Multilingual facilities in a Swedish library
A Study of Activities, Goals and Provisions of resources

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The following thesis will examine how a city library manages its multilingual facilities. I am interested to explore the challenges and problems librarians face, and how the library helps in integration. This has been studied through several qualitative interviews with librarians, major immigrant organization’s representatives who use library multi-language services, as well as steering plans of the city library and international library of Stockholm.

The results of the study indicate that the city library has ambitious plans for providing multi-language facilities to people from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The library has multi-lingual literature in more than 60 languages and is trying to reach out to people through a variety of programs including “cultural weeks” and “languages days”. While it is always challenging for the library staff to buy literature in various languages, the library has started to acquire literature by creating user profiles and via a cross-referenced group responsible for such activities.

The study also revealed that while user groups were positive about the library’s ambitions for multi-cultural activities, they were critical regarding a lack of acceptable and useful literature in their own languages, especially for children.

The analysis method for this study was Roth’s theory of integration. The main aim of the library is to provide a platform for cultural exchanges between people of various ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, these results provided interesting insights if these activities are leading towards a positive vicinity, and distance between them or not.

Nyckelord: Multicultural, Multilingual, Integration, Immigration, Immigrants, Identity, Library
1. Introduction

In 2012, I spent a considerable amount of my time in helping the City library’s multilingual section in systematically organizing and sorting literature according to various languages. I soon realized this work required knowledge of various languages, especially when dealing with actual users of these languages. Moreover, it wasn’t easy to find knowledgeable and multi-lingual library staff. When asked to outline the topic of my thesis research, I decided to focus on investigating the current provisions for, status, goals and challenges of multilingual facilities at the city library, as well as more ideal platforms for those seeking information. This is especially important in higher population urban settings where people from numerous cultures and nationalities tend to live. Planning to be a librarian myself, and a non-native Swede, I am naturally curious and motivated to better understand the range and needs of users in the presence of required multilingual facilities.

The advent of modern information technology has rapidly changed the role of libraries. Libraries are becoming a social gathering place and information access centers for people with different backgrounds who may otherwise not have access to modern information technology assets. Are libraries able to provide such an environment and tools, especially to minorities and immigrants in their native languages? Are libraries helping minorities and immigrants to integrate into the mainstream of society and in becoming a useful part of society’s development?

An important aspect of informing people about the multilingual facilities available at the library involves active marketing of these facilities not only inside the library but also to the external society. It will be interesting to find out if libraries carry out such activities and additionally work together with external actors like schools and immigrant associations to promote language education and language interest among children. Atlestad and Myhre (2012, p.97) in reference to Stenberg, wrote that a library could help people to learn languages other than their native (e.g., Swedish) language, as well as help non-native parents motivate their children to learn their previously native language. This can help to increase communication, reduce segregation and bridge the gap which often exists between different ethnic groups.

According to the Swedish library law (SFS 2013:801, 8§) “Public and school libraries should pay special attention to people with disabilities, immigrants and other minorities by offering literature in languages other than Swedish and in forms tailored to their needs.” This law describes that libraries are compelled to work for freedom, equality, diversity, independence, heritage, education and internationalization of the society. The library is an open place where everyone is welcome and to get a wide variety of information; also at no cost. A library, according to library law, language law and other library organizations, should provide appropriate language facilities in languages other than Swedish based upon the needs of its users.
Including everyone in the public library may be problematic in a context where some people might not have access to either their own languages or digital facilities. The problem may be greater for people who have immigrated to Sweden and who do not yet know how Swedish society works. On the other hand, it is also challenging for libraries to help people in all languages because it would require significant capital and skilled human resources to execute such a broad plan.

A detailed analysis of a citizen’s background in each municipality is required to comprehensively understand their language needs. A person with a background from Brazil does not mean automatically this person speaks Portuguese since there are many people who also speak Spanish in Brazil. Similarly, a person coming from India might speak the dominant Hindi language but also any of the other 29 recognized languages in India.

1.1 Problem

In recent times large numbers of people have been moving across borders all around the world bringing in a paradigm shift in how people communicate and how their needs for cultural and linguistic identity is changing in their newly adopted countries and cultures. According to the Immigration department, about 1.4 million people living in Sweden were born outside Sweden, which corresponds to about 15% of its population (Migrationsinfo, 2013). Between 1960 and 2012 this percentage steadily increased from fewer than 5% to over 15% of the total population.

Globally, libraries play an important role not only in providing information but also laying groundwork for cultural integration among different ethnic groups. Libraries face different challenges depending on their location, population diversity in the area, and their available resources. Several of them have incurred a sudden need to manage multicultural environments and facilities because of the migration of people from within and outside the country. As Swedish society becomes increasingly multicultural, Swedish libraries also face similar issues and challenges, but also represent new opportunities for its own development and in providing support for other languages especially to children and young people.

It is clear, therefore, that libraries should provide a platform for cultural exchange and information to its citizens and especially to immigrants. My chosen city is one of the fastest growing, multicultural and academically sounds cities in Sweden, where a number of people live with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. How do the non-native users perceive the city library’s multilingual facilities? Are multilingual facilities available at the city library sufficient and interesting to keep them updated about their respective culture and language? It is simultaneously interesting to investigate the librarian’s perspective of challenges in providing these facilities in relation to integration of various ethnic groups in the city. Are there differences between the city library’s provisions of multilingual facilities and its user’s expectations? Both of these aspects can help draw conclusions which might help in narrowing the gap between provisions and expectations of these stakeholders.
1.2 Aims and Issues

The aim of this work is to study multilingual facilities provided by the city library to various ethnic groups in the city. How do librarians work with different language groups and how do they procure literature in languages other than Swedish? I would like to explore goals and ambitions that national and local governments have assigned to the city library for providing multilingual facilities. What kinds of actual resources are available for such activities and to what extent have they been successful? What are the policies and yearly plan of the city library including their budget? What are the guidelines for the librarians, and if the city library is affected by national and local cultural policies, how do these activities help towards integration.

To better understand these aspects of a modern multilingual and multicultural library environment I am interested to carry out this research project at the city library in reference to the policies and achievements of the international library in Stockholm. The project will involve qualitative research through librarian interviews and some immigrant organizations in the city.

The main questions that I would like to investigate for multilingual facilities are:

- What are the goals and ambitions of city library in providing multilingual facilities?
- What activities and resources are provided to achieve these goals?
- Can conclusions drawn from this work be related to Roth’s theory of integration?

To get answers for these topics I will interview librarians who have a direct responsibility in providing and managing these facilities at the city library. I have chosen three such librarians who have different responsibilities in managing multilingual facilities at the city library, and this should help me in gaining a wider perspective of their opinions and issues they face. To be able to get an idea of how these facilities are perceived by actual users I have chosen four immigrant organizations that have direct interest in the multi-cultural facilities of the city library.

I will apply ‘Roth’s theory of integration’ to analyze my results. Roth’s theory can be applied to this work as it involves a systematic analysis of activities of various stakeholders and their relative effects on integration of various ethnic groups within a society. This will be further discussed in chapter 2.

1.3 Limitations

This work will involve only one particular city library to find out how the library set goals and carry out activities for providing multilingual facilities. The results may or may not be applied to all libraries in Sweden since different libraries have unique environments. It will be difficult to generalize how all immigrants perceive these facilities since I will interview only
four representatives from four immigrant organizations. However, this study should help me pin-point some trends that affect integration, especially in light of Roth’s model of integration.

There are other stakeholders such as national government, regional governments, municipalities, educational institutions, employment agencies etc. helping in the integration of various ethnic groups in Swedish society. However, this study will not involve their role but will only focus on the library and its immigrant language facilities. I will use this data to compare with earlier work done by other researchers and how it can be applied to the current situation in Sweden.

This research is not meant to find right or wrong answers from my informants, but involves talking about their personal experiences about multilingual facilities and its benefits both from a library’s perspective and from a user’s perspective.

1.4 Conceptual definitions:

There are several important terms that I have used in this work. These are described below for how they are defined in this thesis:

1.4.1 Identity:
Identity for an individual or for a group of people is the aggregated characteristic of their religion, gender, ethnicity, race or sexuality. An identity is easily available to people who are born and brought up in the same environment as their parents and grand-parents. However, when people move and live in other countries and cultures, they may suddenly lose their inherited identity in a new culture, language and environment. For such immigrants or immigrant, a group which keeps and further develops their identity in their adopted society is challenging. By developing their unique identity, respect and new roots in the new society invariably lead to positive integration. On the other hand, failure to develop identity could also lead to psychological, social and cultural problems.

1.4.2 Culture:
Culture is the way of life, customs and traditions within a larger group of people in a country or within a religion (National Encyclopedia).

1.4.3 Multiculturalism:
Multiculturalism is a model in which different groups are given space to express their cultural characteristics and acceptance of cultural differences in a society (Roth, 1996, p.27). Multiculturalism and cultural pluralism are used as synonyms.

1.4.4 Multilingual and Multilanguage:
These words are utilized frequently in this work. Multilingualism (or Multilanguage) refers to the use of multiple languages by an individual or a group of people. Multilingualism may
apply to communities as well as individuals. Multilingualism and bilingualism are basically the same phenomenon (National Encyclopedia).

1.4.5 Immigration:
Immigration is defined as the movement of people (immigrants) from one place to another place where they are not native because of economic, political reasons and natural disasters.

1.4.6 Immigrant:
Immigrant is a person who moves from one country to another in order to settle there for a long time. In Sweden one should be registered at least for one year to be considered an immigrant. The term immigrant is not present in the Aliens act and it was not clear who immigrants are because it is not specified whether this word refers to those who are foreign nationals, foreign born, or members of the second generation migrant (i.e. people who themselves were born in Sweden but with at least one foreign–born parent). In 1960, the term ‘immigrant’ was elected to replace the negatively-charged word ‘foreigner’ (National Encyclopedia).

1.4.7 Mother tongue:
Mother tongue is a language that children learn first. Mother tongue is the tool that children learn to use in order to verbalize symbolic concepts and encode their environment. In bilingual families, children may acquire two different native languages simultaneously (National Encyclopedia).

1.4.8 Integration:
It is a process uniting people with separate identities to each other. This term is used for a process in which a society is built, and through which different classes of people unite with each other to become bigger entities (National Encyclopedia).

1.4.9 The City library:
The city library “kommunal folkbibliotek” is a library provided by the city’s municipality to its citizens. It also plays an additional role as a central library for other smaller libraries present in the city suburbs.

1.5 Thesis outline

In chapter 2, I will discuss the theoretical background based on Roth’s model of integration and how various factors plays a relative role in defining the outcome of immigration in any society towards integration.

