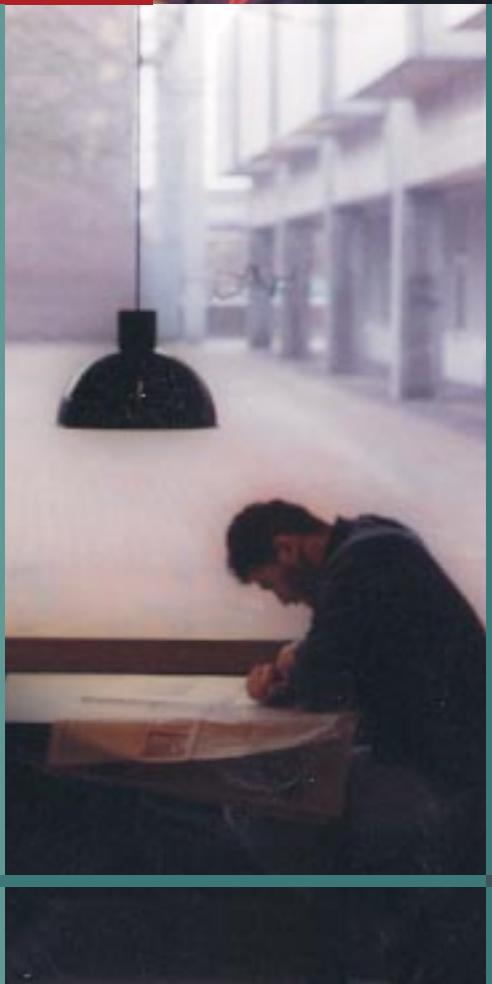


Refuge for Integration

A Study of how
the Ethnic Minorities
in Denmark use the Libraries

Abstract and
Recommendations

Prepared as a collaboration
between the State and University Library,
Odense Central Library and Aarhus Public Libraries, Denmark



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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the role the libraries play in the encounter between the ethnic minorities and Danish society, how the minorities use the libraries and the importance of the libraries in the integration process. The study only includes library users. From an ideal point of view the study should also have included non-users, but it proved impossible within the framework of the project.

The study should make it possible for the libraries to optimise their services to refugees and immigrants on the basis of reliable data of user requirements and needs. Therefore the report contains proposals for new initiatives and priorities in relation to the user group.

We hope that the report can be a tool for the libraries when they prioritise their services towards refugees and immigrants, and that the report contributes to strengthen the role of the libraries in the integration process.

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PUBLICATION

The results of the study are published in three parts. This is the brief summary of the main results of the study in english. Moreover there is a main report and an appendix in danish. The individual parts of the report are available at the Public Libraries in the Municipality of Aarhus, Mølledegade 1, 8000 Aarhus C. phone 8730 4593, email: srh@bib.aarhus.dk. The entire report can be seen on and printed from the internet address: www.aakb.dk/frirum

THE PROJECT GROUP

The project group behind the study:

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Conclusions



The Library bridges the Gap



The share of borrowers which is not of Danish origin is almost equivalent to their share of the population in the municipalities of Odense and Aarhus.



Library users from the ethnic minorities use the library to a much greater extent than the population in general.



How the ethnic minorities use the library is relatively equally divided on all library services where other users mainly borrow materials.



For older users the library has an especially important function as a meeting place and place of sojourn. It is the place where they meet equals and read foreign newspapers and periodicals, but it is also the place where they meet a very extensive supply of cultural products in Danish and, among others, read Danish newspapers.



It is stated that the library is important in connection with 'good experiences' (48%), 'learning Danish' (44%) and 'your education' (40%). A small share (approx. 30%) indicates that the library has been important in connection with 'gaining knowledge of Danish society'.



Children and young people mainly use materials in Danish. When young, they clearly identify with their own age group to a much greater extent than with their ethnic group.



Many parents are worried for the future of their children in Denmark. They believe that their children live in a 'cultural void', and that they partly abandon their cultural background. Therefore they would like the libraries to support initiatives that encourage children to seek their own roots and to consider this legitimate.



The awareness of ethnicity seems to grow during adolescence where young people get interested in materials about their background. The various functions of the internet (e-mail and chat) are used, among others, to create contact with equals and family.



For the girls the library is a place of refuge, a legitimate place of sojourn outside the family.



Many children and young people with minority background visit the libraries daily or almost daily and therefore develop a close relationship with the staff. It is a mixed blessing that in some areas the staff carry out tasks which more or less resemble socio-educational tasks.

The Libraries and the Computer Services



Ethnic minorities have a more pronounced use of the internet than users in general.



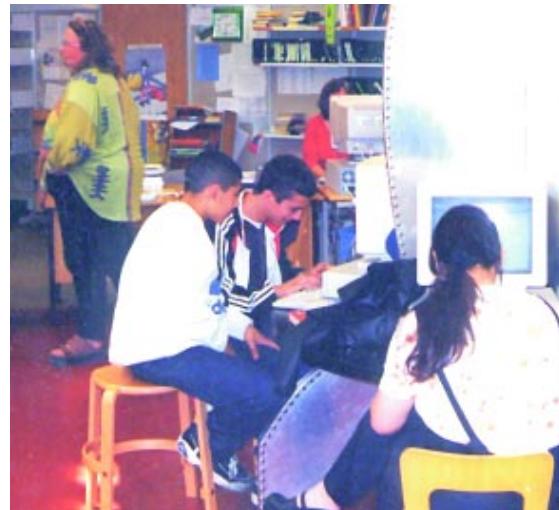
The internet is used by adults and older users primarily for e-mails, for targeted communication and to a smaller extent for information search. The wish to use the internet for information search decreases with age.



Young people use the internet for targeted as well as diffuse communication, for contact with equals and for information search and entertainment.



The writing culture on the internet means that the fact that young people use the internet supports their learning of Danish as well as English.



Library Materials

There is an overall satisfaction with the libraries' general services.



There is a markedly lower degree of satisfaction with materials in native languages. The critics mainly state that the collections are too small and too old.



The ethnic minorities borrow on average less than ethnic Danes. There are, however, large variations from one group to another.



