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From means to an end to ends in themselves

An empirical study of the development of public library programmes in Denmark between 1960 and 2020[1]

Abstract

Offering a variety of activities and events is considered a central part of many public libraries today. Under the term public library programmes, this article presents the findings from an empirical study of the development of publicly available and publicly announced activities and events offered within or in relation to Danish public libraries over a sixty-year period. The aim of the study was to enrich our understanding of these library services from a historical perspective focussing on describing development. Inspired by Historical Case Study (HCS), the study was designed as a diachronic analysis of a broad variety of empirical source materials collected from two case libraries, documenting programmes offered between 1960 and 2020, including interviews with programming librarians. From analysing the source materials, a development is described which shows that while the different types of programmes offered throughout the period have been somewhat consistent, their format and content have expanded in parallel with the expansion of the public library, its collections and services. At the same time, the reasoning behind offering programmes can be described as a development from programmes considered as a means to an end (e.g. education, publicity or community building) to

programmes also considered as ends in themselves. By supporting and enriching the knowledge on programmes as services, this study provides an empirical foundation for discussions and debates about the role and function of public library programmes as part of the public library in the future as well as rich empirical examples for further research.

Keywords: public libraries, public library programs, historical case study, document study, empirical study, diachronic study, library history

Introduction

> (…) it is those activities and the general education, which takes place every day in our library space that creates a library (Schaltz, 2020).

Programmes such as story hours, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, cafés, play groups and writers' meetings are considered central elements of modern public libraries. As the head of Herning Bibliotekerne, Pernille Schaltz, recently stated in an interview on Danish national radio, such activities are part of what creates a library (Schaltz, 2020) and are thus likely to play an even bigger role in public libraries of the future. If this is the case today, intriguing questions about the past and present of such activities arise. In order to understand why programmes are considered such a central part of modern public libraries and to discuss their future relevance and potential, qualitative insights into the history and development of these services are needed. This article presents findings from an empirical study of public library programmes in Denmark from the 1960s to the present as a foundation for understanding and reflecting on this central feature of the modern public library.

In Denmark, programmes are generally referred to as 'cultural activities' or 'events' (*kulturelle arrangementer*). In this study, a broad definition of public library programmes as "publicly announced and publicly available activities and events, taking place within or in relation to a public library" (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 365) allows for an investigation of many and markedly different examples of programmes as a whole, encompassing the social, educational, cultural and informational aspects of these services. The study focuses on two case libraries, differing in terms of their geographical location, size and role in the library system. The first library is *Bibliotekshuset*, a small branch library in the Copenhagen library system. The second is *Herning Centralbibliotek,* the main library of the municipality of Herning located in central Jutland. Both libraries have been offering programmes since the 1960s and are in possession of source materials documenting this practice. Approaching the collection of empirical source materials from the case libraries, this study poses two research questions:

RQ1: Which types of programmes have been offered at the two libraries between 1960 and 2020 and how have they developed in terms of format and content?
RQ2: What are the roles and functions ascribed to the programmes during this period and how has the reasoning behind offering programmes developed?

This study derives from the claim that public library programmes are complex phenomena, which cannot be understood by addressing different types of programmes alone (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 373). In a recent study, Danish library researcher Mia Mathiasson and Henrik Jochumsen provide an analytical model for analysing public library programs in relation to "three levels of abstraction" (2020, p. 375): format, content, and role and function. In this model, *format* refers to the basic elements underlying public library programmes as events in terms of duration and location, information about the organiser(s) and participant(s) and details about access and availability of the

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programmes. *Content* refers to a complex of topics, media and materials. *Role* is related to the assumed purpose of a public library programme on an ideological level, whereas *function* refers to the purpose or outcome on a more practical level (see Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 366). This model has been a useful tool for the analysis presented in this article and provided the categories used in the research questions. Focussing on describing development in terms of *continuity* and *change*, answering RQ1 provides descriptive insights into the types of programmes offered as well as the format and content of these programmes. Building on these descriptive insights, RQ2 is answered through an interpretative reading of the data in order to provide insights into the changing reasoning underling having programmes, focussing on their ascribed roles and functions (implicitly or explicitly mentioned in the source materials). To provide perspectives for the findings presented in this article they are related to existing studies, which are presented below.

Existing studies

Although public libraries have been offering programmes for many years and for many different incentives in many different countries, research on the history and development of public library programmes is scarce. Programmes in public libraries has been an area of study before, however under terms such as "adult education activities" (Johnson, 1938; Smith, 1954), "extension work" (McColvin, 1927; Jolliffe 1968) and "cultural activities" (Wirla, 1958). Across these different terms, programmes have been related to general education, public relation and outreach as well as to the general stimulation of an interest in books and literature as well as cultural activity more broadly. The more neutral terms "programs" and "programming" have been used in North America since at least the 1950s (Smith, 1954) and have become more widely used in recent years. Most empirical studies have been survey studies applying a somewhat restricted perspective on programmes and only a few studies that treat programmes and programming activity as a unified whole exist. One example is the recent American research project, the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA), conducted in collaboration with the American Library Association (ALA) and the Public Programs Office (PPO) between 2015 and 2020. One of the aims of the NILPPA research project is to develop a conceptualisation of what they call "library public programs" in order to provide "sufficient data on whether, and how, these efforts are working" (NILPPA, 2020). No empirical studies with a historical perspective and broad conception of public library programmes have been identified.

