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Introducing society

A lifelong learning perspective on public libraries' contribution to integration

Abstract

Public libraries have a societal duty to promote the peaceful coexistence between population and are therefore involved in integration work. However, the question is whether the integration perspective is suitable for addressing current issues or if other perspectives are more adequate. To study this, I conducted a literature review of published articles on Scandinavian public libraries' integration work, six semi-structured interviews with male asylum seekers and an email interview with the chief operations officer at three asylum reception centres in Denmark. Using a lifelong learning perspective, I was able to consider the six asylum seekers' experiences with integration in new ways. It became evident how integration is an ambiguous concept, and how the integration process does not constitute temporary phases but rather initiates lifelong learning processes, just like the activities native Danes conducts in their efforts to handle their lives in late modernity. The lifelong learning perspective probably cannot replace the integration perspective, but it may help us understand which activities are appropriate for public libraries to engage in. The public libraries' task is not to assimilate, but to promote new citizens' opportunities for peaceful coexistence by facilitating people's participation in society.

Keywords: public libraries, asylum seeker, integration, lifelong learning, experience formation

1. Introduction

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Scandinavian countries and their public institutions experienced a change in migration patterns (Delica & Elbeshausen, 2017; Johnston, 2016). To facilitate the integration process, Danish authorities increasingly instructed their culture institutions to cooperate with non-governmental organisations and private corporations as part of the solution. In the case of public libraries, this work culminated with the report *The public libraries in the knowledge society* (2010).

The history of integration in modern Denmark begins with the immigration ban in 1973. Throughout the 1960s, Denmark enjoyed virtually full employment, and therefore the Danish authorities invited guest workers to fill the vacancies, especially in the production industry. Even though the import of

labour ceased in the early 1970s when economic conditions turned, Denmark continued to honour the obligation to provide family reunification and allowed various kinds of refugees under the protection of UNCHR to apply for asylum (UNCHR 2001-2018; see also Jensen & Pedersen, 2007). Together with the economic crisis, increased unemployment as well as a dawning political recognition that guest workers, invited during the 1960s, had no intention of returning home, the Danish authorities, which, hitherto, had pursued a *laissez faire* integration policy, decided to intervene. The public libraries became a part of this intervention from the beginning and evolved as time passed (Refuge for integration, 2001). New refugees kept emerging during the 1980s and 1990s, which promoted the development of new integration strategies until the public libraries gained their heyday as integration institutions in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For almost two decades, the public libraries constituted a key contribution to the integration process and managed to keep the attention of both the public and the Danish authorities (Refuge for integration, 2001).

Most of these initiatives were locally or regionally anchored integration projects, expressing experimental activities or different kinds of best practices, often endeavouring to build library collections of mother-tongue literature, develop language-training programmes and to create physical environments where people, unfamiliar with the use of the public library, could feel welcome and confident. In many cases, the public library was – and still is – seen as refugees first meeting with the asylum-providing nation’s institutions and representatives (Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005; Johnston, 2016). Other projects sought to educate and equip librarians with knowledge, strategies, and skills aimed at serving refugees who could express, to librarians, incomprehensible ways of using the public library’s assets, for instance because of illiteracy, poor education, or cultural differences (Refuge for integration, 2001; see also Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005; Skøtt, 2019). As a part of society’s adjustment to new migration movements, the Danish public libraries have used the integration concept to define their activities regarding peaceful coexistence between populations for the last 40-50 years but during the same period the social structures of society have been subjected to serious changes (Delica & Elbeshausen, 2017; see also Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005, and Savolainen, 2016), leaving the integration perspective with a need for reconsideration.

2. Research questions and objectives

The changes in society’s social structures are caused by increased global migration movements, mobility, inequality, etc. challenging the nation states’ self-perceptions (Delica & Elbeshausen, 2017) and cause the nation state’s original idea of a common cultural unity to waver. Therefore, it is interesting for public libraries to discuss the integration concept and to reconsider the integration practices, which are taking place. I base my theoretical framework on Peter Jarvis’ lifelong learning theory, which he develops in the book *Adult education and lifelong learning* (2010). I do so because I consider lifelong learning theory to represent an alternative to the integration theoretical approach. Originally, lifelong learning was regarded as a concept aimed at people’s growth as human beings and was associated with the individual adult’s life practice, but within recent years this understanding has been revised. Jarvis states how:

[T]he major difference between all of these earlier orientations to lifelong education and the more current ones is that formal lifelong education is now regarded as something necessary for work rather than for the humanity of the learner. Clearly, this is not an either/or situation; it should be both/and, but the emphasis in recent years has been on work rather than the humanity of the learner. An ideal has been turned into a practical necessity with a pragmatic orientation (Jarvis, 2010, p. 45).

I aim to change perspectives to create a valuable theoretical framework for investigating the integration practices and the ways asylum seekers experience these in new ways.

Based upon the above, my research question is: *What new insights may be gained by applying a lifelong learning perspective to the public libraries' integration practices?* In the next section, I will outline the methods and my methodological considerations and choices. Then, I will present the starting point and outcome of a literature review I conducted, explain the theoretical framework and the analytical apparatus to finally carry out the analysis itself. The article ends with a discussion of my findings and a conclusion.

3. Method

The integration area in Denmark is thoroughly regulated. The minister of immigration and integration and his ministry hold the political responsibility, while different services and local private and/or public operators hold the administrative and practical responsibility. When an asylum seeker registers with the police and applies for asylum, she thus initiates a process which is divided into several phases and managed by more operators: the asylum application process constitutes a first phase, while a second phase begins when the asylum seeker receives the decision on whether she has been granted asylum or not. The answer, whether positive or negative, initiates a third phase, aiming to reintegrate the asylum seeker in society in Denmark, in another safe country – or in her country of origin. The asylum application phase, which is the starting point of my study, is managed by the Danish immigration service in cooperation with local operators and the asylum seekers and regulated via contractual agreements. Hence, the asylum seeker must enter a contract with the local operator, to be accommodated at a residential centre:

The operator must try to reach agreement with the resident on the content of the contract. If this is not possible, the operator must determine the content of the contract in accordance with the assumed number of hours (...). The contract, which must be adapted to the case processing phase in which the resident's asylum case is located, determines the scope and content of:

- Necessary tasks concerning the operation of the centre
- Teaching (...)
- Activation (...) (Standardkontrakt... 2018, p. 36 – my translation)

Necessary tasks include cooking, cleaning, and tidying of own housings and common areas, as well as cleaning and maintenance of outdoor areas. Education is mainly aimed at language and culture acquisition and must create the conditions for a successful integration process or facilitate a repatriation. Education must create an active and meaningful everyday life, where general and professional skills are maintained, as well as: '... contribute to increasing the individual's responsibility for their own lives and for the community existing at the place of accommodation' (Standardkontrakt... 2018, p. 36 – my translation).