The circulation figure for the loan of materials in native languages placed in deposit from the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature for a period of 6 months was, for all material types, 1.0 equivalent to 2.0 on an annual basis. The average circulation for all material types in the public libraries was 2.3 in 1999.



It is mainly adults who borrow books in native languages. The circulation for adult books placed in deposit from the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature for a period of 6 months was

1.14 equivalent to 2.28 on an annual basis. The circulation figure for loan of adult books in the public libraries was 1.8 in 1999.



Loan of music in native languages for adults is on average 2.9 loan per placed unit equivalent to 5.8 on an annual basis. For the public libraries in general the circulation of music for adults was 4.5 in 1999.



Children only borrow books in native languages to a very small extent. This also applies to children's books and music for children placed in deposit from the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature.



Especially the parents look for materials for children and borrow books for small children.



Non-fiction books in native languages are borrowed to a much greater extent than expected. They constitute approx. half of deposit loans, but normally constitute only 30% of a deposit.



It is characteristic for non-fiction books with the highest loan is that the treatment of topics is embedded in the cultural context of the original countries. They cannot be replaced by Danish non-fiction books on the same topics. However, special interest has been shown for literature about the bringing up of children in the western part of the world translated into 'immigrant languages'.



Conclusions made on the background of these observations are as follows: when ethnic minorities borrow less than the population in general it is probably due to the fact that markedly fewer materials are available for adults in native languages. When the supply is available for the adults, e.g. as deposits from the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature, it is also used to almost the same extent as other library materials.

Abstract of the Results of the Study

Recommendations



► ► ► The Material Collections

The non-Danish material collections are, even in large municipalities, relatively small. The study shows that large municipalities with relatively numerous minority groups probably should build up their own material collections to a much larger extent than previously.

Small municipalities or municipalities where the different ethnic groups are relatively small cannot build up material collections in a meaningful way, but must rely on the offers of deposit loans from the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature.

All libraries should also offer a comprehensive supply of newspapers and periodicals.

The purchase of non-fiction should generally be given higher priority.

Music and video films are very much in demand, and work should be focused on increasing the supply, centrally as well as locally.

The purchase of children's books for large children can be given lower priority. Books and videos for small children, on the other hand, should be purchased to a sufficient extent to satisfy the demand.

Furthermore it is recommended to engage in a further development of the applied loan statistics program so that the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature can measure, in a simple way, how borrowed materials are used.

The libraries are hesitant about building collections which will be superfluous relatively fast. The possibility to switch collections, e.g. with the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature as an intermediary, should be considered.

► ► ► Information about Society

Information about the society should be given a more prominent place. The libraries' efforts should be improved.

FINFO (www.finfo.dk) aims at providing an up-to-date service via the internet. The prerequisite for it having any effect in the municipalities is that the local libraries join the system and supply information.

Only when they experience that they can get useful information, adult users utilise the information systems. This is the case in connection with FINFO's collection of global links which are very much used by ethnic minorities to get information about the development in the native countries. Here is an example of a connecting link which the library can utilise by supplying information (preferably translated) about local conditions.

► ► ► The Internet

That young people are attracted to computer technology means a potential which can prepare the way for other kinds of qualifications. The libraries should therefore provide full access to the internet, including chat and e-mail, which partly fulfils important social functions, partly supports the language skills of young people, particularly in connection with Danish and English.

► ► ► Information

You have to meet the user where the user is. E.g. on immigrant radio and TV, in immigrant associations and in the mosque. There is a need for increased information efforts involving translated information.

► ► ► Disturbance

There is a need for competence development of the staff so that they are better prepared for cultural encounters and better can handle disturbance.

Method for conducting the study

Conceptual Framework

It is the group *citizens of foreign descent* from less developed countries which is the focus of the libraries' offer of service to users with minority background and which is the object of investigation here. In this study we will use the concept ethnic minorities as a joint designation, but we will also use other designations, when this seems natural, designations which have become part of everyday language.

The Elements of the Study

In the study of how the ethnic minorities use the Danish libraries we have wished to establish:

- ▶ how do the minorities use the library
- ▶ what do they use the libraries for
- ▶ how satisfied are they with the services offered
- ▶ what proposals for changing the libraries' practice do they wish to recommend.

We have assumed that the best way to carry out this user study is to combine qualitative and quantitative study methods.

Therefore we have wished to supplement the quantitative studies (statistics of loan data and questionnaire survey) with a number of focus group interviews.

Focus groups

The study was carried out in the autumn of 1999 and the spring of 2000. It includes interviews with 15 groups, totally 50 persons divided on the following groups: Arabs, Somalians and Turks in Aarhus and Odense, older Arabs in Aarhus, Bosnians in Odense, Iranians in Aarhus, Pakistanis in Odense, Vietnamese in Aarhus, young girls in Aarhus, young computer girls in Aarhus, young boys in Odense and young people in Rising near Odense.

Questionnaire survey

The study was conducted in the spring of 2000 and comprises 322 persons from ethnic minorities divided on the libraries in Aarhus: The Main Library (90), the libraries in Gellerup (54) and Hasle (50) and in Odense: The Central Library (72), Rising Library (7) and Vollsmose Library (49).

When relevant, the results are related to general user studies in Aarhus conducted in November 1999 among 1100 users.



Description of Libraries

The libraries included in the study are Odense Central Library and Aarhus Public Libraries as well as the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature (DCLIL). Below is a brief description of these libraries and the objectives for the work with ethnic minorities.

Description of Libraries in Odense and Aarhus

Key Figures 1999	Odense	Aarhus
Population	183.912	284.846
Local departments	9	20
Stock of books	824.155	1.000.457
Loan of books	2.077.086	3.284.808
Circulation of books	2,5	3,2
Expenses per inhb.	412	440
Expenses per inhb. for materials	52,49	65,79

Objectives for serving Ethnic Minorities

Goal settings for Aarhus Public Libraries are passed in the City Council every year in connection with the budget approval. The library sector is one of 10 political action areas within the refugee and immigrant area in the municipality. One of the objectives is e.g. that '*Citizens of foreign descent must constitute the same proportionate share of registered borrowers than that of the overall population*'.