In Denmark, studies on public library programmes are extremely limited. Besides a few research-based studies, programmes and programming activity have been the subject of quantitative survey studies conducted nationally. One example is a survey on "cultural activities" conducted by the State Inspection of Public Libraries in 1972/73. Similar surveys have been conducted annually since 2009 by the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces under the title Library Barometer (*Biblioteksbarometer*). In the following, three historical studies are introduced, which all provide useful insights into programmes and programming activity from a Danish perspective. None of these studies focus on programmes or programming activity as a unified whole, but rather on programmes and programming activity as a part of larger studies on the role and function of the public library. The first of these studies was conducted by the Danish librarian Ingerlise Koefoed in 1965. As part of her larger study termed Cultural Centres (Koefoed, 1967), Koefoed also reports on what might be the very first investigation of programming activity at Danish public libraries. This investigation took form as an informal inquiry that was sent to 35 libraries, primarily main libraries, out of which 32 responded (Koefoed, 1967, p. 38). The second identified study was conducted in 1989 by the Danish library researchers Bruno Kjær and Anders Ørom (1992a, 1992b) under the title Transformation images and library-cultural identities. Part of this study comprised a survey study focussing on library-cultural identity in relation to 1) library buildings and interiors; 2) public relations (PR) and external dissemination activities; and 3) exhibitions and programmes (differentiating between the two). The survey was sent to 227 public libraries of which 119 responded, reporting on a total of 2,353

exhibitions and 5,467 programmes (of which 4,503 were for children). The third identified study is an extensive research project conducted by sociologist Marianne Andersson, cultural sociologist and library researcher Dorte Skot-Hansen and a team of assistants between 1992 and 1993. Building on case studies, surveys and extensive interviews, the study aimed at providing a snapshot of local public libraries, including the extent of programmes offered (Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 222–236).

In all of these studies, the development of programmes is explicitly linked to the revision of the Library Act in 1964 and the ensuing debates about the role and function of public libraries as cultural centres (Koefoed, 1967; Kjær & Ørom, 1992a, 1992b; Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994), thus emphasising the cultural role and function of the public library. This role is supported by a link between public library programmes and the democratisation of culture in the 1960s and cultural democracy in the 1970s (cf. Kjær and Ørom, 1992a, 1992b). This is also characteristic of the way programming activity has been described and defined in Danish library history (see Thorsen, 1992). In the 1964 Library Act, public libraries are described as places "promoting information, education and *cultural activity* through the free accessibility of books and other relevant materials" (Danish Library Bureau, 1965, section 1[1] of the Act, emphasis added).[i] With the inclusion of the phrase "cultural activity", public libraries received "yet another aim" (Thorhauge & the Library Agency, 2002, p. 5). This new aim and the cultural political debates about cultural centres following the 1964 revision are often emphasised as having had a significant influence on the development of programming activity (*arrangementsvirksomhed*) as a more substantial part of public libraries (see Thorsen, 1992, p. 140 and Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 222). According to the State Inspection of Public Libraries, the very term *kulturelle arrangementer* was coined during the 1960s cultural political debates (1976, p. 18). The link to the 1964 revision and the following debates is most explicit in Koefoed's (1967) study on cultural centres. Andersson and Skot-Hansen's study of the public library is more nuanced, contributing to a theoretical understanding of the role and function of public libraries as *knowledge centres*, *informational centres*, *social centres* and *cultural centres* in the community (1994, p. 18). Programmes and programming activity is, however, only directly linked to the library's role as a cultural centre (Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 222–236). By including both programmes for adults and for children, using the phrase "activities" instead of "cultural activities", Kjær and Ørom (1992a, 1992b) were first movers in the Danish research context.

Focussing on a single year period, these studies are all synchronic snapshots of the extent of programmes offered within the year surveyed (respectively, 1965, 1989 and 1992/93). However, what makes them different from the national surveys is that they also provide qualitative insights into the content of the programmes as well as the attitudes towards offering programmes. In her study, Koefoed concluded that the librarians' attitudes towards programming activity were generally positive. However, lack of space, staff and money (what Koefoed terms "the usual things") was mentioned as an obstacle to further development (Koefoed, 1967, p. 39). In the first part of their study of *library-cultural identities*, Kjær and Ørom reflect on what they call the "indirect dissemination practices", which includes programming activity. Elaborating on the "image problem" as one of the symptoms of the transformations of the library-cultural identity, marked by ideas about "the market" and "the living room", which break with the image of the library as a shrine for knowledge and culture, Kjær and Ørom reflect on the search for alternative library-cultural identities as "a response to the obliterate image of the "traditional library" (Kjær & Ørom, 1992a, 33-34). This is an interesting finding, since it explicitly breaks with the narrow focus on culture when looking at programmes and programming activity. Moreover, it ascribes to these phenomena a key role in transforming "the library image". The Andersson and Skot-Hansen study provides rich insights into the understanding of and reasoning underlying programming activity in the early 1990s. Of central importance is their finding that programmes are clearly considered as having "a value in themselves" and that programming activity is considered as "something in itself" and not just as PR for the library or as

extensions of the collections (Andersson & Skot-Hansen, 1994, p. 236). As such, these three studies all provide useful perspectives and background for the results presented in this article.