In chapter 3, I will present background and earlier research previously carried out in this field of study. In this chapter I will present important definitions of key terminologies that have been repeatedly used, and also discuss library laws that govern and outline our libraries’ goals and ambitions. Later on I will present earlier research that has a direct relevance to my work.
In chapter 4 under topic “Methods”, I will give a background of how this work has been carried out. I will also discuss ethical issues and methods I have used for carrying out this survey, interviews of my informants, followed by a short summary.

In chapter 5, I will discuss results of this investigation, present an analysis of results, and discuss relationship of these results with the theoretical background and earlier research.

In chapter 6, I will present conclusions that have been drawn out of these investigations.

In chapter 7, I will give a brief outline of what else can be done further based upon these investigations.

Lastly, a summary of these investigations will be presented followed by reference list.

In the end there are appendixes that detail interview questions.

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2. Theory

As pointed out by various researchers (Roth, 2005; Berger, 2002; Audunson, 2005 and Brnic, 2002), integration of various ethnic groups is central in building a progressive and just society. This study involves in finding out what impact a library’s multilingual facilities has on various ethnic groups so they become an integral part of the society and contribute equally to its progress and development. Therefore, in this section I will briefly describe Roth’s model of integration (2005). In his work, Roth has analyzed various factors that can play a significant role in overall integration of a multicultural society.

Roth’s theory describes how various policies including that of library, national, and regional governments can affect people, both positively and negatively, and thereby affect the whole society. According to Roth, people from different backgrounds and cultures in a society are passengers in one and the same boat and this boat has a narrow and dangerous route. On one side there is forced (negative) assimilation and on the other side there is the involuntary segregation, however, in the middle of the boat there is positive assimilation and positive distance among people. According to Roth, in modern societies no group can develop on its own but everyone is interdependent for growth and prosperity of the society and thereby allowing this “so called boat” to stay on the right course (Roth, 2005, p.171).

Roth has described a multicultural environment with the help of terms like negative distance, positive distance, negative vicinity and positive vicinity. These are described briefly below:
2.1 Negative distance:

According to this model, a negative distance (Roth, 2005, p. 27-30) between a society’s minority group and majority group leads to segregation and suppression of a minority’s rights in politics, education, work and an overall degradation of society. In extreme forms, negative distance can lead to mass murder, ethnic cleansing, etc. There can be a variety of reasons that lead to negative distance among people, including the dominance of majority groups who control all aspects of life. It also has a negative impact among the majority group since it can inhibit the growth of a creative and fair cultural society, eventually impacting everyone.

2.2 Positive Vicinity:

Positive vicinity (Roth, 2005, p.50) is completely opposite to negative distance. With positive vicinity, both the majority and minority groups work within the frame of active participation in central politics, education and policy making. They even participate in more basic social activities where everyone contributes to develop a flourishing society. Both the minority and majority group understand each other in daily communications and therefore it is important that both have some common moral values.

2.3 Negative Vicinity:

Roth (2005, p. 75) describes negative vicinity as when a majority group tries to integrate the minority members in their cultural beliefs even though the minority groups are not interested in or inclined toward such beliefs. This has a negative impact on the minority members’ living conditions. The main impact is on a minority’s autonomy, integrity, self-determination and cultural self-esteem through forced indoctrination and manipulation by the majority group.

2.4 Positive Distance:

Positive distance (Roth, 2005, p. 89) is opposite to negative vicinity. In positive distance, the minority group enjoys and keep their cultural values while living side-by-side with the cultural values of the majority groups. This leads to respect and cultural tolerance for each other and a general multidimensional growth of members. Minority groups get to decide their own cultural and religious beliefs. Minority members have access to higher education, politics
and employment in prestigious and central posts. Roth provided a good example of often flourishing “China Towns” in several cities in USA where both Chinese and American cultures flourish with respect for each other without conflicts or cultural and religious suppression (Roth, 2005, p. 89).

There can be several factors that could lead to positive and negative distance/ vicinity in a society. I will specifically try to find out, in which direction, actions and activities of my chosen library are leading towards. As stated earlier, libraries facilitate multilingual facilities, cultural activities and other programs to attract diverse groups. It will be interesting to find out if these activities create a positive distance between different groups by developing mutual respect and understanding and if the library management is continuously analyzing and improving based on drawbacks and successes of their activities. Interviewing library staff involved in multi-language facilities and representatives of immigrant organizations as users can give me a perceived insight on policies and their actual effect on integration in the city since providing e.g., multi-language literature is only useful if it has a positive impact on how people feel about their identity and value in the society.

There is no standard process for developing interethnic relations. Depending upon the prevailing conditions and policies developed by various actors, the outcome can lead to either integration and development or assimilation and disintegration. There are challenges, and in a fast-changing world these seem steadily more complex and difficult to manage. Education and information seem central to development, and in a 1998 EU report Ryynänen described that “possession and mastery of information promotes economic, social and cultural integration and therefore, it is appropriate to guarantee free access to information for the citizens” (Ryynänen, 1998, Report on the Green paper on the role of libraries in the modern world).

I think positive integration remains a difficult issue for most Western countries. Immigration to European countries is a fact of life and immigrants play an important role in social, cultural and technological development of each of the European countries. Highly skilled immigrants help in developing the service and manufacturing, educational, and technology sectors while non-skilled immigrants play an important role in filling positions native people no longer find desirable.

The European Integration forum of European Commission in (2004) adopted eleven common basic principles for immigrant integration. Four important principles among them involving culture, education, language and integration which directly relates to this study are:

- Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration

- Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society
Frequent interaction between immigrants and member state citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

Member states must safeguard diversity in cultures and religions.

However, in recent times several important European heads of states have acknowledged that their countries have failed to completely integrate immigrants into their societies (German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister David Cameron in 2011 (David Cameron’s attack on multiculturalism divides the nation, 6 February 2011, http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/feb/05/david-cameron-attack-multiculturalism-coalition and http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-my-war-on-multiculturalism-2205074.html, [14.02.14] and Merkel says German multicultural society has failed, 17 October 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451 and http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/17/angela-merkel-german-multiculturalism-failed, [14.02.14]). This acknowledgement from countries that have a long experience in dealing with immigration issues has prompted me to assume that, at least in Europe, there are several challenges that remain unresolved in developing truly prospering multicultural societies. In the United States, I believe successive Jewish, Indian, Chinese and Hispanic immigration has resulted in making the United States an economically strong country. These immigrant groups have largely kept their cultural and linguistic heritages and flourished side-by-side with other cultures and ethnic groups quite in line with Roth’s model of integration. It is also worth pointing out that Roth’s theory of integration might have its own limitations and theoretical goals might significantly differ from reality. Integration is a complex and delicate issue and there are many stakeholders and people involved in making it work to a level close to Roth’s model and the boundaries between individual freedom and collective responsibilities in a society are not easy to formulate through this model. I think one limitation of achieving multiculturism and integration could be that it is not always obvious how to achieve or build a national identity side by side and Roth’s model does not answer all the practical aspects and processes that can help in achieving such goals.

2.5 Conclusion:

It is clear from the above discussion that integration remains a very difficult and delicate subject for both immigrants and a hosting society. Roth’s theory sets guidelines of how a fine balance can be developed and measured for successful integration. I am interested to find out the level and quality of interactions between a library and its various language groups, and determine the method by which a library sources literature in various languages, what programs it has for multilingual activities, and how targeted users perceive these facilities. Moreover, I am intrigued to understand to what extent these activities and facilities have reached targeted people and led to positive integration among citizens. Roth’s theory of integration can help in understanding this dynamic situation between a library and its users. It
should also be noted that a library’s role is relatively small but important within a complex issue of integration and multiculturism, but it can, nevertheless, shed light on improvements and issues that a multicultural society faces for successful integration of various ethnic groups.

3. Background and Earlier Research:

3.1 Background
Since this study is primarily focused on finding the status of multilingual facilities in libraries, it is interesting to first review what Government policies, ambitions and status exist for such activities. According to Järtelius (1993, p.160) in 1993 about 12% of Swedish population had either both parent or at least one of the parents from a foreign country. This proportion was about 6% around 1963 and even less before this time. This proportion has increased since then and in 2012 this percentage steadily increased to over 15% of the total population (Migrationsinfo, 2013). Several ethnic groups like Finns and now even migrants from Asia, Europe and Africa have adopted Sweden as their country. These communities have kept their own mother tongue alive and, to some extent, their cultures. There is a growing need to bring these ethnic groups near Swedish culture and vice versa to create a better understanding across the various communities.

In the Government’s bill submitted in 1998/99 (p.28-29) the Swedish government declared that Sweden’s national minorities should be recognized and knowledge about their language and culture should be supported. Minority languages should be recognized, given support and required to be kept alive. Swedish minority policies provide equal rights and opportunities to everyone regardless of ethnic or cultural background. Therefore, communities are built upon social diversity and equality. According to these policies, development should be based upon mutual respect and tolerance, and everyone should be responsible and involved.

Minorities in European countries, including Sweden, contribute to Europe’s cultural heritage. In Central and Eastern Europe minority questions received great attention after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1998, and minorities learned to demand conditions for new opportunities and respect for their identity. In Sweden, the government’s aim in this bill was to strengthen national culture heritage by supporting national minorities, their languages and culture (Government bill, 1998/99:143, p.11).

Brnic (2002, p.165) pointed out that multiculturalism in Sweden can be looked upon as living as a “Swede” with a certain physical outlook, language proficiency and behavior. This unfortunately means that several key aspects of the society like its flexibility, tolerance, and
languages are ignored. Nationality on the other hand is aimed at bringing people with various cultures, language groups, values or religions under one umbrella.

According to language act 2009:600 everyone in Sweden has the right to a language, both Swedish as well their mother tongue, and it also gives rights to minorities to develop and maintain their culture. It also asked libraries to pay special attention to children by helping them develop their language skills and cultural identity.

Zimmermann (2010), while a research fellow at Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, wrote in his blog “International Law observer” about minorities and minority rights in Sweden. The new law incorporates Sweden’s commitment of its international obligations to protect the national minorities’ cultures and languages. The Swedish constitution of 1974 provides in Art. 2(5) that state have an obligation to preserve and develop cultural life of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. The minorities have a specific solidarity within the respective group, an own religion, a linguistic or cultural linkage, and to maintain their own distinct identity. This will help minorities protect their own culture, and language which in turn, should result in making them a part of Swedish society and a common heritage of Sweden. Despite these governmental efforts in the period 1999-2009, the implementation of these policies has been rather slow.

As a result, in January 2010 a new Act on national minorities and national minority languages was proposed and adopted in Sweden. This Act contains provisions on national minorities, national minority languages, administrative sectors, and the right to use minority languages in administrative authorities and courts and provisions for certain obligations in pre-school and elderly homes.