The objective of Odense Central Library is based on The Public Libraries Act, among others: '*The Public Libraries Act is based on the spirit of the UNESCO library manifest which stipulates that all citizens must have free and equal access to information, knowledge and cultural experiences*'.

The material selection policy involves that non-fiction and fiction is purchased in numbers equivalent to the actual composition of the immigrant group in the municipality and on the island of Funen in general.

The policy in Aarhus is formulated in operational terms based on a political decision made by the City Council. The library departments prepare business plans with quantifiable goals which are settled in the annual sector accounts.

In Odense they prefer more general formulations and have not yet prepared business plans with quantifiable goals. They are, however, preparing an actual policy within the area. As it appears from the above, there have been some attempts to do so in the material selection policy.

Using the Collections

Aarhus measures the number of registered users of foreign descent as well as the loan of materials to these users yearly. Furthermore the utilisation and circulation of the collections are measured. The purpose of collecting these data is to assess the result of the efforts invested compared to the consumption of resources.



Information about Services

Aarhus and Odense inform their users in writing via the traditional channels which the libraries use in their public relations activities. Both cities are committed to electronic communication of information via www.finfo.dk. The information material is primarily in Danish. Neither Aarhus nor Odense make use of contact to religious associations or meeting places in their informative work.

Bilingual Staff

In Aarhus as well as in Odense they invest in competence development of the staff. In Aarhus there have been half-day courses and thematic meetings for the staff involved in serving ethnic minorities. In Odense there has been a conference on serving refugees and immigrants for library staff on the island of Funen. The purpose was to provide the staff with knowledge to serve the users in a qualified manner.

How large are the collections? (1999)

	Books adults		Books children		Music cd adults	
	Odense	Aarhus	Odense	Aarhus	Odense	Aarhus
Arabic	766	1399	829	792	90	213
Vietnamese	670	801	332	308	24	234
Pers./Iranian	1066	1022	408	647	76	203
Turkish	604	727	1117	737	136	263
Bos/Cr/Serb.	573	205	618	177	1	4
Urdu	382	214	285	147	22	178
Polish	317	371	86	162	4	-
Kurdish	225	155	76	110	23	50
Russian	141	340	66	176	7	-
Chinese	105	420	96	171	9	-

Description of Libraries

STATSBIBLIOTEKET INDVANDRERBIBLIOTEKET

Hjem Om Indvandrerbiblioteket E-mail & adresser Links

Indvandrerbiblioteket
Tlf. 32 10 50 00
Mobil tlf. 4473 4600

Nyheder til
bibliotekene

Klub-forum

Samlinger

Katalogen/bestil

Enkeltlinje og depoter

Om

FNPRD

Seg i biblioteksbaser

Forslag, råd og rås

Laveværdier
register

Internationale
cooperation

Biblioteks-
samarbejdet

Projekter og arrangementer

Aviser og tilskrivninger

Welcome to the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature (DCLIL)

The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature is a joint service provided by Danish libraries for ethnic minorities. The DCLIL has approximately 140 000 units of material in about 50 different languages. Individual collections are available in 30 languages. In some languages music, videos and books on cassette are available. The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature is not open to the general public and all loans take place via local libraries. If a local library does not have the material you require an order can be placed at DCLIL or at another library.

Local libraries, language centres, schools and asylum centres can loan material for between 1-6 months. Catalogues, listing books, music, video and books on cassette, can be obtained from the The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature. In many of the catalogues the details are written in the language of the material required, for e.g. Arabic catalogue written in Arabic.

This home page gives information about news and services available from the DCLIL. Users have access to the DCLIL's collections on the Internet via [bibliotek.dk](#). Here, through advanced searching, you can look up writers, titles and subject words in a choice of languages.

The Multicultural Library is a section of the Danish Statsbiblioteket. Questions concerning the DCLIL's Service can be sent to our address, by phone, or by e-mail sbib@statsbiblioteket.dk

► Presentation of The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature (DCLIL)
► IFLA Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations
► Papers on Multicultural Librarianship (in english)

The largest collections of the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature are divided on languages as follows:

Language	Units
Albanian	5.723
Arabic	22.260
Bos/Cr/Ser	19.258
Kurdish	3.696
Persian	12.036
Tamil	6.311
Turkish	21.576
Urdu	14.617
Vietnamese	6.926

The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature

The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature (DCLIL) is a section of the State and University Library and is a joint superstructure for the services the public libraries provide to ethnic minorities. DCLIL has approx. 130,000 material units in approx. 50 different languages. There are actual collections in 30 languages. The largest collections are books in Turkish (21.500 units), Arabic (22,000 units) and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (19,000 units). The accession in year 2000 was totally approx. 6,500 units (books for adults and children, music and a small number of videos for adults and children).

DCLIL is not open to the public. All loans take place via the local public library. If the local library has not got what the user wants, they send the requisition form to the DCLIL or another library.

Public libraries, language centres, primary and lower-secondary schools and refugee centres can order deposits for 3-6 months for the users. To be able to orient yourself in the DCLIL stock of books, music, videos and talking books, it is possible to order catalogues from the DCLIL. The catalogues are sent to all public libraries and to a number of institutions and organisations within the minority area. In most catalogues the books are described in the language they are written in, e.g. Arabic with Arabic writing.

The tasks of the DCLIL and the public libraries have traditionally been divided. The task of the public libraries is primarily to meet the needs for materials characterised by news and topicality (newspapers and periodicals), integration-relevant materials (e.g. language courses) as well as commonly used reference books and non-fiction characterised by topicality. The DCLIL must primarily meet the needs for experience-oriented materials, humanistically and sociologically related non-fiction as well as reference books on practical subjects and talking books. It is assumed, however, that large public libraries with many immigrant users have their own collections of books adapted to the needs of the area.