Research design and methods

Aiming for an understanding of how this phenomenon has developed over time, a diachronic approach was well suited to this study. As opposed to the existing synchronic studies presented above, a diachronic study draws the long line of development and provides empirical descriptions for an understanding of the background of these services. Thus, a research strategy was needed that allowed for a diachronic reading of the varied source materials and provided methods for how to conduct the study in a systematic manner. Such a strategy was found in Historical Case Study (HCS) as described by library researcher Michael Widdersheim (2017, 2018). HCS is a hybrid research strategy combining features from history and case study using "a mixture of new and existing sources" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 147) to track changes over a longer period of time into the present. This makes HCS a useful research strategy for "addressing research questions related to change, continuity, development, and process" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 151). According to Widdersheim, HCS research must fulfil three criteria: it "must 1) study phenomena from the distant past into the present, 2) incorporate existing data sources as well as create new ones as the case unfolds, and 3) construct both idiographic and nomothetic types of knowledge" (2018, p. 144). Moreover, HCS research follows three stages: the collection and analysis of source materials (stage 1), data collection and analysis (stage 2) and data interpretation (stage 3). HCS provides a strategy for researching this complex phenomenon in a diachronic and somewhat systematic manner across of a broad temporality and an extensive collection of varied source materials. Adaptions have been made to the systematic approach described by Widdersheim in order to make it more applicable to the kind of investigation undertaken in this study. In the following, the three stages of HCS are introduced with a focus on how they have informed and directed the study presented in this article as well as when and how this study deviates from the HCS procedures.

In stage 1, source collection and analysis, "theoretical sampling" is used to define the case or the phenomenon studied, identify temporal units of analysis and gather relevant source materials in a dialectic manner. Theoretical sampling is described as "a trial-and-error process", since researchers "cannot know in advance what sources will be relevant or accessible" (Widdersheim, 2017, p. 58). This means that as source materials are collected and contours of the phenomenon are sharpened more relevant sources will possibly appear. In line with the trial-and-error process of theoretical sampling, a sample of source materials functioned as a way into the phenomenon investigated. In the spring of 2017, 15 public libraries from across the country were contacted by phone or email and asked whether they were in possession of archival source materials documenting their past programmes. A few libraries responded that they were in possession of potential source materials. Visits were arranged and during the summer and autumn of 2017 three libraries were visited, source materials were inspected (first round) and interviews were conducted. In the end, two libraries were selected as case libraries. In line with HCS research, the list of sources was informed by the nature of the case or phenomenon studied (Widdersheim, 2017, p. 57). This has also been the case in this study, where additional sources were uncovered during the visits to the case libraries. This resulted in supplementary source collections taking place from the spring of 2018 until January 2019 (physical collection at the libraries) and again during the spring of 2020 (online collection). The source materials consist of a broad variety of archival documents made available by the two libraries. In this study, *document* is defined as "any symbolic representation that can be *recorded* or *retrieved* for analysis" (Altheide, 1996, p. 2, emphasis added). In the processes of source collection and analysis, the documents are recorded or retrieved by scanning them, taking photographs or screen shots, entering information into Excel sheets or simply taking notes. As part of the initial analysis in stage 1, the source materials are divided into "temporal units of analysis" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148) in order to gain

an overview and focus attention. According to Widdersheim, the temporal units of analysis "can be identified and distinguished in a number of ways", however they "must be well-justified and non-arbitrary" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148). In this study, the identification of the temporal units builds on findings from the initial analysis, however the units have been revisited and adjusted along with the conducting of the analysis and interpretation and, thus deviates from the HCS procedure.

Stage 2 builds on stage 1 and consists of data collection and analysis. In this process, the temporal units of analysis identified in stage 1 are described and analysed "in a uniform way and according to the same criteria in order to facilitate comparisons" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148). In the data analysis, a "research framework is used to describe the case over time using the source materials as an evidentiary basis" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148). In this study, the research framework for the diachronic analysis is inspired by Mathiasson and Jochumsen's (2020) analytical model. Thus, when analysing the source materials, change and continuity in relation to the format and content of the programmes offered as well as their ascribed roles and functions are observed over time, resulting in a description of the development of programmes offered within or in relation to the two case libraries. In stage 3, the descriptions produced in stage 2 provide a basis for answering the research questions by comparing "patterns in the similarities and differences of the temporal units" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148–149). This is done by comparing the different units of analysis and elaborating on the findings presented in the analysis, focussing on two aspects of the analysis: 1) the format and content of the programmes and 2) their ascribed roles and functions.

In the following, the results of this study are presented with reference to the three research stages of HCS. Firstly, referring to the source collection and analysis, the cases and source materials are introduced in more detail and the temporal units of analysis are identified. Secondly, referring to the data collection and analysis, the results from the diachronic analysis are presented in the analysis, which forms the greater part of this article. Thirdly, referring to data interpretation in HCS, an interpretation of the findings is presented, providing elaborative answers to the research questions. Finally, a summative discussion reflects on the findings in relation to the existing studies and suggests areas for further research.

Source collection and analysis
The two libraries were not selected for being representative cases but for being suitable providers of a broad variety of source materials and for being willing to share their history of programming activity. The "source material coverage" (Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148) refers to the period covered by the many and very different source materials. In this study, the source materials cover the period from 1960 until 2020. At Bibliotekshuset, programmes have been offered since the late 1950s and past programmes are documented since 1960 in monthly reports, flyers and newspaper cuttings. At Herning Centralbibliotek, programmes initiated by the library have been offered since the late 1960s. The library has, however, offered programmes initiated by others earlier than this. Tri-annual reports, flyers and extensive scrapbooks with newspaper cuttings document their programming activity since 1965. Importantly, between 1983 and 2011 the flyers from Herning Centralbibliotek only announce programmes for children and are thus supplemented by newspaper cuttings and articles reporting on programmes for adults. Finally, Facebook events reporting on programmes serve as source materials covering the period from 2018 until the spring of 2020. As part of the source collection, four interviews were conducted with librarians from both of the two libraries: a group interview with two librarians from Bibliotekshuset and three individual interviews with librarians from Herning Centralbibliotek. At the time of the interviews (2017), the librarians had between 12 and 35 years of experience in planning, facilitating and conducting programmes in public libraries. The interview method provides insight into the librarians' experiences of working with programming activity in the

past and present, as well as their personal opinions about programmes as part of library services. The table below (Table 1) provides an overview of the source materials collected for this study.