As mentioned before, libraries play an important role in facilitating multilingualism. The Library Act Ds 2012:13 Constitutional Proposals 11 § 8 states that Public libraries should pay special attention to national minorities and people who have a mother tongue other than Swedish, by providing literature in:

- the national minority languages (Jiddisch, Romani, Sami, Finnish and Meänkieli)
- languages other than the national minority languages and Swedish, and
- easy-to-read Swedish

The City Library, being in an urban area which has a growing population of people with different ethnic backgrounds, in its own turn has a number of goals to serve its community. These goals include the ambition to provide literature in different languages according to city’s diverse population. To do this it also aims to educate its staff about various multicultural issues and keep their web site updated for information. It also aims to work closely with immigrant associations and organizations, while arranging activities with a view on the citizen’s backgrounds.

To be able to serve these groups, the library has people responsible for multi-language services and a representative for the cross group for buying literature in different languages. The library will also recruit staff with language and cultural competence. It also aims to
ensure that the library staff knows about the city’s cultural and language diversity since multilingual and multicultural operations are set to grow from 7% in 2012 to 10% in 2015. (2013, Måldokument för mångspråksarbetet på stadsbibliotek).

In a well-functioning multicultural society people respect each other’s critical views even though they might be in conflict with one’s own thinking, while being open to change their views with reasonable arguments. This mutual respect leads to a well-functioning multicultural society. Gutmann discusses the relationship between minorities and the majority in a society and how they should relate to each other (Amy Gutmann in Taylor, 1992, p.24). According to Kymlicka (1995, p.104) people in a society, whether they are in majority or minority, should be able to decide what is best for their culture as well as decide what they can adopt and integrate in their culture from other cultures. A culture should not be threatened by a dominant culture nor should it be affected by decisions made by them. As he wrote “this can happen if a land, language rights and political institutions of a national minority are taken away.” When people have national, regional, ethnic or religious identities in a society, it invariably leads to a healthier, stable and functional modern society (p.175).

One of the most classical examples of a flourishing multicultural society is in the USA where people from almost entire world live and work side-by-side. Kymlicka (1995, p.97) further referred to Skutnabb-Kangas that people learn a national language like Swedish in Sweden, and English in the USA when their own mother tongue is not being threatened or suppressed. This is highly relevant to my research since the city is known for its innovations in science and technology and is a base for two of the most well-known universities in Sweden. A positive co-operation and integration should help in open communication and collaboration, leading to the development of the city’s economy.

Wolf in Taylor (1992, p.82) has written a fine example that her children loved the same stories as she loved in her childhood, but their favorite stories included tales from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. These tomes were unavailable to her, due to unavailability or lack of knowledge. She thinks that there has been remarkable progress carried out by the libraries. People from various backgrounds can find books in the library which express and illustrate traditions and legends to which they are closely tied, and the characters in the books look and speak like them and their parents. The essential thing is that American children have availability of diverse literature and stories which are the foundation of a multicultural heritage. This way people recognize themselves as a part of a multicultural society; and respect the people of the community in all their diversity.

3.2 Earlier Research

As I described above, most western societies are becoming more multicultural and therefore, there is growing demand and need for providing multicultural facilities to migrants and immigrants. Many interesting and related research articles exist where this topic has been discussed and explored. It remains a challenging and extremely relevant ambition for any
democratic society to provide equal rights to all its citizens and aid their cultural integration. This information is especially interesting for my study because it gives me information on how various other libraries in several countries, including Sweden, are dealing with such issues, what problems they face, and how successful they have been in executing their facilitating mission.

For decades there have been ongoing discussions about multilingual and multicultural libraries, and several researchers have written about this topic. S.R. Ranganathan’s five laws of library science (Rubin 2010, p.407) have become central to our understanding of libraries and how the institutions can serve people and societies. He explored a number of philosophical and theoretical issues and developed some of the most fundamental subject criteria. A library’s aim and motivation is to serve the aggregated people and society by providing knowledge, culture and information. The aim is to reach everyone through, perhaps, specialized programs undertaken by the libraries, meaning that even minority groups and economically-deprived segments of a society have the right to get information preferably in their own language. This is useful and interesting information for me since there are a large number of large and small ethnic groups in the city. It would be interesting to find out which activities the library provides to reach the smaller ethnic groups, and what suite of specialized activities and programs exist.

Shoham and Rabinovich (2008) analyzed the library services to immigrants in Israel and came to the conclusion that a library is both a cultural and a social institution for the immigrants in their new country. Israeli libraries maintain a collection of materials in simplistic Hebrew which help the immigrants begin learning the language. In many Israeli libraries there are librarians who speak the immigrant’s language to aid their search for brochures and collections in their mother tongue. Moreover, libraries even organize special cultural programs in immigrant’s languages to make them feel as if they haven’t abandoned their original home. Their ambition is to create a multicultural society through integration rather than assimilation like the one that has been discussed and implemented in Sweden as well. Many American libraries offer special services for various ethnic and immigrants. US libraries offer native language literature, multilingual librarians and English classes (Zang, 2001). Several libraries have installed computers offering services and literature in multiple languages, as well as video-viewing facilities and telephone answering systems. This has resulted in a large increase in the number of public libraries and immensely benefitted immigrants as these services are free to them and help them mix within their adopted country (Strong, 2000).

It is interesting to note the Danish experience in dealing with large-scale immigration and their integration in Danish society. Immigrants comprise about 7% of the Danish population and large-scale immigration from non-European countries is expected to expand. This required Denmark to adopt multicultural policies for the integration of new immigrants. Berger (2002) described that the Danish government formulated their policy so as to integrate immigrants into Danish society and culture. Immigrants were offered to learn language and the culture of their new country. The public libraries offered literature and media in many languages throughout Denmark. In his combined qualitative and quantitative research Berger
found that factors such as provision of music and videos, and not just books, and access to free internet and other library services were key factors for immigrants to visit and benefit from library services.

To what extent the ambition of cultural diversity has actually benefited people with diverse cultural and linguistic preferences in Sweden will be vital to this work. A report “Folkbibliotek i tal och tankar: en faktarapport från Folkbiblioteksutredningen” (1982) cited an immigrant survey in 1974 (SOU 1974:69) and pointed out that public libraries have a cultural responsibility for immigrants and minorities - rather than the majority group. Immigrants have difficulty securing literature in their native language, although it was a public library’s poorly handled responsibility. This report showed that public libraries should improve their foreign language inventory to provide better services to immigrants. It also demands better cooperation between public libraries and schools such that children with languages other than Swedish could access native language literature. According to Johannisson (2012, p.43 in “Den utmanande diskussionen – Debattskrift om kulturpolitik och identiteter i Norden”, Nord 2012:006) Sweden has ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and as such, there is a need to ensure everyone’s preferences are satisfied. This diversity should help develop a vibrant democracy through diverse cultures and more choices for everyone. Statens Kulturråd (1986:8) presented a report on immigrants and their linguistic needs for Sweden. This report recommended a qualitative approach to public libraries in Sweden by determining the real needs of multilingual users instead of group size in relation to total population. On the question of stocking literature it recommended that media stocks should be made available based on actual needs of immigrants and linguistic minorities at the local and regional levels.

As we saw above successful integration of immigrants require provision of multilingual facilities in local libraries. Multilingualism can be viewed from both social and individual perspectives. Atlestam and Myhre (2012, p.19) with reference to Otterup, described that multilingualism from a social perspective shows how a society accepts and respects that people speak different languages. An individual perspective shows how individuals get a chance to become multilingual and what multilingualism can mean for an individual. Otterup discovered in his analysis that there are some important factors that affect the degree of multilingualism which lead to something positive for the individual as well as to the society. He pointed out that multilingualism can be frustrating for some but at the same time can offer unique individual opportunities, thereby developing a flourishing society where linguistic and cultural diversity is a great asset for prosperity and peace. This is specifically important in my research because there are several ethnic groups as well as migrant workers and students who interact with Swedish culture and language and this can lead to a positive effect for city’s growth and increases cultural tolerance among citizens. However, in an excessive form, it can also lead to negative integration and cultural intolerance as pointed out by Roth.

Library staff could play an equally important role in providing multilingual facilities as they can very well be the first people that immigrants gets in touch with on their arrival. As I also experienced during my short period working with multilingual literature at the city library it is challenging for librarians to be able to communicate with users of various linguistic groups.
Jönsson-Lanevska (2005, p.19-20) argued that the role of library as an informer and language instructor is highlighted by Swedish cultural policy. This research work corresponds directly with my work as it outlines three stages that a new immigrant goes through upon arrival in Sweden; 1) the positive phase on arrival followed by 2) a critical phase of disappointment and negative emotions, which can then lead to 3) a balancing stage of positive cultural integration. Libraries introduce immigrants to Swedish language as well as give them the possibilities to keep contact with their native culture and language. The diversity brings new demands for information. Librarians can take the role of a guide, an advisor, a leader and an assistant. Ericsson and Nordeman (2011) discussed that librarians are often not multilingual and therefore often fail to understand the needs of some of its users. This creates a big language barrier between the librarians and the user for the simplest tasks, such as making a library card and explaining the rules for borrowing books. Libraries also find it difficult to recruit employees with multilingual skills, and young people rarely choose to become librarians.

Since my work is also about finding language facilities and its coupling to identity for an individual or for ethnic groups in a multicultural society, it is relevant to ask whether language facilities provided at the city library have helped these groups maintain a unique identity. Taylor (1992, p.26) commented that recognition and identity is not just good for everyone in the society but it is a must for a well-functional society. Failure to do this can easily result into disrespect, mistrust, discrimination and a permanent damage to the society. Just a few decades ago the societies were much more homogeneous and therefore, the issue of identity and recognition were less important and needed. However, nowadays, societies are becoming much more heterogeneous and therefore the aspects of respect, recognition and dignity have become increasingly important. Societies are becoming increasingly multicultural while at the same time also becoming more porous (Taylor 1992, p. 63) due to increasing immigration around the world.

In my study I will use Roth’s theory of integration. It describes how various policies of the national, regional governments and other institutions could lead to negative or positive integration among various ethnic groups. Therefore, I will review how other researchers have described the relationship between integration and multicultural facilities provided at libraries especially for minorities.