The accession for year 2000 are divided on the largest languages as follows

Language	Units	Titles
Albanian	224	111
Arabic	1.281	471
Bos/Cr/Ser	627	186
Chinese	244	110
Kurdish	244	87
Persian	568	221
Russian	367	151
Somalian	234	49
Tamil	671	176
Thai	124	71
Turkish	432	209
Urdu	542	204
Vietnamese	557	204



Statistical Snapshot of how the Libraries are used in Aarhus and Odense



The study comprises a statistics of registered users at Aarhus Public Libraries and Odense Central Library. It includes persons who have library cards for the library. As of 1 October 1999 the two libraries have made an extract from their borrower registers. This includes all borrowers and gives information of number of borrowed materials on any day in question. Subsequently this data have been added data from the national register concerning age, sex, descent, local area, etc.

In conclusion the statistical snapshot shows that

- ▶ the share of borrowers among the non-Danish group fairly equals the share of borrowers among the population in general.
- ▶ women and children are to some extent underrepresented compared to borrowers with Danish background
- ▶ persons from different countries of origin use the libraries to a varied extent. Persons from Iran, Vietnam and Chile are fairly highly placed in connection with share of library cards, while particularly Arabic-speaking groups (Palestinians, Lebanese and Iraqis) possess library cards to a much smaller extent.
- ▶ borrowers from ethnic minorities borrow on average less than the population in general

How the Ethnic Minorities use and assess the General Services of the Libraries

In this chapter the description of the study's central questions are concentrated:

- ▶ how ethnic minorities use the libraries
- ▶ what they use the libraries for
- ▶ how satisfied are they with the services offered
- ▶ and what proposals for changing the libraries' practice do they recommend

What experiences do the interviewed persons have in connection with libraries in their native countries?

Most interviewees have come to Denmark as young or adults and many were not library users in their native countries.

In many of the countries from which the interviewees come, there are limited library services which are attached to schools or universities, and the services offered are usually limited to books. More of the interviewees mention other possibilities to get cheap access to books, e.g. second-hand bookshops, book fairs or places where books are hired out.

How frequently are the libraries used?

The persons asked use the libraries markedly more than users in general. For all age groups it applies that a majority of the persons asked visits either every day or 1-2 days a week. A particularly intensive use of the library is apparent with young people under the age of 18. It is also significant that persons over 60 either use the library at least once a week or more - or not at all. This may imply

that the library's function as meeting place or place of sojourn and the wish to read the daily newspaper are especially pronounced for this group.

84% of the young people interviewed from ethnic minorities use the library at least twice a week, whereof 19% visit the library on a daily basis.

Recently the libraries' internet services have meant a major change in how children and young people use the libraries. For a number of years the libraries were worried that young people would abandon the libraries. The opposite situation is now the case. They do not visit, however, to borrow books, but primarily to make use of the computer services offered.

What do ethnic minorities use the libraries for?

How ethnic minorities use the libraries differs from the general Danish use pattern by being more varied. When comparing a large user survey from Aarhus Public Libraries it appears that, while the population in general primarily uses the library for borrowing fiction and non-fiction as well as music and to a smaller extent uses other services offered by the libraries, the ethnic minorities' use of the library is more equally divided. They seek information, inspiration, entertainment and books to support them in their educational studies. Others visit to use the internet, read newspapers or study. The questionnaire survey, statements attached to this study and the interviews all draw the same picture.

Especially marked is the internet use. 65% of persons interviewed say that they use the internet at the library compared to 19% among users in general (cf. user survey at Aarhus Public Libraries among 1100 users in 1999).



How are the Libraries Assessed?

The interviewees are generally very satisfied with the libraries. Compared to the experience users have of the libraries in their native countries the persons asked stress that Danish libraries are more modern, have more space, and that you can also borrow music and videos, just as you have the possibility to use the internet in the library. More stress the importance of the free-gratis-and-for-nothing principle.

Between 40 and 48 % advise that the library means a lot in connection with 'good experiences', 'learning Danish' and 'your education'.

It may seem surprising that apparently the library means less when it is about communicating 'knowledge of Danish society'. However, 1/3 of the persons asked indicates that the library has meant a lot in connection with 'gaining knowledge of Danish society'. On the other hand, it is not surprising that the library does not play any significant role in 'getting a job'.

Assessment of the General Services offered by the Library

With the libraries' general services is meant the services which are not targeted at any special user group. Materials in Danish and other western European languages are generally included in the general services. In this study we have only included materials in Danish and in English.

The majority expresses satisfaction with the libraries' general services. There is, however, a demand for more video films for children and adults, more copies of new music and better language courses.

How the Ethnic Minorities use and assess the Materials

The Significance of the Library in Connection with Learning Languages

44% of the interviewed persons indicate that the library has been very significant for their learning Danish.

The libraries' Danish language courses are very popular. Many use the library's services while they are waiting for a place at the language school. In the libraries you often meet Danish residents of foreign descent which arrive with family members, friends or boy or girl friends which have just arrived in Denmark and which seek language courses on cassette tape for self-tuition.

In accordance with this it is also in the group of relatively newly arrived people that we find a more pronounced satisfaction with the language courses.

The materials which seem to be most important are books with tapes. Especially in the children's libraries a large selection produced for Danish children with reading disabilities can be found. Experience shows that these materials are also important for foreigners learning Danish.

Several of the interviewed persons mention that they do not talk with Danes outside the language school. Young people are primarily together with other foreigners, and this results in a weakening of their Danish language learning.

Young people state that their use of the internet strengthens the learning of Danish as well as English.

It seems that participation in chat rooms is important to the language learning of children and young people - in English as well as Danish. Here the writing culture is necessary, and it means low status if your language is too poor.

Several of the respondents mention that what goes on in connection with the internet in the libraries, in the virtual and in the physical room, improves their learning of Danish.

Materials in Native Languages

Offers of materials in the minorities' native languages were introduced in Denmark in connection with the guest workers' arrival in the 1970's. Library services in the immigrants' original mother tongues are also known from, among others, libraries in the USA, Canada, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands.

In Europe the practice differs depending on the policy and strategy of the countries. In some countries, e.g. France and Germany, it is a local decision and therefore there is a great variation in the offers of literature in foreign languages.

The utilisation of book materials in native languages is naturally linked to your ability to read the language. 82% of the interviewed persons advised that they could read and write their native language.