Source materials (reference)	Source material coverage (*library*)	Description
Monthly Reports (MR)	1958–1991 (*Bibliotekshuset*)	The monthly reports consist of forms intended for reporting the library services, including the types of programmes offered. Often, descriptions and anecdotes about programmes were written on the back of the reports. Thus, they provide both quantitative and qualitative information.
Annual Reports (full in-text references)	1956–1988 (*Herning Centralbibliotek*)	The (tri)annual reports on library services and activities, including programmes. The information is primarily descriptive and anecdotal, sometimes quantifiable.
Scrap Books (short in-text references HB: Herning Bladet HD: Herning Dagblad HF: Herning Folkeblad JP: Jyllands Posten)	1970–2005 (*Herning Centralbibliotek*) 1994–2001 (*Bibliotekshuset*)	The scrapbooks consist of a collection of newspaper cuttings and articles from local and national newspapers about the libraries, their services and programmes; some announce upcoming programmes and some report on past programmes.
Flyers (FL-B and FL-H)	1984–2018 (*Herning Centralbibliotek*) 1994–2018 (*Bibliotekshuset*)	The flyers or brochures announce and promote upcoming programmes and provide descriptive and detailed information about the programmes.
Facebook Events (FE-B and FE-H)	2018–2020 (*Bibliotekshuset*) 2018–2020 (*Herning Centralbibliotek*)	The Facebook events announce and promote upcoming programmes and provide descriptive and detailed information about the programmes.
Interviews (IN1, IN2 … IN5)	2017 (*Bibliotekshuset*) 2017 (*Herning Centralbibliotek*)	Four lengthy, semi-structured interviews reporting on the lived experiences of librarians working with programmes.

Table 1: Overview of the primary source materials.

As HCS research operates with a broad temporality, dividing the period into temporal units of analysis serves as a way to gain an overview and focus attention, and is a pivotal part of the analysis. In this study, six temporal units of analysis have been identified and distinguished by referring to change and continuity in relation to the ascribed roles and functions of the programmes mentioned in the source materials. Referring to ideological purposes as roles and practical purposes as functions (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2020, p. 366), the descriptive titles represent the most distinctively different roles and

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functions ascribed to programmes at the time, however they do not omit other roles and functions. As mentioned above, some deviations from HCS have been made and the rigour of the temporal units is one of them. As the source materials vary and provide different levels of insights from different perspectives, and have been written with different purposes, it is not possible to arrive at "non-arbitrary" units as called for by Widdersheim (2018, p. 148). It is possible, however, to be transparent about the manner in which the units are identified.

The units have been identified by creating lists and maps of the different types of programmes found in the source materials and taking notes in relation to their format and content. Special attention was given to the implicit or explicit mentioning of the reasoning underlying offering programmes in terms of their roles and functions. When revisiting these notes, the source materials were structured and lists and schemas were created, noting when and how changes or continuity where found in relation to the three different levels of abstraction. This has not been a linear process as in HCS, but a dialectic process going back-and-forth between the different stages of the research process. During this study, justification for the choices has been a recurrent consideration. In the end, however, it has been a question of interpretation, and in that sense it would be misleading to proclaim that the temporal units are non-arbitrary. There are overlaps and other units could have been imagined. However, for the sake of the descriptive analysis, these units have worked well and provided a frame for each period's characteristics. The temporal units of analysis are illustrated in the table below (Table 2).

Unit X	Period covered	Descriptive title
Unit 1	1960–1968	Programmes as a means to disseminate literature and increase book loans
Unit 2	1969–1976	Programmes as a means to promote the library as something more than books
Unit 3	1977–1982	Programmes as an inclusive means to community building
Unit 4	1983–1994	Programmes as shaping the library profile as a meeting place
Unit 5	1995–2008	Programmes as community building
Unit 6	2009–2020	Programmes as ends in themselves

Table 2. Overview of the temporal units of analysis

Analysis
In the following, the results of the data analysis are presented, using the temporal units of analysis as a structuring tool to describe the development of public library programmes between 1960 and 2020. Due to the amount of source materials and the broad temporality examined, any thorough investigation of everything that happened within the two libraries is beyond the scope of this study. The purpose has not been to list all the different types of programmes mentioned in the source materials but to highlight continuity and change in relation to the three levels of abstraction. Therefore, the analysis is based on examples rather than a definite outline. To secure uniformity and consistency, and thereby facilitate comparison (cf. Widdersheim, 2018, p. 148), each of the units report on the different types of programmes offered, their format and content as well as the reasoning underlying offering them in terms of roles and functions. The first paragraph of each unit

reports on the format and content of the programmes offered, while the last paragraph reports on the reasoning underlying offering programmes in terms of their ascribed roles and functions.