To answer my research question, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with residents (see Appendix A) and a follow up email interview with the chief operating officer of the three centres. I chose to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with asylum seekers, as my interest is focused on how individuals experience being integrated into a new society. The structured parts of the interviews enable me to ask questions about the topic I have set out to investigate, while the open parts leave space to additional information and side stories. I selected my respondents using an information-oriented approach (cf. Brinkman, 2013) and chose to interview adult males because library science studies often omit men's library activities (e.g., de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017) or include men's use of libraries in mixed population studies as representing a population group (e.g., Johnston, 2018; Savolainen, 2016; Vårheim, 2014), even though there are documented differences between children's, women's, and men's library use (Applegate, 2018). However, this study is not a gender study, and the gender perspective will not be further elaborated. I also chose my respondents

because they all had some of the characteristics for which both integration and lifelong learning activities may compensate; they were all in vulnerable situations where their initial social and cultural skills no longer sufficed, and they were faced with acquiring new skills and understandings as they adapted to their new society (chief operations officer, email interview, 11 September 2018). Furthermore, I based my selection on the following criteria:

- The respondents had to be Arab or Northern African immigrants, as they represent the new groups of asylum seekers coming to Denmark,
- The respondents had to be active patrons, as the pivoting point of the study was to learn how the interaction between the asylum seekers and the public library could be analysed from a lifelong learning perspective; and
- Participation had to be voluntary, and respondents had to agree to the use of their contributions in the research process. All interviews were conducted based on an interview guide (see Appendix A), recorded, and subsequently transcribed.

I conducted interviews with asylum seekers from two of three asylum reception centres, situated in a peripheral region of Denmark, and a follow-up email interview with the chief operations officer in charge of the institutions. The two centres were placed in minor urban settlements in rural environments, hosting minor and mid-sized companies, trade businesses, tourism, etc. Together with a third centre (an asylum reception centre for unescorted children), the institutions in question had room for a total of 619 residents, but due to political restrictions, this number was decreasing. At the time of my investigation (late summer of 2018), 581 residents – children, adolescents, adults, and elderly people – were accommodated in the three locations.

The starting point for the respondents' library use was a mobile branch from the local public library, which visited the largest centre every Tuesday and the small one every Thursday. The mobile branch consisted of a van with shelves for books, games and movies on the left side, a small sofa group with a fixed table just behind the driver's seat and the entrance door, and a computer for information searching and registration on the right side. The mobile branch brought beach chairs together with a portable billboard to be placed outside when the weather permitted. The scheme was established in May 2018 and a small but firm core of patrons was established, from which the six respondents were chosen. The asylum seekers had no social security number, which is usually required to become a patron, but library staff may issue temporary loaning cards to tourists, exchange students and thus also to asylum seekers, which may be used at public libraries throughout the municipality. Despite this possibility, the mobile branch accounted for most of the respondents' library use.

I conducted six interviews between June 3 and June 5 2018 with male residents between roughly 18-70 years. My methodological approach is based on a hypothetical-deductive approach (King & Horrocks, 2012). This means that the respondents' answers are considered as subjective opinion formations based on my questions. My questions thus acted as a catalyst highlighting certain aspects of everyday life, while other aspects, with potential influence on respondents' answers, may have been ignored (Brinkman, 2013). Four interviews (with respondents A, B, D, and E) were conducted together with an interpreter, who, at the same time, was the local librarian and served as the contact person between the respondents and me. One interview (with respondent C) was conducted in English, assisted by a resident interpreter, and one interview (with respondent F) was conducted in English.

Using a translator is always difficult because translations are creative processes which must try to convey the form and content of utterances in a new linguistic context. My contact, who was an

experienced translator speaking several Arabic languages, was aware of this issue. After each interview, we discussed the form in which the interview had been presented, including the very poetic rhetoric of the mature and intellectual respondents. The quotes from the interviews conducted in Arabic were first translated to Danish by the interpreter and then translated to English by me, while the quotes from the interviews conducted in English are reproduced verbatim. As neither of the respondents speak English as their mother tongue, these appear in broken English.

Another issue is whether the prior relationship between the contact person and the respondents is influencing the answers given. This can in no way be ruled out. It is a general challenge in qualitative studies where the interaction between interviewer and respondent is conditioned by a third person. It is impossible to secure the conversation from external influences. However, without this intervention, I would not have been able to complete this study, and the respondents had nothing to gain by distorting their answers. They knew full well that their answers did not affect neither their asylum application nor general living conditions.

Some of the respondents were awaiting approval of their applications for a residence permission, and some had received a rejection and contemplated further actions, while others awaited the results of appeal applications. These different stages in the asylum process gave the respondents different preconditions for engaging in activities, but their engagement did not necessarily decline with the initial rejection. This was the case for some, (e.g., Respondent A), while others engaged even more (e.g., Respondent F). I chose respondents who had been living in Denmark between six months and three years, as I wanted to talk to people in the initial phases of their integration process (cf. Berry, 1997; see also Announcement on teaching and activation, etc. of asylum seekers and others, 2010), to study how they used the library services provided and for what. The respondents were in transition phases between their previous lives, which had been lived elsewhere under other circumstances, and future lives, which seemed to be completely different – whether they were granted asylum or not. No one had the prospect of returning to their former lives, although for some this was an incarnated desire (Respondent A, 3 June 2018). Even if the respondents did not yet have a residence permission, they were still exposed to integration efforts and especially the uncertainty about their future put certain requirements on the respondent's readiness to learn. Again, I cannot be certain how the current situation affected the respondents' comments, however, when studying the answers, some of the respondents also formulate disapproving comments concerning, for instance, the long processing times and the minimal prospects for getting asylum. Thus, any influence from their current living conditions did not deter some respondents from being critical.

The follow-up interview with the chief operations officer was completed as an email correspondence, concerning the formal organisation of the institution, and aimed at clarifying various practical issues regarding the administrative structures and the asylum seekers' everyday lives. The chief operations officer divided the asylum seekers' duties into *teaching*, *necessary tasks*, and *activation*. The residents initially signed a contract with the centre, outlining the various activities they had to partake in.