In the context of Europe, Blanc-Noël (2009) pointed out that Europe is a place where the numbers of immigrants are growing and this immigration flow is expected to continue. Overall, Europe has two models when it comes to dealing with integration. First is to create a multicultural environment by preserving immigrant’s identities, languages and cultures. The second is to assimilate the immigrants into the local culture and its values. According to Blanc-Noël (2009, p.5) to Even though Sweden had no significant experience with immigration, it nevertheless, adopted a multicultural policy in 1974 giving immigrants the right of equality at par with Swedish citizens, freedom of choice of choosing their cultural values, as well as cooperation between the majority and minority groups. This was followed by a not-so-successful focus on language and vocational training in the integration program of 1980 (Blanc-Noël, 2009, p.15). Minority groups were placed in special residential areas but their language and employment conditions didn’t improve. In fact, they became even more
mixed and confusing, since they mingled with so many diverse cultures and languages. This resulted in more discrimination to minorities and as a result, in 1986 Sweden became the first European country to recognize discrimination and therefore, introduced an ‘ombudsman’ according to Blanc-Noël (2009, p.16). However, they also specified that cultural freedom doesn’t allow Swedish essential values and norms. After a series of changes and reforms the government in 1990 introduced a new ministry of ‘Integration and Gender Equality’ with an emphasis on integration policy. The ministry’s goals are to promote equal rights, opportunities to all citizens irrespective of their backgrounds and gender. Among 28 other countries, Sweden stood first in an immigrant integration policy index, but the larger question of multiculturalism remains in Sweden. Among some significant improvements were the availability of literature and newspapers in several languages in libraries, native language classes for minorities in schools, and multilingual support at key administrative offices.

The results of a qualitative research study by Abrahamsson (1996) that Iranian youngsters are happy with the library and its facilities in Borås and that one should not put a lot of weight on immigrant’s backgrounds, have been strongly disputed by Jonsson-Lanevska (2004, p.25) in her master thesis. She pointed out that even though it is probably encouraging that these youngsters have adopted Swedish language quite well, if it is done at the cost of their own language and culture then it will mean that they lose actually their own unique identity and will not represent a true integration into Swedish society. These observations are certainly interesting for my work and it seems successful integration is a rather complex process and involves considering several important factors.

3.3 Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that several investigators have described the benefits of multicultural society, libraries, identity and successful integration of diverse cultures and an important role a public library can play. Cultural understanding and tolerance leads to respect and development in a society, but cultural misunderstanding can lead to civil unrest and intolerance. It is interesting to find out if library programs create a good understanding of various cultures and languages among its users and if there are any significant issues that have negatively impacted the implementation of these programs. It seems from the above discussion that multiculturism, multilingualism, identity and integration are related subjects and involve complex factors that can both negatively and positively affect the outcome. Therefore, to understand these factors is not only essential, but it is critical for the ambitions of integration in a multicultural society.
4. Method

In this chapter I will present how I carried out my research work, the method that I have used, and how the results have been analyzed.

4.1 Background

I carried out this work from the spring to the summer of 2013 at the city library and its user groups. I have a total of seven informants; three from the city library and four from a few immigrant organizations in the city. The informants are responsible for multilingual facilities at the city library and user informants are members of immigrant organizations that have a direct interest or responsibility to connect their members with the city’s multicultural facilities. The interviews with librarians were carried out at the city library premises. Interviews with user informants were carried out at their workplaces.

When I contacted the city library and presented my project and its goals, I found the institution immediately interested in my work and very helpful in referring me to the relevant librarians for further contact. I sent mails to them and received positive replies. Given that I needed a broad insight into the programs and issues of multilingual facilities at the city library I decided to interview as many librarians at the city library as possible.

I also came to know about various immigrant user organizations from the city library. I contacted a number of them, to which only a few replied, who had an interest in the city library’s multicultural activities-and indicated their willingness to participate in my work. I chose four such organizations for this work.

4.2 Ethical issues in research

It is important to give information and purpose of the project to the participants. The anonymity and privacy of the participants and library should be respected. I received permission from the head of the library department to interview the librarians, and had the required releases from both the library and user informants to record interviews. I also promised them to use the information solely for the purpose of my research.

As an interviewer, especially in a qualitative interview, it is essential to ensure that harmful consequences to participants are minimized. At the same time the benefits should far outnumber harm, if any. This process must be managed in an open and cordial manner such that the participants are well aware of the benefits (and harms if any) of the information and material (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.72-74). I also gave the participants my contact details in the event they had any questions and concerns before or after the interviews.
4.3 Method

The method that I will use for this study will be the qualitative semi-structured research interview. A research interview is defined as a dialogue between two people initiated by the researcher in a specific order to collect relevant research material (Wildemuth, 2009, p.232). A qualitative research interview is appropriate for my project because I will interview librarians who are working with multicultural and multilingual aspects in the library. This will help to understand the issues and solutions that they have and will allow me to gain knowledge about their activities without the quantification of data. A qualitative interview also makes it easy to discuss the subject matter in depth and the interviewee can openly and freely share his/her views on different aspects of their work. Qualitative method is neither restrictive nor totally unrestricted, therefore it becomes easier to focus on the actual issue and discuss various factors that affect the main issue. I have formulated my questions in a semi-structured method, which yield both brief and simple queries. This can lead to new subject insights and may produce contradictions. A personal interaction between the interviewer and interviewee in a qualitative interview also helps to create a harmonious atmosphere during the interview and can also help the person being interviewed to realize his/her own situation from various aspects while gaining new ideas for improvements (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.28). A semi-structured interview means that there are a number of predefined topics and related issues, but the order may change, and other questions can be added or removed depending on how the interview develops (Wildemuth, 2009, p.233). This method would be particularly well suited for this study because it will deliver the flexibility of asking relevant questions during interviews as well as the possibility of updating questions that could be presented to later interviewees. This study involves a limited number of the city library’s multi-language service providers and users’ interviews, and therefore, the semi-structured qualitative research method will provide a very useful tool in both data collection and useful conclusions.

I chose the city library because they have a comprehensive multicultural policy and a group actively managing these activities. As mentioned before, the city has a growing multilingual population of immigrants and students from several countries, and contains a host of multinational companies employing people from outside Sweden who are either foreign nationals, ex-patriots, or in some other way have immigrated to Sweden. Therefore, the city library is an ideal place for me to carry out this research work; admittedly, it was also relatively convenient from a proximity perspective for me to access my informants for this work.

To obtain the information that I required for this study I contacted the following three librarians:

1. Library informant 1 (L1): manages the library’s adult multilingual section
2. Library’s informant 2 (L2): manages the library’s children multilingual section
3. Library informant 3 (L3): responsible for purchasing multilingual literature and also work with other smaller libraries around the city

I was unsure if all or some of them would agree to participate, but after I sent correspondence to them about my project and sought their permission for the interviews I was pleased that all three librarians agreed to participate in this study and I forged ahead. These interviews should give me the intended thorough information. These librarians were also part of the city library’s profile group.

L1 works full time, leads the multi-language group, works closely with other libraries for their multi-language literature needs, as well as with the city library’s suppliers. L2 is also a part of the multi-language group but responsible for the children’s section, providing valuable information from a children’s (or even a parent’s) perspective. L3 is responsible for acquiring literature in various languages in the city library, while having additional responsibility for a smaller library in the city.

Next I sought to identify the immigration groups in the city who supposedly use the city library’s multilingual facilities. I wanted to interview people who are directly involved in helping members of their respective organizations generally integrate with Swedish society and who also connect their members with the city library’s multicultural facilities. The city has a number of ethnic groups whom I could have chosen for this work; however, I have selected the following four immigrant organizations:

1. Sudanese organization (U1)
2. Kurdish student and academician organization (U2)
3. Kurdish women organization (U3)
4. Somalian organization (U4)

These four user informant groups represent some of the largest immigrant organizations in the city and work with their members and the city library for integration, information and other cultural goals. Interestingly, several immigrant organizations that were contacted told me they were not actively involved with the city library and did not wish to participate in this study.

I contacted my Arabic speaking Sudanese informant (U1) of the Sudanese organization, sent an email about my project, and asked if I could visit him for an interview, to which he happily accepted. I met him in a quiet room and briefly explained my project. I was very happy that my “user informant 1 (U1)” was very knowledgeable about the questions of integration and challenges they face. I later found out that he is from Sudan and is working as the chairman of the organization and has lived in Sweden for more than 20 years. He has been an active member of the Sudanese organization for many years, has a PhD in political science, and is working at the adult education center. He is actively involved with the city library in organizing multicultural activities for Arabic organization.

Next I contacted the informant representing the city’s Kurdish student and academician’s organization. It was relatively more difficult to find the right person who not only represents the Kurdish organization but is also actively involved connecting its members with the city
library. Luckily I contacted my “user informant 2 (U2)” who is actively involved with the library and he agreed to participate in this study. U2 was raised in Sweden and has an excellent command of both the Kurdish and Swedish languages.

My “user informant 3 (U3)” is from Kurdish women’s organization and she is actively involved in cultural activities and radio programs in Kurdish in the city. I went to meet her at the radio station and interviewed her in a quiet room. She had arrived in Sweden within the last five years.

My “user informant 4 (U4)” is from the Somalian organization in the city. He has lived in Sweden for over ten years and has been an active part of the Somalian organization.

During my interviews I used qualitative research techniques but ensured that the interview was focused around the topic of my interest and that I received the required information. Nevertheless, I explored the answers which needed more discussion for getting meaningful and useful information.

4.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in a research project is fundamental in producing knowledge that is accurate. According to Bryman (2004, p.272-276) criteria of reliability and validity as applied in quantitative research cannot be directly used in qualitative research because measurements and social settings used in qualitative research cannot be frozen and thus replicable. However, an alternate way for evaluating qualitative research was developed by Guba and Lincoln (1994). This method involves assessing a qualitative study through ‘trustworthiness and authenticity’ and proposes that there can be more than one or even several truths in social world. Trustworthiness is made up of credibility (parallels internal validity), transferability (parallels to external validity), dependability (parallels to reliability) and confirmability (parallels to objectivity). Authenticity is made up of fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity and involves a wider political impact of research. Hammerskey (1992, p. 69) proposed that even though we can never be absolutely sure about the truth of a social research but if it represents accurately those features of the phenomenon that it is intended to describe, explain or theorize then its validity should be accepted.

Chapter two gives theoretical background upon which this work is based. Further in chapter five, I have specified citation from my informants and analyzed my results based on these observations. These observations are then coupled to the theoretical aspects without any prejudices or bias. I believe that a reader will be able to follow my observations and reasoning and will see coherent, consistent and logical explanations. This should give readers a possibility to judge that my explanations are realistic and accurate.
I have attached my questionnaire in the appendixes A and B.

4.5 Interviews

Based on the above set of themes, I carried out interviews of both librarians and its users. The interviews with librarians were conducted in a quiet room at the city library. Questions for both librarians and representative user groups were based on steering document of the city library, earlier research conducted by other researchers as well as on the goals of this study.

I informed the interviewees about the goals of my research project. I also informed them that I will record their interviews so as to focus completely on the discussion. Interview with informants took around 90 minutes each and since information as well as identity of my informants collected during these interviews is to be kept confidential; therefore, I have removed their names and positions as well as the name of the library or its location. I recorded all my interviews but they are not transcribed word to word. I listened to these recordings many times carefully and coded the information in the form of categories so that I could make themes related to my theory and questions. In addition, recordings of the interviews will be used only for this study and kept confidential.