1960–1968: Programmes as a means to disseminate literature and increase book loans
The format and content of the programmes offered in the first unit can be characterised by a limited variety of programmes offered, limited target groups and a limited focus on literature "and other closely related topics" (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1969, p. 7). Most of the programmes mentioned in the early years were intended for adults and were predominantly exhibitions. At Bibliotekshuset, exhibitions are offered every month during the programming season (from September to May) and sometimes several exhibitions are offered per month. Many of these are book exhibitions, which are often supplemented by a book list on the topic in question. Programmes offered for children were predominantly story hours, offered at Bibliotekshuset since 1960. Library orientations are also mentioned as programmes in the monthly reports and have been offered regularly since the early 1960s. However, since these orientations have not been publicly available but offered exclusively to specific groups such as school classes or study circles, they are not included in this study. In 1961, the popular travelling exhibition *Ungdommens Bogmarked* ('Bookmarked of the Youth'), visited Bibliotekshuset. This exhibition was complemented by a film screening and book talk, which was limited to the presentation of books related to the subject of the film (MR, October 1961). Neither the film screening nor the book talk became a recurrent event, but the programme represented a new target group: young people. It would, however, take many years before programmes other than exhibitions were regularly offered for young people. Before the mid-1960s, the programmes mentioned at Herning Centralbibliotek were provided by other organisations such as high schools, evening schools and study circles. In October 1966, the children's library offered a series of programmes in relation to *Børnebogsugen* ('The Children's Book Week'). These programmes were a huge success and resulted in a significant increase in the number of user registrations (Herning Central Bibliotek, 1967, p. 8–9). From the autumn of 1967, Herning Centralbibliotek started offering programmes for adults as well, providing writers' evenings and facilitating lectures and study circles on "literature – and other closely related topics" (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1969, p. 7). In 1968, record concerts (concerts where a record is played for an audience) and a few instances of live concerts followed. For children, film screenings, children's theatre and story hours were offered from 1968.

In terms of role and function, the period between 1960 and 1968 is characterised by programmes exhibiting, motivating or reading books. As mentioned in relation to the festivals 'The Children's Book Week' and 'Bookmarked of the Youth', increased book loans and increased number of user registrations seem to be the success criteria underlying and reasoning for offering programmes in these years. In relation to 'Bookmarked of the Youth', the book exhibition was mentioned as having a direct influence on the increased demand for books "which led a hidden existence before" (MR, October 1961). Thus, provision of books and literature and increased book loans and user numbers seem to be the main function of programmes (practical outcome), while the ideological purpose or role is the dissemination of books and literature.

1969–1976: Programmes as a means to promote the library as something more than books
From 1969, the number and variety of programmes offered at both libraries increased dramatically and in terms of both format and content the programmes were expanded. This expansion is due to an expansion of the library collections to include new media and materials. At Bibliotekshuset, exhibitions used to be the most common type of programme, though the frequency seems to drop from 1971, from several exhibitions per month to just one. Other programmes offered for adults were writers' evenings, film screenings, debate evenings and concerts. From 1973, Bibliotekshuset offered a film club for children. The aim was to offer regular film screenings (two per months), however, due to limited budgets and technical problems this was not always accomplished. In Herning, programmes

offered for adults from 1969 were exhibitions, concerts and short film screenings. According to one of the librarians, the expansion of the collections characterises the development of programmes through the 1970s (IN1). The content of the programmes were expanded both in relation to topics covered and media and materials used, resulting in the mixing of topics, media and materials in new ways. An exhibition of underground magazines at Herning Centralbibliotek is a good example, since it incorporated music especially composed to fit the content of the exhibition as a key element in the dissemination (HF, 1971). Moreover, exhibitions of comic books are mentioned at both libraries as examples of programmes embracing and promoting new materials.

In relation to the role and function in this period, at a practical level, programmes are explicitly mentioned as library PR activities. In a newspaper article from 1969, Herning Centralbibliotek is described as something "more than books" (HB, 1969). Here, programmes such as film screenings, children's theatre and musical play groups are mentioned as new offerings and as part of the re-branding of the library. An example is how a live jazz concert is explicitly described as "setting the stage for the music section at the new library" (HB, 1969). Moreover, there is a focus on the social potential of programmes in this year, which can be found in an article in the professional library journal *Bibliotek 70.* Here*,* librarian Jane Pedersen reports on her experiments with what she terms "open programs"; that is, programmes "providing nothing but a frame for people to fill out themselves" (Pedersen, 1971, p. 328–329). Pedersen found that "a special form of being together" arose between the participants with which the content itself had nothing to do" and that this form of being together had the potential to bridge the generation gap as well as other barriers (Pedersen, 1971, p. 329–330). At Bibliotekshuset, the librarians discussed the idea of open programmes at a staff meeting, expressing a wish to experiment with such "anti-programs" themselves (MR, August, 1971). Programmes are also explicitly mentioned as PR in the monthly reports from Bibliotekshuset, where "PR at the library (about beat- and theatre evenings and movies)" is an independent item on the agenda at a staff meeting (MR, April 1970). Programmes can be seen as part of the extension of the library identity, which is found in newspaper articles reporting on *hygge* (JP, 1972) and social relations (JP, 1973) at the library in Herning and as a means to promote the library as something more than books.

1977–1982: Programmes as an inclusive means to community building
In the years between 1977 and 1982, the format and content of the programmes offered continued to expand. Programmes offered for children were story hours, children's theatre and film screenings, the latter being the far more popular type of programme, indicated by separate boxes for film screenings in the monthly reports (MR, March 1977). Film screenings were expanded in several ways, including film- and gaming clubs for children, which were offered at Herning Centralbibliotek from 1978, and documentary film screenings for adults, followed by debates. Exhibitions are still a recurrent type of programme and this format was also expanded. Examples include participatory exhibitions such as debate exhibitions and even participatory art exhibitions, where users were invited to exhibit. In Herning, this is found in relation to the "spring exhibitions". As opposed to the first spring exhibition in 1977, which was subjected to censorship, for the 1979 spring exhibition, local artists and amateurs were invited to an uncensored exhibition "where everyone is guaranteed representation" (HD, 1979a). The opportunity to exhibit was not limited to artists, but collectors were also invited. This inclusiveness is also found in relation to the content of the exhibition, as evident in the list of collectables mentioned in the invitation: matchboxes, medals, stamps, pipes, butterflies and more (HD, 1979c).