4. Literature review

To outline how integration theories have shaped the perception of the public libraries' integration activities hitherto, I will present a brief review of 11 key articles. The articles were identified by applying the following search queries:

((“public library” OR “public libraries”) AND (integration? OR integrating?) AND (“Nordic countries” OR “Nordic country”) OR Europe)),
((“public libraries” OR “public library”) AND (integration? OR integrating))
((“public libraries” OR “public library”) AND immigrant? AND (integrating OR integration))

The searches were conducted between 7 and 8 June 2018 in the following databases: Scopus, SAGE Journal, Web of Science, Academic Search, and Eric. The databases were selected based on their subject coverage and in cooperation with a local research librarian.

The academic interest in Scandinavian public libraries' integration activities has hitherto been scarce (Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Vårheim, 2014). I present 11 of 14 retrieved peer-reviewed articles, their methods, and results, to identify what significant findings previous studies have contributed with. I chose to concentrate on studies conducted in Scandinavia (in one case in comparison with Great Britain and Canada), because these countries have deployed national integration strategies for culture, education, and business policies, contrary to for instance USA (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017; Johnston, 2018). The absence of a national integration strategy leaves the integration initiatives to local political, social and/or cultural institutions, which for instance reduces the opportunities for equality in the asylum process, coordination of joint efforts, and rational use of scarce resources. In addition, migration movements in the United States differ from migration movements in Europe, just like challenges are handled differently (de Graauw & Bloemraad, 2017). Therefore, three articles were omitted.

In 2005, Jönsson-Lanevska reported the findings from a comparative case study of the city library, the local public library, and the adult education library of Borås in Sweden. The author interviewed three librarians and compared the findings with equivalent Finnish and Danish studies. In Jönsson-Lanevska's view (2005), assimilation can never be or become the aim of public libraries' integration activities. Instead, librarians need to continuously develop their intercultural communicative, psychological, and pedagogical competencies while keeping focused on the children's cultural and language development.

A similar conclusion was reached by Atlestam, Brunnström and Myhre (2011), who applied focus group interviews and circulation statistics in their case study. The authors concluded that immigrants made use of the public library for education, work-related tasks, and private purposes, and to preserve their native tongue. The estimated importance of native language literature differed widely between the children and their parents.

On two separate occasions, Ulvik (2009) and Audunson, Essmat and Aabø (2011) studied the integration of female refugees. Ulvik conducted a participatory, semi-structured observational study among female refugees attending reminiscences groups in Oslo, Norway. Ulvik found that common social and cultural activities such as reminiscences groups might be a steppingstone, allowing trust to develop between members of different ethnic communities and emphasised the development of: '... public libraries in multicultural local communities into areas that can function as meeting places in the community' (Ulvik, 2009, p. 155).

Audunson, Essmat and Aabø conducted nine in-depth interviews with Afghan, Iranian, and Kurdish women. These women both used the public libraries for instrumental chores, linking them to society's system worlds (e.g., to their workplaces) and for social chores, linking them to their life worlds (e.g., to their local communities) in pursuit of sociality. The first utilisation connected the women to society's public space, while the latter included the opportunity to move from passive observation to active participation across socio-cultural boundaries and to obtain comfort and consolation (Audunson et al., 2011).

One year later, Aabø and Audunson (2012) published the results of a lengthy in-depth observational study of an adult immigrant population in three different districts of Oslo. Their study built on prior

surveys and was supported by a literature review and interviews. Aabø and Audunson showed how the public library as a space exposes people to each other's diversity, but also displayed how people live culturally and socially differentiated but meaningful lives. This exposure of dissimilarity provides patrons with opportunities to conduct self-reflection and thus enhance their own life choices. This conclusion subscribes to an anthropological thesis, in which individuals become aware of their arbitrary lives in their encounters with that which is different (cf. Johnston, 2018; Vårheim, 2014).

The public library as a public space was the starting point for two subsequent studies. Vårheim (2014) conducted unstructured interviews with two librarians and eight students participating in an education programme in Northern Norway to study how the public library's physical surroundings enabled face-to-face meetings between immigrants and their fellow countrymen as well as between immigrants and Norwegians. The visible presence of people expressing diverse life practices and the librarians' egalitarian approach to patrons was deemed of crucial importance and value for the development of social capital and general trust among immigrants.

In 2016, Johnston reported the findings from a case study consisting of field observations, interviews, focus group interviews and questionnaires on three public libraries in and around Malmö. The study sought answers to questions about how language cafes and conversation groups contribute to language learning and to integration in general and concluded how above-mentioned initiatives support immigrants' integration through informal exchange of information. The public library's practices '[...] have the ability to bring together, in one program, the many ways in which newcomers are already using public libraries – as meeting places, for language learning support, and for personalised information provision from library staff' (Johnston, 2016, p. 16).

Subsequently, in 2017, Delica and Elbeshausen published the results of a comparative study, utilising prior research data, secondary documentation, interviews, and observations from British, Canadian, and Danish public libraries. The public libraries in question had been exposed to extensive organisational redesigns, and despite some differences, which could be attributed to socio-political conditions, the public libraries in question had developed new and similar organisational self-understandings, denoted *the social library* by the authors. The social library referred to the public libraries '[...] as a cornerstone of a defined community' (Delica & Elbeshausen, 2017, p. 237) instead of a cornerstone in the imagined community, which formerly defined the nation state.

By using Jürgen Habermas' public sphere theory and case-based research methods, Johnston, together with Audunson (2017), examined how the public libraries in Oslo, Moss and Horten support different forms of publics and thus also various forms of integration work. The authors observed how the Norwegian public libraries manage their obligation to create '[...] independent meeting places and arenas for public discussion and debate' (Johnston & Audunson, 2017, p. 229). The study focused mainly on the political integration of immigrants and their opportunities to gain a voice in the Norwegian public. The study showed how '[c]onversation-based programming in public libraries shows great potential for supporting immigrants' political integration and bringing their voices into the public sphere' (Johnston & Audunson, 2017, p. 237).

In another article from 2017, Johnston studied how integration is promoted through friendships and acquaintances created through public libraries' integration activities. The study was based on observations of three language cafes in and around Oslo, as well as questionnaires, and used contact theory as a theoretical framework. In contact theory, the physical encounter between people is a crucial premise for creating recognition and respect for cultural differences. The study concluded that '[...] the programming [language cafes] shows great potential for facilitating the four processes

undergirding Contact Theory: Learning about the out-group, changing behaviour, generating affective ties, and in-group reappraisal' (Johnston, 2017, p. 12).