I interviewed user informant one (U1) in a quiet room at the department where he works. The interview was originally planned to be about 1 hour but since the discussion was extremely interesting it went on for an additional 40 minutes.

Interview with user informant two (U2) and three (U3) were carried out at their work places. They also took slightly more time than I planned. My user informant three was relatively new in Sweden and had difficulty in explaining her thoughts in Swedish and therefore, the interview took more time than planned and there were repetitions several times. She was nevertheless, very knowledgeable and supportive and has been a writer and radio presenter for several years.

I could only meet my user informant four (U4) at a multicultural event and the interview could not be conducted in a quiet room and therefore, information that I got was both limited and brief. Nevertheless, he answered all of my questions related to this work and I got information that is helpful to draw useful conclusions. Therefore, I have used information from this interview as well in this project.

4.6 Summary

All interviews were conducted in order to obtain as deep information as possible for my research goals. I followed the principle of semi structured interviewing method and it gave me a lot of flexibility in asking questions and in digging deep within my questions. The city
library was an ideal choice considering that there are several ethnic groups who live in the city and use library’s multilingual facilities. Since I had already worked at the city library earlier last year it was relatively easy for me to recruit my library informants for this project. These informants were directly involved in multicultural activities and therefore, I got a broad perspective of information from them. It was relatively more difficult to recruit user informants but I got significant help from the city library about organizations that use their facilities in the city. I chose four people from four different immigrant organizations that happily agreed to participate in this work.

I took special care and made sure that the questions asked, data collected and explanations given during this research work are accurate. I have also made sure that methods used for collecting data are consistent and free from deviations in line with the standard reliability and validity guidelines put forward by Denscombe (2010, p.144).

These discussions gave me a lot of data and information and I divided my results into 4 main topics that are being presented and discussed in the following chapter.

5. Results and Analysis

In this chapter a detailed analysis of the results obtained during this work has been presented under various themes. These results have been analyzed according to the theoretical base on which this study is based.

As mentioned before this study is based on seven qualitative semi-structured interviews of both librarians involved in multilingual activities at the city library and representatives of immigrant organizations who are users of these facilities. The results of these interviews are presented below under four main themes through “inductive method of data analysis”.

Inductive data analysis approach is a general approach for qualitative data analysis which is guided by objectives of the research project. There are several other approaches to data analysis in a qualitative research notably, grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), phenomenology (van Manen, 1990), discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1994 in Bryman & Burgess) and narrative analysis (Leiblich, 1998). Inductive data analysis enables a researcher to make concepts, themes or a model from raw data. According to Thomas (2006) the researcher creates a relevant label from a data segment which describes the meaning of the text segment and subsequently adds more text segments which are relevant. This approach is suitable for analyzing data in this project because it provides a simple, convenient, reliable and valid approach to data analysis.

I have made the following four themes out of my collected data:
1. Library’s Multilingual Facilities
2. Procuring Multilingual Literature
3. Immigrants and their interest in libraries
4. Promotion of Multilingual Facilities in Library

This way of presenting results is helpful because it allows for summarizing the information gathered under themes of questions which makes it both easy to understand and present.

The first part deals with the city library’s multilingual facilities and details both library’s and user’s perspectives on how beneficial these facilities actually are. The second part describes how the city’s library source multilingual literature. This is a very important part since it implies establishing a direct connection between what literature the city library has to serve its diverse multilingual users and how users perceives the usefulness of this literature. The third part involves in understanding interests that immigrant organizations have in the city library and level of support they need from the city library in order to make sure that their members benefit from them. The last part deals with the promotion of library’s multilingual facilities and analyzes if information about these facilities reach to the right people. In all four themes, I have tried to couple the information provided to the overall question of integration among various ethnic groups with the mainstream life in the city.

Each of these four parts is analyzed by Roth’s theory of integration so that I can draw important conclusions from this study. Since these four themes describes library’s multilingual facilities and ambitions as well as users expectations and interest in these facilities, it enables me to evaluate how these results relates to positive/negative distance and positive/negative vicinity according to Roth’s model of integration.

5.1 Library’s Multilingual Facilities

According to my first library informant (L1) the city library has literature in many languages outside the three largest languages namely Swedish, English and Spanish. Other larger languages in the city library are Arabic, Kurdish, Persian and French. The city Library has over fifty languages in its adults section and over sixty different languages in children’s section. The city library is well stocked since it is located in one of the largest cities in Sweden. The city library spent more than 130,000 sek during 2012 for buying multilingual media. The budget is set to increase even more after 2015 according to its operational plan since multilingual demand in the city is increasing.

On the question of multilingualism my first library informant (L1) had the view that it is an advantage for both the individual and the society, provided that it is possible to amalgamate and further develop both Swedish and other native languages (Atlestam, 2012, p.70). This statement directly relates to Roth’s theory of positive vicinity since in a society where people can develop their own linguistic and cultural identity leads to growth, peace and development.
The city library also has literature in other languages like Thai, Chinese, Somalian, Dari, Turkish etc. However, to be able to have literature in all languages is challenging and the city library always looks for resources when demand comes. Nevertheless, the city library never refuses to buy literature if it is sought after by its users. The city library is a municipality library and all libraries in the municipality come to it for borrowing and sharing multilingual literature. This also gives the city library statistics about literature demands for various languages. It also uses the international library of Stockholm for borrowing books that it doesn’t have. In the first place the city library tries to buy the books but if the books are old, not available or difficult to find, then it borrows them from the international library Stockholm since they have a larger collection of literature in various languages. According to my library informant (L1):

*It is a big challenge to select literature and it’s important that library has continuous contact with other libraries, library visitors, language teachers, external contacts and suppliers etc. to continuously understand literature demands.*

The city library has a goal to be a cultural center for everyone. Therefore, considering that more than 20% inhabitants in the city are either born outside Sweden or have parents who were born outside Sweden and have diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, the city library needs to fulfill their demands and needs. However, according to my user informant U2, it was obvious that the city library has not fully accomplished this ambition yet and there seems to be issues with both resources available at the library as well as knowledge about citizen’s backgrounds and their unique needs. According to Atlestam (2012, p.71), “the important task for librarians and decision makers is that the library is part of a new reality, it is no longer a matter for some enthusiasts to engage in a kind of immigrant activity but that library develops as a dynamic cosmopolitan meeting place in a multicultural society in time and space”. The above information couple directly with observations put forward by Roth. According to Roth, stakeholders like libraries that are responsible for bridging the gap between various ethnic groups, have to be knowledgeable about user’s cultural and linguistic needs, in order to help in their overall integration.

According to the library respondent L1 multi-lingual and multi-cultural activities and facilities at the city library are designed for cultural identity,

*Library helps in integration and bringing people together. Library is a democratic institution and its services are free for everyone to benefit from. We want to make sure that people feel comfortable in library and use its services and do not feel excluded or unwelcomed. People learn from literature of other cultures and they appreciate the situations that a story describes in comparison to their cultures and languages and their situation.*

My Arabic informants U1 praised the city library that it has Arabic speaking employees which greatly help Arabic speaking people but suggested that such services can be improved even further.
The city Library’s policies are good and they want to make library a place of cultural integration, democracy and knowledge. I just hope more people visit the city library and demand books they need. I am sure the city library will buy literature for them.

He was nevertheless, critical that the city library does not have useful and enough literature in Arabic which would be useful especially for children. In fact, sometimes he brought books to give to the city library. According to him, earlier there were not enough Arabic speaking people in the city and, therefore, literature at the city library was also limited. However, with an increasing Arabic population there seems to be more budgets available and hopefully the city library will have more Arabic literature especially for children.

My user informant U1, emphasized that Arabic literature must be available from each of the Arabic speaking countries and not stocked at the same place like they have at the library. It is not sufficient to have Arabic literature which is either from one country or a few major ones, since there are cultural and historic differences that interests people from different backgrounds even within Arabic speaking population.

From the above information it is clear that there exist differences regarding usefulness of multilingual facilities between the library and users, even though there are good intentions from both sides. It is interesting to note the observations of the user informant U1 and it could help the city library to source literature that helps various Arabic users from different countries. As Roth postulated, to bring everyone on board one needs to minutely balance the needs of various ethnic groups so that negative distance and negative vicinity do not take place. This can only happen if stakeholders have a deep knowledge of these groups for their needs including their historical and cultural backgrounds.

Both of my Kurdish informants U2 and U3 worry about their children losing their interest in their mother tongue since the city library does not have enough Kurdish literature and media. These children could lose their native language and therefore, also their identity in the Swedish society. My Kurdish informant U2 was more critical. According to him:

Firstly the city library does not have enough or interesting Kurdish literature and when I gave suggestions about Kurdish literature, the city library promised to check but it never informed me and probably never checked.

He wondered if these promises were a mere formality or if there was a genuine interest in getting those books.

My Kurdish informant U3 said that the city library not only has fewer books but they are also old and the library needs to have more books and a greater variety of literature to be able to appeal to Kurdish users. Interestingly, she mentioned:

Sometime Kurdish books in the library are older than 20 years and therefore our vocabulary is also old. I sometime come across new words in Kurdish but we do not know about them since we and our children do not read new Kurdish literature.
In addition, since the city library does not have newer interesting books she has to search for them on the internet and it is both time consuming and expensive for her. Earlier my Somalian informant (U4) said that the city library has some books from Somalia but when they ask for books in Somalian language then the city library has been helpful in buying them.

My other Kurdish user informant U2 was much more critical of the issue. According to him children need a variety of books, music, videos and games so they keep their interest alive for their mother tongue but unfortunately the city library does not have this.

To me it seems that even though the city library has provided literature in several languages including Kurdish it is either outdated or too limited and there is a need in understanding the actual demand continuously and expanding the available literature. It is possible that finding Kurdish literature is much more difficult compared to other mainstream languages considering that Kurdistan is not a recognized country and has long been affected by wars and oppressions. User informant U2 confirmed this too but suggested that:

*It could be difficult for the city library to get books in Kurdish; however, library can cooperate with Kurdish immigrants here in Sweden, who has the knowledge and contacts to make it easier for them.*

This was interesting insight as it involves cooperation and understanding of needs and interests between the city library and its users. There seems to be a need that the city library actively connects with its Kurdish users so that library can use its limited budgets in buying useful and needed literature.