The inclusiveness found in relation to the format and content of the programmes can also be seen as a key proponent in the role and function of the programmes in this period, which can be related to an extension of the role and function ascribed to the modern public library. In Herning, this is explicitly

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stated in a newspaper article reporting on the library as a workshop with cultural and social aims (HD, 1978). Programmes are considered a central part in reaching these aims. This can be found, for example, in the inclusiveness towards the community as a resource. An example is another "new exhibition format" (HD, 1979b) at Herning Centralbibliotek where local associations, interest groups and organisations (with a non-commercial purpose) were invited to exhibit at the library in order to share and disseminate their work (HB, 1979). The role and function of programmes in this period can be described as inclusive means to community building, mirroring the cultural and social aims ascribed to the public libraries at the time.

1983–1994: Programmes as a means to shaping the library profile as a meeting place
Between 1983 and 1994, the format of programmes underwent an expansion. This is particularly visible in an expansion of target groups and a divide between programmes for children and programmes for adults, which can be seen as due to a change in announcement methods at Herning Centralbibliotek. From 1983, Herning Centralbibliotek no longer offered evening programmes and programmes for adults were limited to "a few exhibitions per year" (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988, p. 44). As the number of programmes offered for adults decreased, the number of programmes offered for children increased. Programmes such as film screenings, film- and gaming clubs and children's theatre are consistent, and new types of programmes appeared, such as talent shows (FL-H, February 1984) and magic shows (FL, February 1986). These programmes are characterised by actively involving the participating children. From 1983, mobile libraries or book buses brought programmes such as children's theatre and puppet shows to the surrounding areas of Herning Centralbibliotek (HB, 1983), thereby expanding the programmes in terms of location, while at the same time promoting the children's library. At both libraries, programmes especially targeted at young people were offered regularly from 1985 (as opposed to isolated events such as the book festivals in the 1960s). These programmes include exhibitions (MR, April, 1984), film screenings (HF, 1985) and workshops on how to make your own music video (FL-H, November 1986). At Bibliotekshuset, a youth section (*U-afdelingen*) was established in 1985, making this new target group "feel at home" (MR, September, 1985). From 1994, programmes were provided on Saturdays (FL-B, autumn, 1994), expanding the target groups to include families. In relation to content, this period is characterised by a focus on the library's move into the digital age through computers and technological equipment. This focus directly influenced the extent of programmes offered at Herning Centralbibliotek, where budget cuts, a focus on offering business services and the purchase of technical equipment are mentioned as reasons for the decrease in programmes for adults (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988). The purchase of technological equipment had a positive influence on the children's library in Herning, where the gaming clubs offered electronic games from 1985 (FL-H, 1985/1986) and a data workshop was established in 1987 (FL-H, 1987). In relation to the data workshop, programmes such as gaming and instruction in Word processing were offered for children.

In relation to role and function, towards the latter half of the 1980s a more explicit and strategic attitude towards programmes is found. In their strategy from 1988, Herning Centralbibliotek describes programming activity as an area that "complement[s] the classic library functions" (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988, p. 64–65). The library further expresses a wish to become "a nice place to be", whether you want to listen to music, read a magazine, play, read books, watch a video or "meet other people", and programmes are explicitly mentioned as part of "shaping the profile of the library" as a centre for cultural and informational activities (Herning Centralbibliotek, 1988, p. 64–65). Thus, programmes were still considered a means to an end, however the end goal changed and programmes were then considered part of shaping the library's profile as a meeting place, and where having programmes is considered a part of what makes the library "a nice place to be".

1995–2008: Programmes as community building

In relation to content, the predominant focus during these years seems to be the provision of Internet and digital skills, and the use of computers for both business and pleasure is a dominating feature in programmes for both children and adults. A series of programmes providing assistance and instruction for Internet use appear in the source materials from 1995 and from 1996; "Internet" is an independent paragraph in the flyers from the children's library at Herning Centralbibliotek (FL-H, 1996-97). From 2000, there was a second wave of programmes teaching the skills needed for the digital age. This is seen in programmes such as "The first trip to the Internet" and "Learn how to write on a computer" (FL-B, spring, 2000). From October 2003, Bibliotekshuset offered regular IT courses every morning and from 2004, a series of programmes where "seniors are helping seniors with IT" (FL-B, autumn, 2004). At both libraries, writers' meetings, lectures and concerts for adults made a reappearance from 1995, as well as new types of programmes in the form of plant exchange markets and poetry cafés, which were offered by Bibliotekshuset in collaboration with volunteers and local organisations (IN2). The most common types of programmes offered for children and young people were still film screenings, children's theatre and musical playgroups (IN4; IN5). Moreover, at both libraries the creative activities, which have been an increasing part of the children's libraries since the 1970s, are now offered as creative programmes and workshops in relation to festive seasons such as Shrovetide, Easter and Christmas.

In relation to role and function, a focus on relations through social programmes, collaboration and community building is found to be an important aspect of programming activity. Although the digital still dominates the content of the programmes offered, the use of computers in programmes is as much an act of individual learning as it is an act of building relations. This is the case in programmes such as PlayStation tournaments offered at the children's library at Herning Centralbibliotek (FL-H, spring, 2004) and in the series of programmes where seniors helped seniors with IT at Bibliotekshuset. Moreover, the market- and café programmes are not defined by their specific content (e.g. plants or poetry). Instead, these programmes can be defined by a focus on the social act of gathering around a shared interest. As such, programmes no longer appear solely as a means to something else but as something in themselves. As ways to meet up, share experiences and take part in the local community, programmes are no longer solely considered as tools for community building, but as an active part of community building in themselves.