Even when doing an isolated observation of the group of young people under 18 and 2nd generation refugees/immigrants, the share which stated that they could read constituted 77%. This piece of information is, however, to some extent put in perspective by the parents' pronounced worries about the children's language skills (see below). The other decisive factor for using materials in your native language is that they actually exist. In Aarhus and Odense the stock of books for adults in 'immigrant language' comprises 5,600 units and 4,800 units respectively - divided on more than 10 languages. In periods this stock is supplemented by deposits from the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature.

Different parts of the questionnaire survey show that the demand for materials (books, music, periodicals and newspapers) reflects the age group. Adults want materials which help them to maintain and develop the knowledge of their native country's history, culture and current development, while young people to a higher extent demand the same as ethnic Danes within the same age group. Materials in native languages are thus especially used by adult borrowers over 27.

The focus groups request an improved supply of materials in native languages. It is a common feature that the interviewed persons mention that a good supply in their native language is very important, partly for the newly arrived, partly for children's and young people's knowledge of their cultural background and language.

Still more people start to see their bilingual skills as something useful. To be good at your native language may be an advantage because it improves job options and trading relations.

There is also a wish to read literature in the original language instead of the translated version. Others stress that the libraries' material supplies in native languages are very important for the children's forming of identity. Many of the interviewees mention that their children have not previously been interested in their background. In primary and lower secondary school the children are oriented towards Danish culture; they have Danish friends, listen to the same music and have the same interests as their Danish friends of the same age. The division seems to arise during adolescence. Some of the interviewees say that at this time they started to seek information about their cultural background.

Several of the interviewees indicate that they are not good at their mother tongue. A Turkish respondent states that Turkish spoken by Turks in Denmark is obsolete.

Several of the focus groups express a wish to have more influence on the purchasing of books and music.

When one language group's material collection has a satisfactory extent as far as level and width are concerned, other minority groups naturally want an equivalent level of services offered to them - despite the fact that their part of the population in the municipality may be considerably lower.

How Children use Materials in Native Languages

Several of the interviewed parents say that the children are not that interested in materials in their mother tongue. They express concern that their children will distance themselves from their own cultural background. Therefore they would like the libraries to support initiatives which encourage them to seek their own roots and to consider this legitimate. When children to a very small extent demand materials in their native language, it is probably due to the fact that many children only speak their mother tongue because they speak it at home. Many children cannot read or write the native language.

It seems that generally children prefer to focus on what gives them a joint identity with Danes of the same age. They do not focus on the fact that they have a different descent.

Assessment of the Material Supply in Native Languages

The users have not been asked to prioritise their wishes for improvement.

It appears that people are dissatisfied with the fact that the library does not have enough materials in native languages; this applies for books, music, newspapers, periodicals, videos, etc. In general they wish more new materials in all areas.

In this connection the wishes do not differ from the wishes of Danish library users. But the wishes are thrown in relief by the fact that the libraries' collections of materials in the relevant languages constitute a very small share of the libraries' material stock, and that the deposits placed by the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature cannot change this fact considerably.

The problems in connection with serving refugees from areas devastated by civil war are illuminated by the critics stated by the Bosnian group concerning the designation Serbo-Croatian to describe their language. What an outsider may consider a trivial question could have great symbolic importance. Also in this group they primarily criticise the materials for being 'wrong', i.e. if they originate from Serbia or Croatia.

More focus groups invite the libraries to intensify their informative work. Obviously it is generally accepted that the libraries do not inform efficiently, to a sufficient degree, about the services for the relevant receivers. It is pointed out that immigrant radios and mosques are efficient information channels.

How the Ethnic Minorities use and assess the Facilities

The Library as a Place of Sojourn

The different parts of the study show that ethnic minorities use the library often and to a large extent as a place of sojourn; a place where you meet your friends, go on the internet, spend time in the newspaper reading department or a place where you can study. This also means that the visiting rate is markedly more frequent than for other library users.

Of the 56 comments which appear in the questionnaires on questions about opening hours, there is a marked tendency: the wish for extended opening hours, during the week as well as in the weekend. Nevertheless 31% are fairly satisfied and 44% very satisfied with the opening hours. Also the focus groups express a wish for extended opening hours, especially in the winter season.

In the focus groups the interviewees stress the library's function as a place of sojourn. In the newspaper reading department of the libraries, in areas with many immigrants, you notice that just after opening time many users from ethnic minorities arrive. In this connection the unemployment rate among ethnic minorities probably plays a role. The wish for extended opening hours is logical when your starting point is that an important function of the library is that of a place of sojourn.

Odense Central Library has plenty of space and many seats between the shelves. Maybe because the conditions invite them to do it, more groups of older Turks and Arabic-speaking men gather here to talk and read newspapers than can be seen at the Main Library in Aarhus.

There is a very varied use of libraries and it is reflected in the fact that there are many requests to facilities provided by the libraries. Some examples are a cutting workshop in the children's library,

study room, 'secret' rooms, places where you can meet your friends, TV-room, praying room, etc.

The reason why the libraries are popular as places of sojourn for ethnic minorities may be due to the fact that they offer some of the atmosphere which exists in the open space, in the streets, in the tea houses and cafes in the native countries of the ethnic minorities. An open and obligation-free environment in which you can move freely. Apart from libraries ethnic minorities also frequently use shopping centres, clubs and mosques as places of sojourn - especially the men.

Place of Sojourn And Disturbances

Recently the libraries have got many pc's with internet access. This has made the library more attractive for ethnic minorities and especially young people use the library more. It is evident for staff and users that the composition of the library users has changed markedly in recent years.

Due to the fact that many young people from minority groups use the library as a kind of alternative youth centre, conflicts arise in many libraries due to noisy behaviour.

There are two opposite tendencies: noisy behaviour and wish for more peace. Some people want a meeting place, activities and some 'action' in the youth groups at the internet pc's. Others point out that the library is a place where they can find peace for studying because they live in a home together with a big family where many people live and stay at home all day and therefore the noise level is high.

Many of the interviewed persons spontaneously mentioned problems of disturbances, noise levels, etc. Both users and staff are very engaged on the problems. In the next section we describe the attitudes of the staff at the

local libraries in Gellerup and Hasle and at the children's department of the Main Library in Aarhus.