As I learned during these interviews that Kurdish immigrants are one of the largest groups in the city and it is obvious from the information I gained that they do not feel, their culture and linguistic needs have been properly addressed by the city library. This could lead to isolation, frustration and deprive Kurdish immigrants and especially their children, not being able to learn their native language and culture. This can potentially develop negative vicinity and negative distance between Kurdish immigrants and other mainstream ethnic groups in the city. My Kurdish informant U2 criticized the gap between the city library’s ambitions and its activities. According to him:

*Having a few old books does not help them and especially their children to keep their motivation to go to the city library and read books in their mother tongue. This can lead to assimilation and people losing their identity.*

My library informant L2 backed these arguments and said:

*Users seem to be happy in most cases although some people think that literature in their language is perhaps not sufficient. There is certainly a bigger wish list than a complaint list.*

Most user respondents pointed out that their children learn Swedish language and culture anyway since they live in Sweden and Swedish culture is dominant culture for them. The main challenge for them is to make children aware of their native culture. It is easy to lose your culture when you live in Sweden. Learning about their own background and culture will
help them in keeping their identity and feel proud of what and who they are. Libraries do not have resources and knowledge about the needs of these smaller groups and therefore, literature and other multi-cultural facilities for these groups are either non-existent or bare minimum. Confirmation of this came from two of my user informants.

According to Roth, cultural dominance and suppression of minority rights by majority group can lead to segregation and isolation. This is termed as negative vicinity and negative distance and can eventually lead to ethnic cleansing or suppression in extreme cases. This leads to problems for not only minority groups but for the majority groups as well, leading to an overall disintegration of a society. As discussed above, it is clear that the city library is making efforts aimed towards integration by providing literature and cultural activities to immigrants in their own languages. I think my user informants were positive about the city library’s efforts but critical of lack of good and sufficient literature and from Roth’s integration theory point of view it can be classified as partially negative distance since these groups do not fully enjoy cultural and linguistic benefits like other ethnic groups.

Overall, I think it is difficult to say if there are negative distances in the society or not but it seems that some ethnic user groups gave mixed information. It can certainly be improved by better understanding the needs of all ethnic groups and by providing additional resources in the city library that focus on identification of these groups and their needs. This could minimize any negative distance that might exist or developing in the city.

5.2 Procuring Multilingual Literature

Procuring literature in various languages is a challenge for the city library since it already serves more than sixty foreign languages. This prompted me to think why it is that the city library does not have enough and interesting literature in various languages it serves for its multilingual users within the languages it serves, as pointed out by all of my user informants. According to my first library informant L1, until 2012 city library used its 2006 survey for purchasing literature in different languages. However, in 2012, the city library together with all other libraries in the municipality carried out a new survey about literature needs, statistics for visitors and for literature borrowed, and through contacts with schools, pre-schools, BVCs (childcare centers), language teachers etc. in order to plan for literature purchases.

In order to improve this routine recently, the city library made ground breaking changes and formed a cross group for various activities including purchasing of literature in various languages outside the mainstream languages, according to my library informant L3 who is himself a part of this group. This is interesting information and relatively a new routine. As my library informant L1 too puts it:

The main purpose of these groups is to deal with operational issues and development issues e.g., for multilingual activities. The groups meet twice per term, prepare plans and other supporting data and based on their information; library’s management committee takes...
decisions. There are exceptions and some of the decisions are made by the groups too. Library’s purchase group has 5 members in which 2 are responsible for adult’s media and 3 are responsible for children’s media. The purchase group meets once every month.

According to my library informant L2, statistics of literature borrowed and other information about the population gives them vital information about literature and languages that the city library should have. The city library get statistics about where people were born but it does not have statistics of the language they speak. Nevertheless, this information is quite useful to estimate the literature needs. The city library also works with organizations and language teachers to understand the literature needs. Mother tongue classes give the library useful information about the number of children with a particular language group and their age groups. The city library staff tries its best to understand by speaking to people who visit library as well. What literature is bought solely depends upon demand, availability of good literature from suppliers etc. The city library also discusses with its reference group that represent one language or a reference group that has participants of many languages.

It eventually wants to promote language and book readings like the International library of Stockholm is currently investing in staff trainings on buying literature according to their steering document. Finding books in certain languages e.g., Chechnya, Armenian, Uzbek is difficult or sometimes even impossible. For those languages the city library borrows books from International Library Stockholm who has a larger selection of multi-lingual literature. As the informant L2 puts it:

We buy and expand literature for any language as soon as we find a demand for them. We have no obstacles to buy literature in terms of budgets but we might find them difficult to find for example Romanian, Ethiopian, Kenyan were difficult to find recently. We also sometime buy books without any demand to make sure that if someone with interest in that language shows up at the library may find it easier and stimulating to ask for more literature in that language.

According to my library informants (L1 and L2), recently the city library has started to purchase multilingual literature centrally and individual libraries do not have budgets for this activity anymore. However, each library contributes to this central purchase group about their needs based on their users’ profiles. This has helped all libraries by sharing literature and knowledge about what literature is needed in the state. This also means that individual libraries do not have to divide their budgets for buying books in other languages they might need since they can be ordered from the central purchase group anytime and they can focus on their normal yearly operational plans. The only issue with this approach is that this central purchase group depends on the information from each of the libraries and it is impossible for the five members of this group to find out personally about the needs of each of the library. Therefore, communication between libraries and this central group is critical.

According to my library informant L1:

Previously every library was buying literature for their needs for what they thought were needed and later we were buying books centrally. We have just started to use a new method in
which each library collects statistics of literature demand and then this statistics is centrally
collected and we create profiles.

Based on this profile this group asked for literature from its supplier “BTJ” for both children
and adults. The group decide on what criteria e.g., type, language, age group etc. they need
literature for and the responsibility of finding and supplying suitable literature then is passed
on to BTJ. This information shows that the city library is seriously involved in developing
innovative and effective ways to source multilingual literature for its users based on their
needs. This is a new routine and if successful can lead to excellent literature availability for
different ethnic groups in the city library. This will benefit immigrant groups in a positive
way and can easily reduce or bridge the distance and lead to a positive vicinity between ethnic
groups as pointed out in Roth’s theory.

Outsourcing to BTJ helps in making sure that books are delivered faster and this saves both
time and resources of the libraries, according to my library respondent L3. It is up to BTJ to
decide what literature in that language will fit these profiles and they deliver books
accordingly. This sounds quite practical but on the other hand my informants were also of the
view that individual selection of books based on actual needs is lost in this process. Librarians
have virtually no control over what specific books will be suitable to purchase for the libraries
or will be delivered to them by BTJ.

Since this is a relatively new routine, informants were not sure about its effectivity.
Previously, libraries were buying books themselves and sometime the budgets were not
sufficient especially in smaller libraries but now that it is coordinated through the central
cross group there is enough budgets and better statistics and everyone should learn more
about multi-language literature needs. My library informant L2 pointed out:

The biggest problem with this, that I see, is that we have not much control over what
literature we get since we do not decide the actual books. In case of books for children, it is
more important that the books are high quality and interesting to read and it is not for
example propaganda. Unlike an adult, who will immediately point to good and bad literature,
children do not do that. This means that we possibly loose our knowledge and insight into
books but we nevertheless, save time, energy and resources.

With the new method I think, there is a possibility that individual libraries do not have
sufficient knowledge about various languages and their literature and they will also lose
control of what specific type of literature might be needed for the city library. For a big
library it is perhaps a great advantage that they buy books themselves and develop strong
relationships with its users and through the new routine they might not be able to do that.

My informant L2 mentioned that since they do not have enough resources to deal with all
types of languages and perhaps BTJ has resources because it is a big organization, BTJ should
be able to supply good literature which fits the profiles that the city library has formed. My
other library informant L1 was more optimistic about this approach and according to her
library’s cross group goes to book exhibitions, courses and book festivals to learn more about
old as well as new literature in various languages. Librarians can also apply support from a
project called “KUB” (kompetensutvecklings projekt för bibliotekspersonal) to be able to travel abroad and attend various book fairs and exhibitions. According to library informant L1:

Library has enough resources for buying media but could use more resources for staff education and to travel abroad for learning. We met during the International Book Fair in Botkyrka this year and the Multilanguage groups discuss various issues and opportunities together. We certainly have issues when it comes to knowledge about various languages that we have and we would like to have within our organization and this is something that library could invest more upon.

To understand various cultures it is important, therefore, that the city library values the contact with its users to learn about their cultures and their needs. The city library also works with immigrant organizations to some extent and they sometimes help in choosing literature as well. Language teachers and contact network certainly has helped in choosing children books in other languages according to my library informant L3. It is interesting to note that my informants were both optimistic about buying books based on profiles but at the same time they also emphasized the need to have a better communication between librarians and actual users for their literature needs. It gave a mixed preference for both centralized and de-centralized approach for sourcing multilingual literature.

On the question of contacting all language groups in the city, my library respondent L1 mentioned that sometimes the city library finds it difficult to answer questions about new and smaller languages like Uzbekistani, Chechniyan etc. and sometime people cannot even read their own native languages too and then it can be difficult for the city librarians to understand their needs. Therefore, it is difficult to say how these groups feel about becoming a useful part of the society or what needs they might have in their own quest for cultural identity. There are several language groups who do not visit the city library according to my second library informant L2 but the city library doesn’t know why and how it can motivate them to visit the library. According to the library informant L2:

Libraries have done some research but perhaps not sufficient enough to understand why these groups do not visit library.

According to Strong (2000) libraries could offer other services like video watching facilities and telephone answering systems in multiple languages. This could lead to a large increase of users in public libraries and has benefitted immigrants in many places, as these services are free to them and help them integrate in their adopted country. Earlier research has shown that identity for every ethnic group, no matter how small it might be, in a society is critical for it to flourish and integrate. It seems that the city library does not have enough resources in finding smaller ethnic groups that might exist in the city and this can bring isolation and eventually negative vicinity for such smaller ethnic groups. According to Taylor (1992, p.25) identity is important for a person or group of people in any society and a lack of identity can lead to mistrust and miscommunication. This results in overall damage, degradation and destruction of a society.
It seems from the above statements that the city library might be involved mainly with some of the larger ethnic groups and in the process might not be so much aware of the existence and needs of smaller and newer ethnic groups. They might feel outlined or outside the mainstream. It is enough for a smaller ethnic group to get discouraged if they find literature in many languages but not in their own and this could lead to retreat from participating in the city library activities and there can be a negative impact on their overall integration in the society as described by Roth. Negative vicinity happens when a majority group knowingly or unknowingly creates conditions to integrate the minority members in their cultural beliefs even though the minority groups are not interested or inclined for such beliefs. In this study some of the respondents (U1, U2, and U3) mentioned that because of overwhelming influence of Swedish culture on their lives and especially on their children’s lives, there is a risk that they forget their own culture and identity. Language is a means of communication but also a part of identity and to learn native language along with mainstream language for immigrants can help make contact with new people both in their native country as well as in their adopted country (Franzen, 2001, p.37).