2009–2020: Programmes as ends in themselves

In relation to both format and content, in this period most of the different types of programmes mentioned earlier are still found, although many of them are expanded. Examples include clubs and groups, which are now offered for all age groups on a broad variety of topics, media and materials. Examples include listening clubs defined by interest offered at Herning Centralbibliotek (IN3). The café programmes from the 1990s have been expanded to baby cafés for parents on leave (Herning Centralbibliotek, since 2015) and language cafés (Herning Centralbibliotek, since 2017). Moreover, conversation salons offered at Herning Centralbibliotek since 2017 can be seen as expansions of the debate evenings of the past. New types of programmes are found as well. Particularly prevalent are health- and fitness programmes such as yoga and mindfulness classes offered since 2009 at Bibliotekshuset (FL-B, spring, 2009). These programmes were first offered for children and their parents, later followed by similar programmes for adults. Recently, a focus on health can be found at both libraries: both practically in physical exercise (such as yoga, city walks, music and movement, and dance classes) and theoretically in relation to lectures on mental and physical health. The fact that Herning Centralbibliotek has been the arena for a Health Fair (*Sundhedsmesse*) since 2018 and an annual mental health day (FL-H, October, 2018) is an indication that health is considered a central topic for programming activity. Other new programmes found in the source materials are community sing-alongs and community dinners. These are characterised by a focus on the social act of gathering.

Community sing-alongs have been offered at Herning Centralbibliotek since 2013 and more regularly since 2017. Community dinners, such as Sunday brunches (FE-B, August 2017) or "Eat with the EU" (FL-H, January, 2019) are found at both libraries though are not as recurrent as the sing-alongs. The focus on digital literacy continues and can be found in a variety of IT courses, introductions to Facebook use and online self-service (FL-H, March, 2015).

In relation to role and function, the dissemination of books and literature is still considered a key purpose underlying programmes at both libraries and is mentioned explicitly by the librarians as a focus area of programme planning (IN2; IN5). Moreover, programmes are still considered as PR for the library, as well as for the city and community. In one of the interviews, a librarian described how the library promotes the city and other cultural institutions through programmes and other activities (IN3). As such, programmes are still considered as a means to disseminate the library's collections and offers and as a tool for community building (IN2). However, a change can be found in the way programmes are framed as ends in themselves. Programmes such as community sing-alongs and community dinners are good examples, since the act of being together physically, exchanging something or sharing an experience is emphasised over the specific content (e.g. the songs sung or food consumed). A recent example of programmes as ends in themselves is "The Take Away Library" initiative, which has been part of Herning Centralbibliotek since 2017. Here, programmes are offered "to go" (Take Away Biblioteket, 2020). This is an example of outreach in 2020, but it is also an example of how programmes have become an integrated part of the modern public library as something you can "take out" and even bring to your own home.

In the following, answers to the two research questions are provided by comparing the different units of analysis and interpreting the findings presented in the analysis.

Interpretation

When mapping the different types of programmes offered between 1960 and 2020, a high degree of continuity is found. Even though new types of programmes do seem to appear in the data, what is intriguing is the way existing types of programmes are expanded in terms of format and content. Focussing on the development of the format of the programmes offered, an interesting finding is the expansion of target groups, which have occurred throughout this period. In the 1960s and 1970s, programmes for either "adults" or "children" dominated the data. However, since the 1980s, these target groups have expanded to become somewhat all inclusive, focussing less on age groups and more on interest groups. In the table below (Table 3), the expansion of target groups is illustrated.

Unit 1 (1960-1968)	Programs for adults
Unit 2 (1969-1976)	Programs for children
Unit 3 (1977-1982)	
Unit 4 (1983-1994)	Programs for adults Programs for children Programs for young people

Unit 5 (1995-2008)	Programs for adults Programs for children Programs for young people Programs for seniors Programs for families Programs for communities of interest
Unit 6 (2009-2020)	Programs for adults Programs for children Programs for young people Programs for seniors Programs for families Programs for communities of interest Programs for babies and parents on leave

Table 3. An illustration of the expansion of target groups.

Useful for interpreting the expanded content of the programmes are the three criteria underlying public libraries, their collections and services: *quality*, *versatility* and *topicality*. Despite several revisions since 1964, in the current Library Act these criteria have remained the same (The Secretariat for Legal Information, 2013) and are mentioned in the interviews as criteria underlying the provision of programmes (IN1; IN3). *Quality* was a notion heavily debated in the 1960s, also in relation to programmes. This debate had a huge influence on the materials offered at libraries and the programmes offered mirror this debate (IN1). An example is the exhibitions of comic books in 1969, which were in themselves a defence of the quality of this media as part of the library and their collections (HB, 1969; IN1). *Versatility* refers to offering something for everyone, which is most certainly the impression when examining the development of programmes offered – the expansion of target groups being an obvious sign of this development. Within recent years, versatility in relation to programmes seems to be an even more elaborated part of the library. In a feature on Herning Centralbibliotek in a local magazine, the library is described as "a very lively library" and programmes are proclaimed as part of making the library a community centre, offering "everything from shared reading to lectures, play group activities, writer's evenings, knitting groups, it-instructions to, well, *everything*" (Volf, 2018, p. 114). *Topicality* is found throughout the period in programmes on trending topics or subject areas. In relation of the rise of the Internet, for example, programmes have played a role in preparation for the digital age. Recently, topicality is shown in the focus on health and fitness, which has dominated throughout the 2010s, found in an increasing number of lectures on physical and mental health issues. A lecture on "how to survive the digital world" (FL-H, November, 2017) is an example of how the topics of the programmes change in relation to society. Another example is the tendency for programmes focussing on being together and sharing experiences, such as community sing-alongs and community dinners, stressing a need for a return to physical experiences. This focus has been challenged during the Covid-19 outbreak and the subsequent cancellations of programmes at both case libraries. Currently, the need for sharing experiences – "together – but apart"[ii] – seems stronger than ever and creative efforts were made to offer programmes online or in a safe format. At Herning Centralbibliotek, for instance, online lectures (FB-H, April, 2020) and

literature cafés (FB-H, May, 2020) were offered. Live-streaming events is also a tendency found in the wake of the Corona pandemic.