For the six libraries we have studied, the accommodation itself means severe limitations and the need for organising quiet areas is very difficult to meet in the existing premises.

Even if you consider the library a meeting place where you can meet friends, it does not mean that you meet people you do not know. Several people express frustration that it is difficult to get in contact with Danes without implying that the library should play a role in changing this situation.

The Staff & the Disturbances

Many users see the noise level in some libraries as a problem. Also staff in some of the studied libraries see disturbances and noise as problematic. At the local library in Hasle there have been several violent incidents which have resulted in the fact that today a guard is permanently attached to the library. To illuminate the problems seen from the staff's point of view parts of the staff at the local libraries of Gellerup and Hasle and at the children's department at the Main library were interviewed.

As a model for solving the problem it was suggested to employ permanent guards as well as to allocate extra man power during some periods. They stress the importance of having a guard, provided that this guard is the right one, i.e. a professional and friendly guard.

Furthermore they point out the necessity of developing staff competence. All interviewees agree that it is positive to have bilingual employees in order to send signals and because the workplace learns to see things from different angles. There does not seem to be big discrepancies between the way the staff wish to handle the challenges and the demand of the users.

The Internet – a ‘Hit’ among Minorities

In the afternoon all places at the pc's in all 6 libraries are occupied. The demand is insatiable. Especially children and young people of both sexes are active users, but also many adults, primarily men, are active users.

The use of the internet seem to concentrate on the e-mail function. Especially adults and older people use this frequently, probably to stay in contact with friends and family.

The use of other functions such as chat, surf and search for news is fairly equally divided. These functions, on the other hand, are mostly used by children and young people. The most dissatisfied comments say that there are not enough pc's and that they are too old and too slow. The respondents request more and newer pc's as well as computer courses.

Young People and the Internet

It is a common feature that young people from ethnic minorities have a high visiting rate. And it is characteristic that they are most visible primarily in connection with internet use. The young people chat, e-mail and surf on the internet. Also girls from the minorities are active computer users, quite on the same level as the young boys.

It is discussed passionately in library circles whether it is the role of the libraries to provide the internet for ‘this kind of thing’. Some of the answers we have received in this study indicate that the internet, including use of e-mail and chat, strengthens the users' skills both as far as languages and computers are concerned.

As many young people with minority background live in a difficult space between homes bound by tradition and Danish society characterised by modernity, the libraries seem to meet the needs for virtual and physical encounters

which do not take place anywhere else.

That the young people are attracted to computer technology means great potentials which can prepare the way for other qualifications. Many children and young people with minority background visit the libraries daily and therefore develop a close relationship to the staff. It is a mixed blessing that in some areas the staff carry out tasks that resemble socio-educational tasks.

A place of Refuge for the Girls

In the media debate there is focus on the girls from the minority environment. In many homes the girls' scope of activities is relatively limited. Apparently, the libraries have become an alternative, a legitimate place where the girls can go with the parents' permission to borrow materials, go on the internet or meet friends of both sexes, so far. In the observations we did during our library visits, it became apparent that the libraries have become a place of refuge.

The Service and Attitudes of the Staff

In the replies to the questionnaires and the focus group interviews the service which the libraries' staff offer the ethnic minorities is generally given a positive evaluation.

There are 61 comments. 36 are positive, and words as sweet, friendly, helpful, polite, open, funny, competent and smiling are used. 25 are negative where 9 focus on the fact that the staff seem to be too busy to help.

It is a common feature of all the focus interviews that the respondents experience the library as a nice place. Nobody mentions that they have experienced discrimination from the library staff. In one single case a borrower experienced discrimination from another borrower and here the staff intervened.

Composition of Staff – Bilingual Staff?

Generally more bilingual staff are requested at the libraries. The request is based on different motivations from being a big advantage for newly arrived which cannot speak the language to signalling that the employees have more than one ‘colour’. Bilingual staff are supposed to know the problems of ethnic minorities and are therefore able to communicate better.

The largest groups (e.g. Arabic-speaking) seem to think they should be represented on the staff.

Many of the interviewees believe that they speak Danish so well that they do not experience any language barriers at the library. More of them believe, however, that newly arrived immigrants and those of their countrymen who do not speak Danish that well would benefit greatly from the presence of bilingual staff.

Other Library Activities

The minorities have large requests as to the role the libraries should play. The proposals are not limited to lending materials and providing information. Many minority borrowers wish that the libraries would organise activities and events in the local communities (tasks which resemble youth centre activities) and support culture production by for example supporting translations.

Some of the respondents believe that the library should take on the greater task of preventing young immigrants from pursuing a criminal career.

The borders between the library as a place of sojourn, an activity centre and cultural communicator are going to mean new challenges and expectations from this user group.

Statistical Study of the Loan from the Deposits of the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature

Method

The analysis has been carried out on the basis of approx. 8,900 materials which have been included in deposits at 14 different libraries. The deposits have been at the libraries in the period from 1 March to 1 September 2000, i.e. 6 months. The libraries included in the survey are as follows:

Avedoere Library,
Broendby Strand Library,
Frederiksberg Library,
Frederikshavn Library,
Frederikssund Library,
Herning Central Library,
Hjørring Library,
Kolding Library,
Nyborg Library,
Odense Central Library,
Sønderborg Library,
Aabenraa Central Library,
Aarhus Public Libraries:
The Main Library and
Gellerup Library

The statistical program applied only registers materials which have had one or more loans, but not the total stock of the deposit. At the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature they know the size of the deposits and have thus been able to establish how large a share of the deposits has not been borrowed, but the non-borrowed materials are not divided into subjects.

On the basis of prior experience the deposits constitute approx. 70% fiction and 30% non-fiction.

General Tendencies

8,875 units were placed at the libraries. During the loan period of 6 months 45% or 3,955 units have been borrowed one or more times.

Totally there have been 8,988 loans (excluding video loans: 268). The circulation figure for the total amount of materials placed is therefore 1.01 for 6 months.

The majority of the collections are old and include only a relatively small number of new titles. Some of the titles placed can therefore previously have been in a deposit at the libraries in question.

The circulation figure for loans of all material types in the public libraries was 2.3 in 1999. Considering that the quality of the deposits could be improved, a circulation figure of 1.01 for 6 months must be considered satisfactory.