5.3 Immigrants and their interest in libraries

A new country, a new language and a completely new culture is what new immigrants face when they arrive in a new country. This is obviously challenging, very difficult and stressful for most people. Leaving back their country, home, family and friends just add up to this dilemma. On arrival, it is obvious that these people look for support and help to settle down both culturally and economically in their adopted country. The library is perhaps the only institution, which by definition is democratic and supports everyone for their language and cultural needs. According to Audunson (2005) foundation of a democratic society is in creating a place where people from different ethnic groups, cultures and demographics can meet, communicate and share. In the absence of such places miscommunication and gaps can arise leading to cross-cultural intolerance depriving fundamental values of democracy to its citizens. He further states “via the public libraries, newcomers and excluded can be offered gradual introduction to the local community which the strategy of legitimate peripheral participation recommends. It is probably hard to find an institution that is better suited to serve such a purpose than the public library and this provides one path for rethinking and revitalizing the library’s role as a meeting-place in today’s multicultural society”.

Several immigrant organizations work closely with the state government and local municipalities in helping immigrants. The library is certainly a place where they can find books both for adults and children, read newspapers and other magazines in their native languages. Therefore, these immigrants have a deep interest in multicultural activities available to them at the local libraries. My four user informants gave a wealth of information regarding their expectations from the city library’s multilingual facilities during interviews.

My first user informant U1 is from a Sudanese organization but since they speak Arabian language in Sudan therefore, they represent Arabic language too. Their main objective is to
help people keep contact with Arabic language, home in Sudan and in integration with Swedish culture. Their organization arranges parties, gatherings and sport activities to gather people. They also help people with their education needs and in understanding Swedish culture from a more practical point of view so they do not feel left out after arriving in Sweden. They also invite people from education or health departments to visit their members so they can see how things are actually done in practice or implemented practically and also invite Arabic authors for seminars etc.

According to informant U1:

*Library is a cultural center in my view. Information about library’s activities is sent to us and then we propagate this information to our members. Library also advertises these activities through its own channels too. We do not work very closely with the libraries but we certainly cooperate with them in certain areas. We help them arranging in cultural weeks, language days and bring our children to library for listening stories and drawings. Library has great interest in our culture and language and they are trying to fulfill our needs. The library buys books when we need them especially for children it is very important to be able to read in their mother tongue.*

These comments points towards positive vicinity and positive distance among population in the city as also pointed out by Roth. City library’s efforts are certainly reaching to some of these ethnic groups who feel that their culture and language has been supported by the library and indirectly by Swedish society. He cautioned that all literature in Arabian language, irrespective of which Arabian country it comes from, is bundled together in one section in the city library which is good however, it would be better if it is placed separately for each Arabian country so that everyone finds books from their own culture and country. I think this comment raises a signal of caution because librarians really should understand cultural and geographical differences even from within the same language group.

Arabian children learn Swedish language and culture since they live here; work here and these children go to Swedish school. As the user informant U1 puts it:

*I think the main challenge is how to make children aware of their native culture as it is so easy to lose when you live in Sweden. Learning their language will help them in keeping their identity and feel proud of what and who they are.*

These views were also reflected by my Kurdish informants U2 and U3. According to user informant U2:

*Children must be able to speak Kurdish with Kurdish speaking people otherwise they will not be able to communicate with their grand-parents and people in Kurdistan. This way they will lose their identity.*

According to my Somalian informant U4 their organization has no routine contact with the city library. He thought that city library has certainly interest in their language needs but there are not many books available at the city library in Somalian language. It might be because the
situation in Somalia has been very difficult and Somalia does not have functional libraries or other institutions.

It seems that there are high expectations from my user informants for the city library’s multilingual facilities but there remain issues that need to be addressed in fulfilling these expectations by the library. These findings are in accordance to Roth’s integration theory since there is a fine balance between what could create a positive atmosphere for peace and harmony in a society and what could instead lead to disintegration and frustration. A careful analysis of needs and provision of cultural freedom for immigrants should lead to positive distance and positive vicinity.

5.4 Promotion of Multilingual Facilities in Library

According to my library informant L1:

*Library runs several programs in order to market its multilingual facilities and in 2010-11 it sent fliers in several languages that it has literature in more than 50 languages and displayed this information at libraries throughout the municipality.*

The city library has also contact with child care centers (Barnavårdscentralerna, BVC) and when someone moves into municipality, the city library sends them information about the multilingual facilities available at the city library. Responsible city library staff for languages often have contact with immigrants cooperatives and organizations and they inform them about library services and facilities and what they can use the city library for, including meeting with other people. City library even organizes cultural weeks. Recently it organized an Arabian cultural weekend. It also organized ‘cultural day’ on Saturdays where one immigrant group can organize various cultural activities. This has been done e.g., for Latin American, Greek, Russian, Finnish languages etc. and has been very successful.

This was confirmed by one of the user informants U1 that they do attend cultural weeks at the city library and during these weeks they introduce their literature and other cultural aspects to their members and everyone else who participates. People come in their traditional clothes and try different type of food. The city library also displays Arabic books so everyone attending these activities becomes aware of their availability. According to user informant U1, the city library activities are small but continuing steps towards integration. One activity or one meeting does not bring integration but it can help towards that goal.

*Swedish people are becoming aware about Arabic culture and I am not sure whether it is positive or negative. I hope it is positive though. Library is central to introduce culture to everyone and these step by step activities will certainly help in overall cultural tolerance and integration.*
These efforts of the city library connect various cultures and help people develop their cultural identity and become a useful part of the society. This is in accordance with Roth’s theory of positive vicinity where people understand and respect each other’s cultures.

According to my user informant U4, library is a good place for cultural exchange and in facilitating overall integration. The city library has been helpful to them in organizing cultural and literature seminars and he was confident that the city library will be supportive if they ask for such activities.

My user informant U1 described integration as both ways:

*Everything can be improved further. Library and other actors should publicize activities, read more books to children etc. Both Swedish and Arabian people should know and understand each other’s cultures. This helps in developing respect and understanding of cultures and brings people together. Culture is a broad term and includes language, food, habits etc. and people appreciate it when they know about it.*

My other Kurdish informant U3 said that the city library’s multicultural activities are helpful towards integration but they should do more e.g., arranging public cultural seminar. In comparison International library Stockholm has plans to run international children week and invite writers from other countries to stimulate interest and it awards library prize for best multilingual services. It also actively distributes BVC (barnvårdcentralt) brochures to children and their parents about multilingual facilities available. This should help more people in the society to learn about different cultures, which should help them to understand better and respect each other’s cultural diversity. My Kurdish informant U2 was nevertheless, critical about this, since they have not been given this opportunity in the city library yet. On the other hand my Kurdish informant U3 knew about the city library’s language promotion activities and she even announces them on their radio programs.

My Kurdish informant U2 said though:

*Since the city library does not have enough Kurdish literature, it can have a negative effect on integration as children could lose their interest in native language and therefore lose identity*

He also mentioned that it is the city library’s responsibility to treat everyone with equality. He further mentioned that:

*There should not be assimilation, we should be contributing citizens in Sweden but still keep our cultural and linguistic identity. Likewise, Swedish people should not be assimilated when they move to another country and culture and should be able to keep their unique Swedish identity.*

Some of these findings point towards Roth’s negative distance and negative vicinity since some of my user informants feel that their languages are not sufficiently prioritized by the city library and they are afraid that their children might lose their mother tongue and thereby also identity.
Lack of knowledge about other minority groups and their needs other than just the most major immigrant organizations is also alarming and needs improvements. On recognition of their existence there is a need to motivate them and their children to learn their own language otherwise there is risk that these children may lose interest in their culture and language later in life and lose their identity and perhaps even lose contact with their families too. This can lead to negative vicinity. The city library can very well fulfill this demand, promote its multicultural facilities and thereby become a center for integration for these immigrant groups.

6. Conclusions

This study explores the multi-lingual facilities of the city library. I carried out this study to understand the importance of multilingual literature, its availability, and other related activities of the city library. I have critically analyzed current situation both from the perspective of the city library’s own staff and from that of the users. Larger cities in Sweden have a growing population of people whose mother tongue is other than Swedish and therefore I chose to carry out this study in a medium sized city which has a growing immigrant population as well as a large number of international students. To be able to get an idea of the current status of multilingual facilities I started by studying the “operational plan 2013” of International Library of Stockholm as a reference since they have the largest collection of multilingual literature and they also serve regional libraries throughout Sweden. The steering document emphasizes the importance of providing multilingual facilities and literature to citizens and in creating a truly democratic institution for stimulating learning, tolerance and respect and where everyone is welcomed. Libraries emphasize the knowledge of its staff responsible for multilingual literature and in co-operating with other libraries both nationally and internationally.

The city library has a broad user base that includes a large variety of people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Some of these groups are larger than others and have formed their own cultural organizations in the city to support their members. The city library works with these organizations to bring awareness about its multi-language facilities and by becoming a platform for cultural activities as pointed out in its operational plan.

Research has shown that recognition and identity is not just important for everyone but it is a must for a well-functioning society (Taylor, 1992, p.26). Roth also described that everyone is interdependent on one another in a society. During this study, I found out that the city library has a range of programs and activities that help different ethnic groups with their linguistic and cultural needs. It has ambitions to provide a democratic and helpful platform for everyone. This was confirmed by several of my library informants who are actively engaged
in working closely with various ethnic groups in fulfilling their needs. This directly couples to the theory postulated by Roth for positive distance and positive vicinity since library’s efforts in taking care of these ethnic groups leads to a better understanding, cultural and linguistic respect for everyone in the society.

There are several activities that help the city library to achieve its goal according to its steering document. In recent times, it organized cultural weeks and language days in libraries for some of the major immigrant groups. These activities were mainly successful. The organizations interviewed in this study were positive to such activities but since they recently started participating in these activities they didn’t have strong opinion about their outcome. It is easy to relate this to Franzen’s (p. 84) observation that such activities are catalysts to a social effect within the group that give its members a feeling of belonging and an energy to try to change and improve their current situation. Overall these activities can help create an atmosphere of mutual cultural understanding and tolerance and are in line of creating a positive distance and positive vicinity among various cultural groups, according to Roth’s theory.

Most of the informants in this study were positive that the city library’s activities are helpful in the process of integration in the city population. However, I also found out that immigrant organizations are worried that their children might lose their mother tongue and other cultural values in face of strong cultural influence of Swedish society. I have a feeling that these observations point to frustration and disappointment among some of my user informants and could lead to a certain degree of negative distance and negative vicinity for them within the city’s ethnic population. As described by several authors including Jönsson-Lanevska (2005) libraries introduce immigrants to Swedish language as well as provide them a platform to connect with their own language. Integration goes faster and society progresses when people have the possibility to keep their identity as has been observed in countries like USA and Canada.