As an answer to RQ1, an understanding of the different types of programmes offered is found to be closely related to an understanding of their development in terms of format and content in relation to the general expansion of the public library, its collections and services since the 1960s.

Just as the types of programmes seem to have expanded in terms of format and content, the roles and functions ascribed to these library services seem to have expanded as well. Based on the analysis provided in this article, it seems clear that programmes have always functioned as a means to something else: as a means for education, public information, entertainment, cultural- and recreational activity, publicity, outreach, community building and probably much more. As the collections were expanded, programmes were used to disseminate the library collections by mixing content in new ways (e.g. exhibitions accompanied by music). Moreover, programmes have functioned as outreach (e.g. puppet theatre in the book buses) and as PR for the library, playing a central role in branding the library as "more than books" (cf. HB, 1969), pointing both to the expanded collections and augmented role and function of the public library as a meeting place. A consistency is found in the dissemination of books and literature, which have been central aspects of programming activity throughout the period studied.

While programmes are still and have always been considered as a means to an end, programmes as a whole have undergone a rather dramatic development. Arguably, programmes have always been experiences in themselves. Exhibitions, story hours and lectures in the 1960s were not 'just' dissemination of content but certain ways to experience it. The dramatic change appears when programmes are not determined by their role and function as a means to something else but as ends in themselves. Importantly, this development does not signal a shift from being considered as *either* a means to an end *or* as an end in themselves, but as both. Although at times some roles and functions seem to be emphasised over others, they are not replacing the existing ones but adding to or expanding them, thereby increasing the complexity of the programmes. This development is best described as adding to or supplementing the existing roles and functions. In the figure below (Figure 1), the supplementary development is visualised as overlapping circles representing the roles and functions emphasised in the six units of analysis. The varying sizes refer to their seniority, without being too specific as to whether or not these have been considered the most important.

As an answer to RQ2, in terms of the roles and functions ascribed directly or indirectly to public library programmes the reasoning behind offering programmes can be interpreted as having undergone a transformation: from programmes serving as a means to an end to programmes serving as ends in themselves.
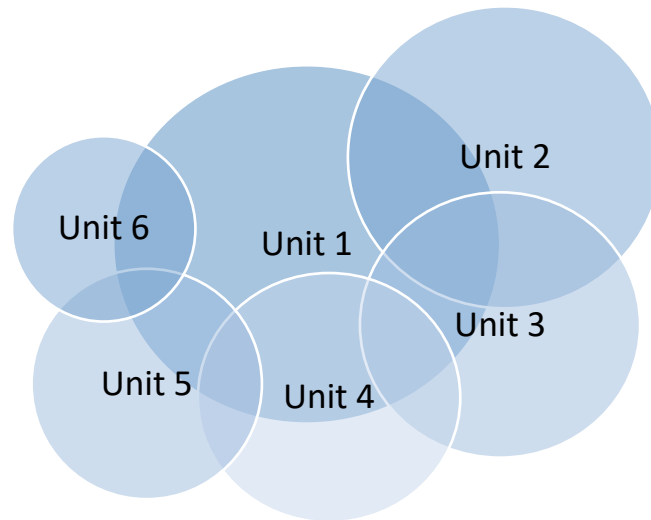
Figure 1. The supplementary development of the ascribed roles and functions emphasised in the different units of analysis.

Summative discussion

By providing both case specific and generalizable insights into the programmes offered during a sixty-year period, this study contributes with new insights into this development, which have not been presented in a narrative form before nor with this level of detail. The diachronic line of development complements and combines the existing synchronic studies. The findings provided in this article support the existing studies in arguing that the cultural political debates of the 1960s and 1970s had an influence on the development of public library programmes (cf. Kjær and Ørom, 1992a, 1992b; Andersson and Skot-Hansen, 1994). As mentioned by one of the librarians, the debate on quality, for instance, influenced the way programmes were thought of and used in the 1970s (IN1). The year 1969 ushered in a new epoch in public libraries as something "more than books" (HB, 1969), and programmes were considered a means to promote this new identity. Thus, with a reference to Kjær and Ørom (1992), already from the late 1960s, public library programmes can be seen as part of the extension of the "library cultural identity" expanding the image of the library. Moreover, this findings from this study support that around the mid-1990s, programmes were considered as "something in themselves" (Andersson and Skot-Hansen, 1994). Today, having programmes in relation to a public library is considered a given and programmes are even considered as ends in themselves as certain "forms of being together" (cf. Pedersen, 1971). In recent years, programmes such as community singing and community dinners epitomise this form of being together related to programmes today. The line of development described in this article is not straight, it has bumps and curves, and it is not complete. Further research into the political, institutional and professional interests underlying programmes and programming activity is needed, as well as ways to theorizing about these phenomena.

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[i] Despite several revisions, the mission statement in the current Library Act (revised in 2013) is similar to the 1964 version. However, "other relevant materials" have been expanded several times and are currently specified to also include "access to electronic information resources, such as the Internet" (The Secretariat for Legal Information, 2013).

[ii] In Denmark, the phrase "sammen – hver for sig" ('together – but apart') became a slogan during the Covid-19 lockdown in the spring of 2020.