Finally, Johnston engaged in a third observational study in 2018 as a participant in different integration programmes in Scandinavia. Johnston's observations were supplemented with informal interviews with organisers and immigrants participating in these programmes, as well as data from prior case studies. The article showed how participation in conversation groups and the establishment of common goals contributed to integration by conveying common knowledge among the participants' dissimilarities and similarities in ways which cannot be taught. These activities were established not to assimilate immigrants but to enable demystification and decrease of prejudice due to the equal status of the attendees and mutual accommodation (Johnston, 2018).

The 11 articles show the wide range in theoretical starting points, methods, perspectives, populations, etc. although a main emphasis on sociological approaches seems to be applied in recent years. Audunson, Essmat and Aabø's (2011) emphasis on how immigrants use public libraries to handle system world and life world tasks in a Scandinavian context sums up the conclusions of the 11 articles: Integration activities in public libraries regard refugees' further education as a starting point for an introduction to the labour market, laws, and regulations, etc. (system world) and their personal development as husband, wife, parent, etc. in a new society (life world). The Scandinavian public libraries still support formal learning activities such as language training and vocational education but put special effort on informal socialisation and cultural activities as prerequisites for active participation in society's democratic processes. Hence, the physical space and interacting with people still play a central role in the public libraries' integration work.

5. Theoretical framework

Society's actions toward asylum seekers are planned from an integration perspective (e.g., Refuge for Integration, 2001). The integration perspective includes a terminology allowing authorities, the municipalities, and their institutions to plan strategic efforts and to handle different challenges – but the integration perspective may also be a starting point for analytical activities, like assessing the values of activities or the results in practice. According to John Berry, the term *integration* refers to the reciprocal acceptance and recognition of different customs and habits necessary for groups to live peacefully together (Berry 1997). One of the things however, making the concept of integration ambiguous and difficult to define is how integration may be applied both at an overarching political-strategic level and at a subordinate pragmatic level. Berry denotes the overall political-strategic process *acculturation*, but this term is never used for instance in a Danish context. Instead, politicians and opinion makers talk about integration in the term's etymological meaning as a process of successfully mixing different people in a community (e.g., Cambridge English Dictionary, s. d.). On the overarching political-strategic level, the common use of the term integration hence just refers to the introductory processes asylum seekers are exposed to, without expressing anything about the inhaled aims or what activities must be carried out to reach these aims. The practical consequences may as well be assimilation or segregation, even though the activity is articulated as integration.

On a subordinate pragmatic level, integration refers to certain forms of coexistence opposed to segregation and assimilation:

[W]hen individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the *Assimilation* strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the *Separation* alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, *Integration* is the option (1997, p. 9).

Integration, whether used in its overarching or subordinate sense, refers to certain learning objectives: integrated is something individuals or groups are meant to become. Integration implicitly indicates a temporary process with a beginning, an interlude and an end, and the outcome of this process is the implementation of intended learning objectives (cf. Berry, 1997). Additionally, the integration indicates a gap between native and non-integrated people (see also Johnston, 2018), whereby the concept becomes exclusionary and may be used as an evaluation criterion. From an integration perspective, the native population is, by definition, integrated, while asylum seekers may be identified according to how well-integrated, they are; strategic integration activities are always aimed at the asylum seekers and never at the native population (cf. Refuge for Integration, 2001; Atlestam et al., 2011). In this sense, integration may be used as a measure of the extent to which individuals or groups have managed to adjust, but without explicit measurable objectives. This is also the case when integration efforts plead for mutual adjustment between asylum seekers and the native population. When asylum seekers are placed in a local area, the current residents are informed and may possibly meet some of the people in question. These initiatives are voluntary and in no way oblige the residents. Hence, no activities systematically prepare the native population for their obligations concerning peaceful coexistence (see also Savolainen, 2016). This is problematic as 'mutual accommodation' according to Berry (1991, p. 10) is required for integration. Only in open and inclusive societies, where the indigenous population allows cultural diversity to flourish, do non-natives have the opportunity to go through a real integration process.

This concept of integration currently defines the public library's integration activities. In this article, integration will be applied as a starting point for an analysis of the respondents' answers.

5.1 Lifelong learning

Public libraries support the formal education activities of education institutions by facilitating those continued and voluntary learning processes, which are driven by the students' or course participants' own ambitions. Education, lifelong learning and how these develop in societies has been addressed by Jarvis (2010), who initially distinguishes between *learning*, *education*, and *lifelong learning*. Learning is defined as an overarching term, denoting the formation of individuals' experiences in general, while formal education and lifelong learning constitute subordinate terms, referring to certain learning activities undertaken for specific purposes. Furthermore, lifelong learning may be subdivided into non-formal learning activities and informal experience formation. The next sections build on Jarvis' theory (2010) and constitute the second half of my theoretical framework.

Formal education denotes learning situations taking place at education institutions framed by institutional practices, such as curricula or syllabuses, and whose purpose is to impart the students with formal knowledge and competencies in intentional learning processes. The student's degree of mastery is tested by professionals and evaluated according to formal and professional standards (learning objectives).

Only a minor part of the individual's learning endeavours takes place through formal education (Jarvis, 2010). *Non-formal learning activities* refers to the extra-curricular learning outcomes, individuals achieve from interacting with people in professional, vocational and/or social situations. Educators often try to promote and support such non-formal learning activities to create empowerment or equipping learners with professional, cultural, and/or social life skills, but in less compelling ways and without testing the learning outcome. Therefore, non-formal learning activities have a less rigid framework according to their intentional content and a greater tolerance toward incidental experiences. Professionals will often have obtained knowledge of and experiences with their subject areas through incidental learning processes, while being socialised into a community of practice as

students or via internship but non-formal learning activities are not limited to organisational contexts. They also take place as voluntary activities aimed at personal development, like when the individual attends courses, events, and activities in their spare time. The need to formalise non-formal learning activities arises as a reaction to the nation state's challenges and dynamics necessitating an individual orientation towards personal growth as both employee and human being (see also Johnston, 2018; Ulvik 2010).

Informal experience formation denotes semi-conscious learning situations in the individual's everyday life, like when interacting with other people. Most of what people learn, they learn at random in everyday life situations where certain occurrences require people to adjust their hitherto actions (Jarvis, 2010). Many situations are handled based on unreflective customs by means of experiential knowledge of how identical or similar situations have been handled previously. Certain events, however, require conscious reconsiderations and alterations to exert adequate conduct (see also Audunson, Essmat & Aabø, 2011; Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005). Everyday life experiences thus become part of the informal experience formation people utilise to handle new life events.

