rohkem arvesse võtma teadusvaldkonna kuraatorite töötulemuste hindamisel.

Kolmandaks soovitan täpsustada sisulise personali haridusnõudeid ja lisakoolituse vajadust ning korrastada ametinimetuste süsteem. See kehtib eriti Eesti puhul, kus sisuliste töötajate jaoks puuduvad kutsestandardid ja atesteerimine. Atesteerimise kehtestamine ja ametinimetuste süsteemi korrastamine võiks olla kasulik sisulise töötaja ameti prestiiži tõstmiseks, aidates kaasa identiteedi täpsemale määratlemisele.

Neljandaks, muuseumitöö on loominguline ja kuraatorid vajavad julgustust, et avada enda loominguline külg. Juhtkonnalt ootavad kuraator lisaks mõistmist. Võib-olla on solidaarsus võtmesõna, mis tuleb võtta vana muuseumi paradigmast, kus juhatajad ise olid muuseumi kogudele vastava teadusharu teadlased. Seetõttu mõistsid nad sisulise personali identiteedi osiseid: vajadust põhjaliku uurimistöö järele, et säilitada usaldusväärsus, vajadust kontrollida fakte ja planeerida tööd jms. Kui muuseumi juhtkond järgib liiga pingsalt ettevõtluse eeskujusid ja tähtsustab vaid tõhusust, survestab see loomevabadust ja ei lase võtta eksperimenteerimise riske. On oht, et efektiivsusele orienteeritud turundustöötajad ei jaga samu väärtusi kui kuraatorid, juhtkod peaks siin tasakaalu hoidma. Kui tähtsustatakse ainult tulu ja atraktiivset toodet, võib teadusosakonna asendamine meelelahutusosakonnaga saada selle trendi äärmuslikumaks väljenduseks.

Toodud ettepanekud ja argumendid võivad abistada muuseumiinstitutsiooni töö korraldamisel ja kuraatori rolli kujundamisel. Veelgi olulisem on see, mida saavad kultuuripoliitika kujundajad sellest õppida, kui nad soovivad, et muuseumid jääksid ühiskonna jaoks hariduse ja kultuuri vallas oluliseks, sest kitsalt kaubanduslike eesmärkide seadmine ei anna sellele jätkusuutlikku alust. Muuseum võib kaotada oma usaldusväärsuse ühiskonnas, kui teadlased muutuvad ebakindlaks, on alamotiveeritud või keelduvad muuseumi eesmärkidesse panustamast. Kui kuraatori asjatundlikkus tuuakse tagasi muuseumi südamesse, nagu Nicholas Thomas (2016: 141) rõhutab, on muuseumil lootust säilitada oma maine ühiskonna jaoks huvipakkuva institutsioonina.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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1998–2004 Estonian National Museum, head of the department of exhibitions and public relations;
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Selected publications

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