There are marked differences in the loan of materials in the different languages. The Asian languages (Vietnamese and Chinese) have a much higher circulation than e.g. Arabic, Persian and Urdu. People speaking Middle Eastern languages generally seem to be very interested in non-fiction, while the Asian languages such as Vietnamese have a considerably higher loan of fiction.

The Vietnamese and Chinese collections of the DCLIL include mainly fiction because it is difficult to acquire non-fiction in these languages. Therefore the deposits offered have mainly been fiction.

Children's materials have lower circulation than adult materials, and the loan of music and video is considerably higher than that of books. These tendencies seem to be in accordance with the loan of Danish materials at the libraries where also music and video have the highest circulation, and the loan of children's materials is stagnant.

The figures appearing from this study show the same tendencies which for instance have been measured in the utilisation of the immigrant collection of Aarhus Public Libraries.

Loan of the different Material Categories

Loan of Books for Adults

Vietnamese is the language with the markedly highest loans, with a circulation of 2.46 decreasing to 0.05 for Polish. Moreover the tendency in the demand for the individual languages equals the tendency in the demand for the libraries' own immigrant collections.

Books for Children:

The circulation figure for Tamil children's books is 1.21. The circulation figure for the other languages is between 0 and 0.59.

Music for Adults:

The loan of music for adults has generally been high, in average 2.89 loan per unit placed equivalent to 5.78 on an annual basis. As a comparison the public libraries' circulation of music was 4.5 in 1999.

The loan of music has been highest in Persian (4.32) and Arabic (3.78). The circulation figure for the loan of Kurdish music of 2.33 is particularly noteworthy as only 40 units were placed divided on 2 deposits.

Music for Children:

As was the case for children's books the loan of children's music is lower. In average the circulation is 0.15 per unit placed. Here it is important to notice that there is no independent tradition for children's music in many of these countries. As a consequence the supply is very small, and so is the renewal.

Loan of Books for Adults

Language	Units in deposit	Number of loans	Circulation in 6 mths.	Number of deposits
Albanian ¹	150	7	0,05	3
Amharic ²	30	2	0,07	1
Arabic	1025	854	0,83	12
Aserbajdjanian	20	9	0,45	1
Bos/Cro/Ser	715	941	1,32	10
Chinese	90	169	1,88	3
Kurdish	190	18	0,09	4
Persian	875	977	1,12	12
Polish	110	6	0,05	2
Russian	163	198	1,21	3
Tamil	295	517	1,75	5
Turkish	575	291	0,51	9
Urdu	510	667	1,31	6
Vietnamese	565	1392	2,46	9
Total	5313	6048	1,14	80

¹ The Albanian collection of books is older. In 1999 Albanian literature was bought extraordinarily for Kosova-Albanian refugees. These books were divided among refugee centres etc and are not included in the study.

² The Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature only has 120 books for adults in Amharic. These books may previously have been lent out to the library in question.

Video

Originally the loan of video was not intended to be included in the deposit study as the DCLIL's collection of videos is very limited. But when the libraries reported the figures for video loans, they are also included here.

Videos are normally placed in deposits only for a 3 months' period. When the libraries have registered the videos as part of the study, it is assumed that the libraries have kept the video for 6 months.

Loan of videos for adults:

Language	Units	Loan	Circulation in 6 mths.
Arabic	52	125	2,4
Persian	22	122	5,5

Loan of videos for children:

Language	Units	Loan	Circulation in 6 mths.
Arabic	4	21	5,3



Fiction compared to Non-fiction

The loan of non-fiction in most languages has had an extent which almost equals that of fiction. This is noteworthy as, based on a presumption that fiction is used more than non-fiction, the libraries normally request this more than they request non-fiction when ordering deposits at the Danish Central Library for Immigrant Literature.

It is significant that language groups with large deposits such as Arabic, Persian and Turkish have approximately equal loans of non-fiction and fiction despite the fact that the deposits include more fiction.

On the other hand, in other important languages such as Russian, Tamil and Urdu there is a clear majority of loans of fiction for adults.

Top 10 for Non-fiction

Arabic: Books on cooking top the list followed by sex guidance. Apart from that also books on religion, sociological science, politics, fairytales and proverbs, geography, biology, Arabian history, biographies have reasonable loan figures.

Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian: Alternative forms of treatment have most loans followed by beauty care and religion.

Then follow books on psychology, pregnancy and birth, child care, cooking, about the languages Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, history of the Balkans and biographies.

Chinese: The DCLIL only has a limited stock of Chinese non-fiction. The loans are divided on most categories: sociological science, politics, fairytales, geography, mathematics, natural science, pregnancy and birth, cooking and biographies.

Persian: Also here the list is topped by books on beauty care followed by books on psychology and religion. Furthermore there are reasonable circulation figures for books on sociological science, politics, fairytales and proverbs, geography, natural science, cooking, history of Iran and biographies.

Tamil: Psychology, religion, fairytales, geography, history of India, biographies.

Turkish: Religion, sociological science, politics, fairytales, cooking, history of Turkey and Iran and biographies.

Urdu: Here the list is topped by books on sex guidance. Furthermore there are books on religion, fairytales, geography, beauty care, cooking, needlecraft, history of Pakistan and biographies.

Vietnamese: Computer books have the highest circulation followed by books on sex guidance. Then there are books on religion, sociological science, fairytales, geography, nutrition, pregnancy and birth, cooking, world history and history of Vietnam and biographies.

Non-fiction for Children

The loan of non-fiction has been limited. Special interest has been shown for the topics religion (Arabic), fairytales (all languages), cooking (Persian), language and history (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian). Again we must stress that the analysis has been carried out on the basis of loan and not the total deposit. Lack of loans for a certain topic may be due to the fact that the topic was not included in the deposit.

The DCLIL has experienced that particularly children's books are borrowed a lot. This is apparently a more widely made experience as the libraries ordering children's books via the joint purchase primarily order books for small children.