Formal education does not occur in Danish public libraries, but public libraries frequently provide the framework for both non-formal learning activities and informal experience formation. I choose to interpret Jarvis' exploration of the learning concept as associated to self-formation and the individual's attempt to handle society's changeability. The integration concept is widely recognised and utilised by public libraries in their planning of how to serve asylum seekers but in this study, I shall tentatively replace the integration concept with Jarvis' concept of lifelong learning to see what new insights such a shift in perspective may bring. Different kinds of self-formation activities are interesting in an integration context because these activities concern people who are in transitional phases of their lives and thus forced to consciously reconsider past life practices to develop new ones.

6. Analytical apparatus

The analysis strategy expresses a hypothetical-deductive approach (cf. King & Horrocks, 2012), as I build my analyses on the learning concepts identified by Jarvis (2010). In the first iteration, I break down the respondents' statements into sentences or coherent statements and distribute these passages according to their subject content into three categories: formal education, non-formal learning activities, or informal experience formation – no matter whether these statements refer to past experiences, current activities, or future desires. Teaching activities such as mandatory Danish lessons are identified as formal education, while instructions regarding cleaning and maintenance are identified as non-formal learning activities. Socialisation and interaction with other residents, volunteers and staff members during leisure time activities, sports, etc. are identified as informal experience formation. These three concepts will structure the next section.

In the second iteration, I regard the various statements according to their intentionality and incidentality, respectively (Jarvis, 2010). The intentional learning objectives of Danish lessons is to learn the attendees to speak Danish, while the intentional learning objectives of instructions regarding cleaning and maintenance is to keep the centre tidy and to repair buildings, installations, etc. In the first case, the fulfilment of objectives is verified via documentation and tests, while, in the latter case, the fulfilment of objectives (the tidiness and conditions of the centres) is evaluated according to normative standards. In both cases, incidental learning activities take place, for instance as socialisation when people learn together or must solve practical tasks together. Statements regarding leisure time activities are identified as situations with a high degree of informal experience formation and are not subdivided because it does not make sense to try to determine the intentional fulfilment of objectives in such situations.

In the third iteration, statements considered relevant to answering my research questions are selected and related to the integration and lifelong learning concept, respectively.

7. Findings

Being residents at asylum reception centres, the respondents were all posed in structurally comparable situations, which they handled widely differently, due to their respective backgrounds, life approaches, prior experiences, etc. Some of the respondents stated how they felt safe in Denmark, but also extremely exposed due to long waiting times, the uncertainty about the outcome of their asylum application process and the consequent anxiety about the future – experiences which had to be addressed in one way or another. Consequently, the stay at the centres was considered a limited period without much relation to what came before or afterwards:

Basically, [I] find it difficult to comment on how life in Denmark is because [I] still live in a refugee camp or an asylum reception centre. Therefore, [I] have not really been able to integrate into society. But [I] have the feeling that it is a fine community where [I'll] have a good time (Respondent E, 5 June 2018).

The respondents did not perceive the different tasks and chores they were obliged to participate in as elements detached from their everyday conditions. Nor did they refer to them as integration activities; rather, they considered them to be part of a totality and a part of the lives they currently lived.

Categories such as mandatory tasks or volunteering first appeared when I took the chief operations officer's considerations into account. The contractual agreement with the Ministry of Integration required the centres to impose asylum seekers with *mandatory tasks*, to encourage people to get involved in *volunteering*, and to provide opportunities to engage in *leisure time activities*. Subsequently, an agreement on teaching and activation was enshrined in a contract signed by the asylum seeker and by a representative of the centres (Standardkontrakt..., 2018; see also Announcement on teaching and activation, etc. of asylum seekers and other, 2010).

7.1 Formal education

Apparently, mandatory tasks and practical chores were of great importance for the Danish authorities and the centres as integration activities. The tasks constituted a cornerstone in the asylum seekers' development of personal autonomy while living at the centres and even before receiving a residence permission. The obligation to become financially self-reliant as quickly as possible seemed to be another key issue, why practical chores, such as autonomy for one's own economy and household, should be incorporated into their personal autonomy – regardless if these activities could be regarded as assimilative in practice (see also Audunson et al., 2011; Johnston & Audunson, 2017; Vårheim, 2014).

Mandatory tasks included Danish language training and participation in the 'Asylum-Seeking Course', module 3-8, concerning cultural understanding, the writing of a Curriculum Vitae, the writing of an individual employment or career plan, as well as clarifying any competence profiles and education needs. English language training was offered to a lesser extent, together with mother-tongue training, which was offered to the extent possible. Specific rules applied for the children.

The most prominent obligations mentioned by respondents was undoubtedly the Danish language training, but the respondents referred to language training in slightly different ways. One of the dedicated learners, respondent F, noted how:

I would like to show the people who I am [...]. I came from another [...] country with other traditions and everything is different, but I will show [...] who I am – not by words but by action. [...]. How can I live in Denmark if I cannot speak Danish? (Respondent F, 5 June 2018).

Despite his idealistic attitude and even though respondent F was a skilled and eager student, he acknowledged the difficulties in acquiring Danish ‘... I can write something with you [but] I cannot pronounce it [...]. [Danish] is so difficult.’ (Respondent F, 5 June 2018). Respondent F’s statement pointed to an awareness of how his socialisation into the Danish society was going to be a continuous learning process which would last for years to come.

Another mandatory task was practical chores consisting of tidying up and cleaning of your own accommodations and common areas, minor repair work and maintenance of buildings and surrounding areas:

All activities aim to strengthen the residents’ competencies, contribute to the operation of the centres, and provide a meaningful everyday life. Necessary tasks are cleaning and maintenance of homes and associated areas. The apartments are regularly checked for whether they are kept in a safe condition and [staff] may instruct on cleaning, etc. (chief operations officer, email interview, 11 September 2018 – my translation).

The asylum seekers were adults and they had already developed certain standards and routines. Nevertheless, staff members supervised and could intervene by instructing the residents how to clean and maintain their accommodations. This might be appropriate regarding garbage sorting or the use of different, and to the residents new, cleaning agents or tools – but to instruct adults in how to clean or tidying up as a part of a formal learning process indicates the presence of an integration concept containing assimilative measures. According to the chief operations officer, chores had a practical purpose but were also aimed at providing asylum seekers with the skills to master their own households, as well as personal autonomy. Only respondent E mentioned practical chores and only in a side note ‘... and then [we] have practical [work] here at the centre where [we] clean...’ (Respondent E, 5 June 2018).