By identity, I mean, they have the freedom and resources to keep their culture alive and pass on their cultural values to their offspring and thereby become an integral and contributing community within their adopted society. Of course, there were several factors that came out of this study that could be improved. Notably among them are:

- availability of enough literature and media
- newer and interesting literature especially for children
- library’s contact with not only larger immigrant groups but also with smaller groups
- City library’s knowledge about cultural diversity and various ethnic groups in the city

I also found out that there seems to be a certain degree of disconnection between city library’s goals for multicultural activities and users expectations and needs. Through these improvements the city library can truly help in minimizing negative vicinity and instead help in developing positive vicinity and positive distance among the city’s population, as outlined by Roth.
It also came out from these interviews that there is a need for more training for library staff. In particular I am referring to comment made by one of my library informants that they do not know all the needs of various language groups and why everyone do not visit library in the city and that they need to do more research and get more knowledge about municipality’s population and how to motivate various language groups especially smaller language groups like Uzbek, Armenian, Chechnya etc. to benefit from city library’s facilities. As pointed in Roth’s theory since everyone being a part of overall development in a society, it is critical that even the smallest and most vulnerable groups need to feel that they can flourish and become a useful part of the society. The city library can help these groups by gaining knowledge, engaging and connecting with these groups. It is challenging for the city library to motivate smaller user groups and there are also difficulties in getting literature in some languages because some of these languages do not have written literature or they do not have functional libraries or other institutions particularly in Somalia and Kurdistan and therefore it’s hard for the city library to buy literature. Nevertheless, the city library can invent various ways in engaging these groups e.g., take their suggestions, use their connections and even ask them for activities that help their children as was pointed out by one of my user informant. I see this as a clear negative distance since the city library has no dialogue or knowledge about some of these ethnic groups in the city.

The language profile of city population also changes and this also affects language demand. For example, in recent times demand for Dari language has increased since many refugees from Afghanistan have arrived in the city due to war in Afghanistan. Therefore, an engaging dialogue with various ethnic groups by the city library’s multicultural group is essential and there is a need to buy and update multilingual literature regularly with newer and interesting literature even from these language groups. According to Roth’s theory, when everyone in a society enjoys their unique cultural identity, it helps in positive vicinity and minimizes negative distances or negative vicinity.

During this study I also found out about the city library’s new routine for buying multilingual literature through its supplier BTJ. This process raises quite a few questions too. City library loses its personal contact with users in providing the book that most interests them. City library might get books that do not interest its users but fits into their profile. City library assumes that BTJ has a broad knowledge and competence of multi-lingual literature all around the world but that can be debated and there remain uncertainties. I think only after a few more years of this routine will shed more light on the affectivity and usefulness of profile based purchasing through BTJ.

In my view, it will be perhaps more useful that the city library either individually or collectively has contact with national libraries around the world and through this network of contacts it can get recommendations and buy books. More training and knowledge of the city library staff should also help in developing and maintaining such a contact group. It should be relatively easy especially in this modern age of communication when one can contact virtually anyone globally in any language and time zones. I do not think it will save any costs but it will make the city library more self-sufficient, increase knowledge and competence and will help it create a global network of literature suppliers.
Provision of literature in more than 60 languages and plans to add more by the city library points towards respect and cultural tolerance by the majority group for minority groups in accordance to Roth’s theory. However, lack of literature for children in their mother tongue points potentially towards a risk of identity loss and thereby towards negative vicinity among various ethnic groups. The city library acknowledged that it has lesser knowledge about the city’s changing ethnic background and language needs. This observation along with criticism by my user representatives about the city library’s old and insufficient literature can lead to a negative distance. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the city library has increased its budget for procuring literature in various languages along with arranging language weeks, culture promotional activities can help in creating positive vicinity according to Roth’s model. Positive vicinity is further boosted by the city library’s efforts in purchasing newer multi-language literature through its profile based purchase routine.

I want to end this study by quoting Kymlicka (p.175) who said:

The health and stability of a modern democracy depends not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitude of its citizens e.g., their sense of identity and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic or religious identities, their ability to tolerate and work together with other who are different from themselves.

7. Further Research

In my view, it would be interesting to explore further if profile based multilingual literature purchase by the city library meet the needs of actual users. This is a new routine adopted by the city library and it assumes that their supplier has the knowledge and resources to find useful literature fitting their profile demands in various languages around the world especially for children books and for smaller languages. It will also be interesting to extend this research work to find out which ethnic groups in the city do not use library’s multi-cultural facilities and why. Is it because they do not find literature in their native languages, whether they are unaware of the facilities or if there are other reasons?
Summary

This study has been carried out to explore the multi-language facilities of the city library. A good reference point came from Stockholm International library’s Operation Plan (2013) and from Steering Plan of the city library (2012-13) which details the goals and ambitions for multi-language facilities. These documents tabulate activities and goals for cross groups, assignments for multi-language group, their responsibilities and rolls, communications and action plans. It lays a lot of emphasis on the cross groups to make sure that they have customer focus and they serve all of the city’s citizens for their multi-language needs.

I carried this research by studying steering plan for multi-languages in the city library and through interviews with library informants and some of their major user organizations. In total, I carried out seven qualitative semi-structured interviews. This study therefore, involves a carefully designed interview plan for the city library representatives who are involved in multi-language facilities as well as major immigrant organizations that have interest in the city library’s multi-cultural facilities. I found out that the city library has recently changed how it buys multi-language literature and started to create profiles of its multi-lingual users and their needs. These profiles are then passed on to their main supplier who in turn analyze these profiles and supply suitable literature. I think this routine is useful for the city library because it gets its books both cost-effectively as well as in time. However, it is also observed during this study that there is little or no control of the city library on what actual books it gets. This is especially important in the case of children literature because it needs to be much more thoroughly reviewed otherwise there is a risk that children might lose their interest and never find it motivating to learn their native languages.

It was also clear from this study that the city library could use more resources to meet its multi-language ambitions. The city library has used so far its own contact networks, language teachers, its users and to some extent a few major immigrant organizations to learn about the language and literature needs. However, there seems to be still a lack of knowledge within the city library’s resources to learn about all of the immigrant population that lives in the city and their linguistic and other cultural needs.

I analyzed these results with the help of Roth’s model which describes that people from various ethnic groups can develop positive or negative distance and positive or negative vicinity which can have a strong effect on how these groups co-exist in a peaceful and progressive manner or fall apart in a violent and disintegrating way. City library’s multi-cultural work and their efforts to provide multi-language literature to various ethnic groups in their native languages is certainly helpful in developing a positive distance and vicinity among city’s population and these activities will lead to an even better understanding and mutual respect.

Overall, I think there is a growing interest within the city library staff to serve all of its users especially those who have their mother tongue other than Swedish so that these groups feel welcomed in the city library and they find useful and interesting literature in their native
languages. City library staff is pro-active, helpful and understands the importance of providing good multi-lingual facilities. However, there are also a number of areas where the city library can improve and provide even better multi-cultural facilities to the entire city’s population especially to smaller ethnic groups and children.
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**Unpublished sources:**

Interviews with three librarians between April and May 2013

Interview with four immigrant organizations in April and May 2013

Recordings are available with writer.
Appendix A

Frågor till Bibliotekrier

1. Förklara mitt projekt och projektets mål med intervjuerna
2. Försöka sätta mig in i bibliotekarier jobb och ansvar.
3. Diskutera bibliotekets styrdokument 2012 och resultat samt bibliotekets flerspråkiga aktiviteter.

- Vem är ansvarig för mångspråk litteratur?
- Hur gör man kartläggningen tillvägga av de mångspråka grupperna?
- Hur jobbar ni med inköpsplanen av olika språk och vad menas med profilköp?
- Vem ansvarar för komunikationsplanen för olika grupper?
- Hur marknadsför ni ert bibliotek?
- Vad är fördelarna med att göra specifik planering för de mångspråka grupperna tycker du?
- Vad finns det för nackdelar med detta?

4. Vilka är de huvudsakliga språkgrupper än fem erkända minoritetsspråken i Sverige?
5. Vilka är de största användarna av dessa sektioner faciliteter?
6. Hur många språk har biblioteket tillgång till?
7. Om du skulle vilja expandera mångspråkig litteratur, vilket språk skulle du lägga mest fokus på?
8. Har biblioteket resurser och kompetens för tillfredställa behoven hos de flerspråkiga grupperna t.ex. att förstå språk, kultur, intresse och behov?
9. Har ditt bibliotek litteratur på ett/flera språk som inget annat bibliotek har? Om ja, hur visar biblioteket upp detta och främjar denna typ av litteratur och språk?
10. Har biblioteket tillräckligt med litteratur för att hjälpa de berörda användarna? Och om svaret är ja, vilka förbättringar skulle man kunna göra?
11. Hur bestämmer ni att vilken typ av litteratur som ska köpas in? Hur engagerar man läsare att vilja vara med och föreslå nya böcker?
12. Delar ni de mångspråkiga litteraturen med andra bibliotek?
13. Tror du budgeten med era resurser räcker för att erbjuda alla tjänster som ni har på biblioteket?
14. Hur når man ut till läsarna om dem flerspråkiga faciliteter som biblioteket har?
15. Finns det någon särskild språkgrupp som du tycker är svårt att nå ut till?
16. Arrangerar biblioteksverksamheten aktiviteter som kan ge medvetenhet om minoritetsspråklitteratur och kultur för alla (mångspråkiga användare)?
17. Erbjuder ni svenska litteratur för dessa språkgrupper? Om fallet är så, vilken inverkan tror du det har att föra människor och kulturer närmare?
18. Tror du dessa aktiviteter har bidragit till att minska klyftan för missförstånd mellan de olika språkgrupperna? vad kan förbättras?
19. Tycker du att biblioteket jobbar med integrationfrågor?
Appendix B

Frågor till Användarna

- Förklara målet med detta projekt.
- Förstå personen som intervjuas roll i organisationen som han / hon företräder.

1. I allmänhet, är du och din organisation nöjd med de tjänsterna som förutsatts för dig på biblioteket?

2. Har biblioteket resurserna och kompetensen för att er
   - språkförståelse,
   - kultur,
   - intressen och
   - behov?

3. Har biblioteket användbar och tillräcklig med litteratur på ert språk?

4. Tror du att de resurserna som finns på biblioteket räcker för de mångspråkiga tjänsterna?

5. Hur informerar ni personer i er organisation om de flerspråkiga resurserna som finns på biblioteket?

6. Tror ni dessa aktiviteter har bidragit till att minska klyftan mellan de olika språkgrupper som finns?

7. Vad kan förbättras ytterligare?

8. Finns det möjlighet att läsa svensk litteratur på ert språk?

9. Vilken effekt tror du att detta har för att sammanföra olika människor och olika kulturer närmare?

10. Har bibliotekets verksamhet ordnat aktiviteter som kan ge medvetenhet om den mångspråkiga litteraturen och kulturens faciliteter för alla?