The Library Bridges the Gap

In the study we have wished to illuminate the following presumptions:

- ▶ The library plays an important role in the integration process

This question is difficult to answer. Popularly speaking, to be integrated in another culture involves that you learn to manage in society, in the culture of the majority, in a natural and familiar way and on equal terms with other citizens of that country without giving up your own cultural identity for that reason. As a contrast to this, assimilation involves that you give up your own cultural identity and then you do not belong to an ethnic minority any longer.

Without comparison the library is the Danish cultural institution which most inhabitants and thus also most ethnic minorities get acquainted with.

Users from the ethnic minorities use the library rather intensively and thereby meet an extensive supply of cultural products in Danish.

Between 40 and 48% of the interviewed persons advise that the library means a lot in relation to 'good experiences', 'learning Danish' and 'your education'. The library means considerably less when it is about communicating 'knowledge of Danish society'. 1/3 of the interviewed persons state, however, that the library has been very important for their 'knowledge of Danish society'. To older people the library plays an

important role as a meeting place and a place of sojourn. It is the place where they meet equals and read foreign newspapers and periodicals, but it is also the place where they read Danish newspapers and borrow books and periodicals in Danish.

Many children and young people with minority background visit the libraries daily or almost daily and therefore develop a close relationship to the staff. It is a mixed blessing that in many areas the staff carry out tasks that more or less resemble socio-educational tasks.

Many parents are worried for the future of their children in Denmark. They believe that their children live in a cultural void, and that they partly abandon their cultural background. Therefore they would like the libraries to support initiatives which encourage the children to seek their roots and to consider this legitimate.

It is a goal for the Danish integration policy that the integration of ethnic minorities is done with respect for their original culture's special character. The aim is integration, not assimilation.

A good material supply in native languages is one means of integrating the ethnic minorities without necessarily having them give up their own cultural identity.

It is possible to strengthen the libraries' efforts in this area.

- ▶ The ethnic minorities demand the same materials as Danes with a short formal education

Within the framework of the study it has not been possible to monitor the library users with a short formal education.

How the ethnic minorities use the library differs from how the ethnic Danes use it by being more varied. While ethnic Danes primarily use the library to borrow fiction and non-fiction as well as music and to a smaller extent use the library's other services, the ethnic minorities use the library in a more equally divided way. But as far as the supply of e.g. materials in native languages for adults exists, the adults borrow it to the same extent as adult ethnic Danes borrow Danish materials.

- ▶ Ethnic minorities use computers at the libraries more than the average citizen

The ethnic minorities use the internet markedly more than ethnic Danes. Adult and older users use it primarily for sending e-mails, i.e. targeted communication. To a smaller extent for information search. The wish to use the internet for information search decreases with age.

Young people use the internet for targeted as well as non-targeted communication, for contact with equals and for information search and entertainment (e-mails, chats and

surfing). That young people are fascinated by computer technology is a potential which can pave the way for other qualifications. The writing culture on the internet means that the fact that young people use the internet supports their learning of Danish and English.

- ▶ Ethnic minorities prioritise music, video, internet, newspapers and periodicals to book materials.

The users have not been asked how, if this was possible, they would prioritise the materials, but if you look at their questionnaire replies and the focus group interviews as well as borrower behaviour, nothing suggests that this presumption is correct.

How the ethnic minorities use the library is divided relatively equally on all the services of the library. Out of the libraries' services the internet is the only service which ethnic minorities seem to use more markedly than other services. When relevant book materials in native languages exist, they are borrowed to the same extent as other materials at the library.

The users are overall satisfied with the library's general services, that is the services directed at all people and which are not especially directed at ethnic minorities. On the other hand, users are markedly less satisfied with materials in native languages. The critics states that the collections are too small and too old. On average the ethnic minorities borrow



less than the population in general. However, there are large variations among the groups. The circulation figure for loan of materials in native languages placed in deposits from the DCLIL was 1.0 for all material types equivalent to 2.0 on an annual basis. The average circulation was 2.3 for all material types in the public libraries in 1999.

Especially adults borrow books in native languages. The circulation of books for adults in native languages placed in deposit from the DCLIL for a 6 months' period was 1.14 equivalent to 2.28 on an annual basis. The circulation figure for loan of books for adults was 1.8 for the public libraries in 1999.

The loan of music for adults is generally high, on average 2.9 loan per unit placed, equivalent to 5.8 on an annual basis. For the public libraries in general the circulation of music for adults was 4.5 in 1999.

Children borrow only books in native languages to a very small extent. This also applies to children's books and music for children placed in deposit from the DCLIL.

Especially parents demand materials for children. It seems to be commonly accepted that especially books for small children are a good loan.

Non-fiction in native languages are borrowed considerably more than expected. They make up approx. half of the deposit loans, but normally only constitute approx. 30% of a deposit.

The non-fiction borrowed most frequently concern psychology, religion, cooking, beauty care, sex guidance, alternative forms of treatment.

Moreover history and biographies are popular topics. The treatment of these topics is embedded in the cultural context of the original countries. They cannot be replaced by non-fiction about equivalent topics in Danish.

On the background of these observations the conclusion is that when ethnic minorities generally borrow less than the population in general, it is due to the fact that apparently there are markedly fewer materials in native languages available. When the supply for adults is there, e.g. in the form of deposits from the DCLIL, it is used to almost the same extent as other materials at the library.

▶ Young people from ethnic minorities primarily use the library's general services and offers of computer technology and to a smaller extent they seek books in their mother tongue

Children and young people clearly identify with their own age group to a greater extent than with their ethnic group.

The awareness of ethnicity grows during adolescence, and young people become interested in materials about this subject. The various functions of the internet (e-mail and chat) are used to get in contact with equals.

▶ Ethnic minorities demand the function of place of sojourn at the library

The share of borrowers of non-Danish descent almost equals their share of the population in the municipalities of Odense and Aarhus.

The function as a place of sojourn is especially important for children and young people and for older people. Of those visiting the library 88% of the young people and 86% of the older people visit the library at least once a week. For the age group between 18 and 60 between 72 and 79% have a similar visiting rate.

▶ Ethnic minorities prefer bilingual staff at the libraries

Yes, but this is considered to have practical importance mostly in connection with newly arrived immigrants or refugees and moreover it has importance as a political signal.