Teaching activities may be considered as formal education due to the presence of learning objective and because the teaching ends with a formal evaluation. The residents’ engagement in cleaning and maintenance had clear learning objectives, such as mastery of their own households, and may therefore be regarded as formal education. Due to the lack of formal evaluation criteria, however, mandatory tasks may also be regarded as non-formal learning activities. Hence, I regard above-mentioned practical chores as situated between formal education and non-formal learning activities.

None of the respondents mentioned the public library, neither in regard to language training nor the performance of their practical chores. It is understandable that the respondents did not use the library in the performance of their practical chore. Here, the staff members’ general knowledge and experience formed the knowledge base which the residents drew on. It is more surprising, however, that none of the respondents associated their formal education with the library. In the answers, a clear separation regarding their use of the library appeared between the intellectual work carried out in connection with the formal teaching activities and the pleasurable reading that the respondents indulged in.

7.2 Non-formal learning activities

Volunteering had a similar nature and was perceived compulsory quite the same way as mandatory tasks, yet without the same status. In my study, volunteering did not mean engagement in political

or societal matters as it usually does (see also Johnston & Audunson, 2017) but referred to the use of asylum seekers' inherited skills to assist staff members in their everyday task-solving, such as interpreters or as teachers in mother-tongue tuition (Respondent F, 5 June 2018). Volunteering included clerical work or involvement in different types of production activities, such as working at the carpentry workshop, production kitchen, recycling shop, as hairdressers, etc. The ambition was to create a meaningful everyday life, while reinforcing the asylum seekers' professional skills.

Several respondents referred to volunteering though few as enthusiastically as respondent F. Respondent F had a Master of science degree in tourism, spoke several languages and felt obligated to aid his fellow residents the best he could:

I am working here, or I am a volunteer here as a translator [...] just helping the people [...] who is speaking Arabic [...] who is speaking Russian [...] and [who] can't speak English or Danish. They cannot speak [with the staff] so naturally, I must help them (Respondent F, 5 June 2018).

Only respondent F indicated, how he used the public library's facilities systematically in his volunteering. He used handbooks, textbooks, and dictionaries, and searched the Internet for information as compensation for lost ways to obtain everyday knowledge (cf. Atlestam et al., 2011; Johnston, 2018), often with the librarians to assist with his information needs related to language (Respondent F, 5 June 2018).

Mandatory tasks and volunteering included all residents, even those whose applications had been rejected. However, it was the *Danish immigration service* who oversaw the asylum procedure. The centres thus had nothing to do with the processing or procedures. Although great emphasis was placed on the asylum seekers' participation in such activities, their engagement had no bearing on their chances to obtain asylum (chief operations officer, email interview, 11 September 2018), and thus respondent F's chances of being granted a residence permission were not any better than those of respondent C, who was a laid-back teenager.

7.3 Informal experience formation

Finally, the centres made leisure time activities available, such as gyms and sports facilities, and they arranged sports games, excursions, and other types of outings (chief operations officer, email interview, 11 September 2018). Staff members arranged sewing and knitting cafés – and had recently allowed the public library from the adjacent town to provide their services to the residents. The leisure activities were the least compelling offer for the asylum seekers and were aimed at conveying meaningful intellectual activities. The leisure activities naturally reflected the asylum seekers' interests but were in fact written into the contractual agreement between the Danish authorities and the centres (Announcement on teaching and activation, etc. of asylum seekers and others, 2010; New to Denmark, 2018; Standardkontrakt..., 2018). However, the contract said nothing about the nature of these offers, and the centres were not obliged to offer e.g., library service.

Most respondents used the library service this way. Despite being desperate about his current situation, respondent A used the mobile branch to pursue a newfound passion for Arabic history:

[I] like to know the history because if you do not know the history, you do not know what is going on around [you]. Reading history means that you are a more educated person and have more insight into how other people live and how their lives have been [...]. When you [...] share your knowledge, you have something to contribute and it would be great if [I] could be allowed to work with it in the future (respondent A, 3 June 2018 – my translation).

Respondent A used the literature to fill some of his spare time but also recognised how reading provided him with new knowledge as part of a self-educational ambition. Respondent A recounted how his interest in history had been ignited by his exile and how this interest had given him new insights into the political and cultural situation in his home country. Respondent A's interest in Arab history may be seen as an expression of mutual integration. Literary self-study may be regarded as a legitimate and worthwhile leisure activity in a Danish context, while the subject of self-study - the history of the Arab world - may be regarded as respondent A's voluntary but legitimate attempt to preserve a kind of connection to his homeland and his former way of life - because it was important and valuable to him.

Respondent B made a similar use of the library. He focused on self-development activities:

When you have a conversation with a human being, you talk with confidence because what you say comes from both the heart, the brain or from the mind [...]. It is something that exists in human nature, but it is something that is enhanced by using the library (Respondent B, 3 June 2018).

By referring to both heart and mind, respondent B indirectly emphasised how both non-formal learning processes and informal experience formation could be nurtured by using the library. Respondent B perceived the encounter with literature as a way of developing tendencies which are naturally embedded in people yet need cultivation. Respondent B's answers were shaped by the fact that he was an educated, mature, and knowledgeable man, who stressed the use of fictional literature as a source to expand his vocabulary. Respondent B's interest was, like Respondent A, legitimate but limited by his language skills, which the librarians in their mutual integration endeavours sought to compensate by providing literature in Persian.

However rudimentary, the library service provided in the surveyed region was applied as a leisure activity and occasionally played a role in the respondents' volunteering and their endeavours to fulfil their different chores. Although no one knew the public library in advance, and the mobile library service was only a few months old, the respondents mainly linked the library's services to the positive experiences of being in Denmark. Respondent E expressed an immediate joy at being seen, heard, and perhaps even appreciated by the librarians, who tried to increase the well-being of people in his position: '[j]ust to have someone come here to our centre and be here, that is huge in itself...'. (Respondent E, 5 June 2018 – my translation; see also Ulvik, 2009).

The same applied to respondent D, however, formulated somewhat less enthusiastically:

[I] would like to continue to use it [the library], but [I] imagine [life] becoming busier when [I get resident permission] (...). Then [I] must work and in internship and then [I] may not have the same time (...) to use the library (Respondent D, 5 June 2018).

As such, the mobile public library branch served a larger purpose explicitly targeted at non-formal learning activities and informal experience formation like furthering the residents' vocational training or literary interests (see also Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Johnston & Audunson, 2017; Vårheim, 2014). This observation was supported by respondent F's emphasis on the importance of the librarians having the proper linguistic and cultural profile, and by respondent C's description of the librarians as: '...kind and helpful' (Respondent C, 3 June 2018). Both statements referred to the role librarians could play in the residents' informal experience formation (cf. Delica & Elbeshausen, 2017; Refuge for integration, 2001).

Contrary to previous studies (Audunson et al., 2011; Johnston, 2016; Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005), I was unable to find any evidence of librarians being among the first native residents asylum seekers got in touch with. Both employees at the centres and associated volunteers were of Danish origin, while the librarians were of other origins than Danish. Thus, one of the librarians working at the mobile branch had an Arab background, spoke several Arab languages, and could easily communicate with a significant part of the asylum seekers, even those who did not master Danish or English.

8. Discussion

The respondents' observations may now be discussed through an *integration perspective* as well as through a *lifelong learning perspective*. From an integration perspective, mandatory tasks, volunteering, and the possibilities for leisure activities may be considered as different integration activities. The purposes of these practices were to create sound routines and provide the asylum seekers with knowledge about the privileges and obligations held by the individual as potential participants in Danish society (cf. Delica & Elbeshausen, 2017). The integration concept contains several tacit assumptions, on an overarching political-strategic level and on a subordinate pragmatic level of what proper integration is, which are invisible to immediate consideration and which, at the same time, may appear paradoxical to an outside observer (Standardkontrakt..., 2018; Announcement on teaching and activation, etc. of asylum seekers and others, 2010). Before the integration concept can be applied, the Danish authorities and their local stakeholders need to regard asylum seekers as being in some kind of a deficit (cf. Ulvik, 2009; Vårheim, 2014; see also Atlestam et al., 2011). The residents were regarded as a more or less uniform group of people lacking language skills, cultural and social qualifications as well as vocational skills and who had a more insecure affiliation to the Danish labour market. The Danish authorities occupy this stance, why they oblige their asylum centre managements to create lessons in Danish and the 'Asylum-Seeking Course', module 3-8 (Standardkontrakt... 2018, pp. 33-37). The only individual considerations to be taken into account, seemed to be in the preparation of education and career plans. The respondents, on their side, knew how difficult it is to act in local communities without knowing the language, norms, and tacit conventions, why they engaged in these tasks and partook in voluntary activities even though none of them had yet been granted asylum and despite the opportunities for success were minimal.

Another necessary assumption is, how integration activities make sense as temporary, result-oriented activities. In the theoretical definition of integration (Berry, 1997) and in the practical activities initiated by the asylum reception centres (chief operations officer, email interview, 11 September 2018), it is implied how integration activities are not destined to continue indefinitely. Instead, integration activities should be a time-limited phenomenon, during which the immigrants increasingly become able to independently pursue their own wishes and needs, while honouring society's current privileges and obligations. The mere fact that the asylum seekers only stayed at the asylum reception centres until their application had been processed, upon which they were transferred to other programmes (education, employment, or deportation) indicated temporariness. The temporal issue was marked by slow application procedures, meaning the stay at the asylum reception centres seemed to become drawn out indefinitely. In the meantime, the respondents were delimited from the Danish society and limited in the social contact with native Danes, which is a prerequisite for fast and mutual integration (Johnston, 2017). The informal experience formation is established in an interaction between peoples' inherent customs, their articulation of their current situations, and everyday lives, as mentioned by Jarvis (2010), why the uncertainty of their current situation increasingly became a normative background to the respondents' informal experience formation (cf. Audunson et al., 2011; Vårheim, 2014).

My findings show how it becomes possible for Danish authorities, politicians, and opinion makers to extend the expectation of the individual asylum seeker's willingness to socio-cultural adaptation far

beyond what the theories on integration issues consider legitimate and unheard of in a society otherwise attaching great importance to the individual's self-determination and freedom to choose. These expectations are possibly due to the use of the term integration as an overarching conceptualisation of activities aimed at non-native people and due to the temporary result-orientation inherited in the integration work (Berry, 1997). This happens, for instance, when politicians refer to second and third-generation integration issues. Hence, and despite all good intentions, activities directed at asylum seekers ultimately tend to become assimilative, because no one distinguishes between assimilation and integration in practice – not in this study in any case.

From a *lifelong learning perspective*, the mandatory tasks, volunteering, and opportunities for leisure activities may as well be considered as formal education, non-formal learning, and informal experience formation, whose purpose is to motivate asylum seekers to educate, and to assume privileges and obligations as private persons, family members, or participants in civil society. Jarvis' interpretation of a modern lifelong learning concept as emphasising '[...] work rather than the humanity of the learner' (Jarvis, 2010, p. 45) in fact makes the concept even more relevant and applicable. In an integration context, lifelong learning thus cannot just refer to the humanity of the learner anymore. Language must be learned, the practical chores must be solved to the best abilities of the asylum seekers and the asylum reception centres, while volunteering and leisure activities each fulfil different functions in the asylum seekers' daily routines – also for the benefit of society. Additionally, Jarvis' lifelong learning concept makes it possible, both on a theoretical and on a practical level, to consider the individual's self-formation as a continuous and unfinished process, comparable to similar processes of native Danes. In a lifelong learning perspective, no one has deficits, even though different people may have different preconditions for participating in society. Lifelong learning activities aim to mitigate these different preconditions and enable the individual to use them as assets in her committed participation in professional, vocational, and private situations (see also Audunson et al., 2011; Johnston, 2017, 2018).

In a lifelong learning perspective, mandatory tasks, volunteering, and leisure time activities become temporary activities which may be extended or exchanged with other relevant activities and at the asylum seeker's individual will as soon as the residence permission is obtained or rejected. The respondents knew, full well, that even though their stay at the asylum reception centres was temporary their socialisation, education, and self-learning processes would proceed in years and decades to come. Mandatory tasks, volunteering, and leisure time activities contributed to develop the respondents' cultural skills in many ways, such as rehearsing their literacies or social skills, enabling a more appropriate management of the challenges, and opportunities of the future in a new social and cultural reality - whether in Denmark, in another country or in the home country. In a lifelong learning perspective, these activities help to prepare the individual respondent's near-democratic participation in society and enable a continued insistence on choosing his way of life.

The replacement of the concept of integration with the concept of lifelong learning is interesting to the Danish public libraries because their purpose and strength lie in their ability to support formal education and specially to facilitate the tacit non-formal learning activities and informal experience formation, while the promotion of a specific and fixed set of customs falls outside of the public library's responsibility. For the public library, the ambition is to create a space where the outcome of formal education may be rehearsed and further developed and to secure a framework in which non-formal learning and informal experience formation may take place as reflective and/or self-reflective processes (see also Ulvik, 2009). The Danish *Act regarding library service* mentions education, but as a self-formation task when stating how:

The objective of the public libraries is to promote information, education, and cultural activity by making available books, periodicals, talking books [audio books] and other suitable material, such as recorded music and electronic information resources, including Internet and multimedia (2000, p. 7).

Especially the latter part of the paragraph is directly aimed at dissemination, which, at least in a Scandinavian context, is perceived as denoting the special communicative relationship between librarians and citizens (Jönsson-Lanevska, 2005; Skøtt, 2018). The public libraries cannot become educational institutions carrying out formal education but must insist on being knowledge and cultural dissemination institutions which citizens may consult to fulfil their individual needs for intellectual or artistic stimuli, knowledge, cultural experiences etc. in their efforts to become or remain active members of civil society (Audunson et al., 2011; Savolainen, 2016). Thus, the process and not the learning objectives, is essential for public libraries as a point of departure for man's self-formation. Thus, the term *lifelong learning* is more in accordance with the public library's practices than the term *integration*. When applied at an organisational level, the lifelong learning concept has the potential to transform the public libraries integration activities into a core task for all employees – not just a task for the integration librarians – because the concrete activities correspond to similar activities undertaken for different groups of native citizens. Applied in the dissemination work, the lifelong learning concept balances the differences between 'them and us', eradicates the temporality of the integration work, and alters the attention from those deficits of, for instance, skills, knowledge, or different forms of capital, which is implicitly implied in the notion *integration*, to focus on the individual's needs and wants. Hence, I will go as far as to claim that integration first becomes reciprocal, that is becomes a mutual acceptance and recognition of people and their differences as defined by Berry (1997) or Johnston (2017) when interpreted from a lifelong learning perspective.

As mentioned above, Jarvis (2010) refers to informal experience formation to denote the learning outcome of recurrent handling of challenges in everyday life. Because informal experience formation is culturally and socially determined, asylum seekers are in a situation where they are continually challenged and must change, adjust, and adapt to a modern, dynamic, and highly changeable society. Decisive for whether the respondents choose to segregate, assimilate, or integrate are the requirements set by the Danish authorities and how the respondents manage to handle these. The respondents' handling is to a large extent (cf. Berry, 1997) based on their former experiences and skills and has influence on how coexistence will be exercised. Furthermore, considerations concerning current situations and past experiences influence on how asylum seekers handle their different conditions (cf. Ulvik, 2009).

9. Conclusion

In this article, I set out to study what new knowledge about public libraries' integration activities are possible to gain when applying a lifelong learning perspective and what such a perspective means for our understanding of the integration process as a theoretical and practical phenomenon. The study showed how integration is an established and well-known approach, which has been and remains used in library practice, and in library and information science, to organise, observe, and define the public libraries' integration activities. The study also showed how several challenges may be associated with the integration perspective.

By conducting a series of interviews and analysing respondents' statements from a lifelong learning perspective, it became evident how integration takes place in practice where the respondents' customs and articulation of their situations, together with the structural conditions found within the asylum reception centres, played a significant role in how they approached different integration activities. Most respondents had come to terms with their temporary situation on the brink of society

but simultaneously expressed difficulties in handling the long waiting times. Additionally, most respondents had acknowledged and accepted that they had entered learning processes, which probably would last a major part of the rest of their lives, though they had drawn various conclusions. These individual experiences and attitudes cannot be captured by either political or theoretical generalisations.

By viewing integration from a lifelong learning perspective, it becomes possible to avoid both the misunderstood reference to integration as a time-limited period and to integration as activities solely related to immigrants' learning objectives. The concept of integration focuses on what is different between people and how these differences may be managed. Different strategies, like segregation, assimilation, or integration all prescribe different means and actions but often primarily for the benefit of the majority population. In contrast, lifelong learning focuses on what is similar, namely, that all people must continually learn and develop, to be able to adjust to a modern, dynamic, and highly changeable world. Hence, everybody must adapt their hitherto cultural, social, informational, educational, etc. experiences to these ever-changing societal structures. This is necessary, both to be able to fulfil people's own desires and needs, and to be able to exert democratic influence on society's development and hereby secure peaceful coexistence. This applies, whether you are native or non-native to the society, you are a citizen in. Several respondents reflected on the theme 'What I am going to do when I leave the asylum reception centre' and showed their acknowledgement of how their reintegration to (another) society had just begun. People may have different starting points, strategies, and abilities to do so, but having to adapt to changing life-conditions has become a common everyday life experience. These realisations are especially interesting for the public library, whose obligation it is to support such processes.

Finally, it becomes possible to redefine the evaluation options. What can be evaluated is the results of formal education obligations and actions, while the results of non-formal learning activities and informal experience formation are and must be individual, volatile, and constantly changing.

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Appendix A: Interview guide

Introduction - about the respondents

- Who are you?
- Where are you from?
- How do you experience being in Denmark?

Everyday life

- What did an ordinary everyday life look like for you before you came to Denmark?
- What is your education?
- Can you describe what you did during a normal day?
- What was your employment?
- Can you describe what you did on the weekends?
- Can you describe what an ordinary everyday life looks like for you?
- Are you doing something else now, how, and why?
- What is your employment now?
- Can you describe what you do on a regular weekend?
- Can you describe what it means that you do something different now than before?
- Is it easy or is it difficult - why?

The library

- Can you describe what you use the library for?
- Can you describe a situation where you use the library for leisure?
- How do you feel that the library is important for your leisure time activities?
- Can you describe a situation where you use the library for education?
- How do you feel that the library is important for learning activities?
- Can you describe a situation where you use the library in your employment?
- How do you feel that the library is important for your work tasks?
- Are there other things you use the library for?
- Do you use other services concerning education/work/leisure - which ones?

Relationships with the librarians

- Can you describe how you experience the librarians?
- Do you find the librarians helpful?
- Do they sometimes teach you?
- Is there anything you need to do yourself/What do librarians require you to do yourself?
- Can you describe if there is something they do not help with?

Unattended opening hours

- Can you describe what you use the library for when there are no librarians?
- How do you experience using the library alone? (nice, quiet, uncomfortable, lonely)
- Can you manage on your own, without the help of librarians?
- What do you do when you experience problems?

The digital library

- Can you describe how you use the library from home/via the Internet?
- Can you describe what you use the library's websites for?
- Is there anything that is perceived as easier to do from home at the library - what?
- Is there anything that is perceived as more difficult to do from home - what?

Future

- What now? What's next for you to do?
- What would you like to do - in 1 year - in 5 years - and in 10 years?

- Do you think you will continue to use the library?
- Is there anything you would like to see changed?