The 2007 Structural Reform and the Public Libraries in Denmark

In 2007, a major structural reform was carried out in Denmark, reducing 271 municipalities to 98. This processes had a number of effects, both direct and indirect on collections, lending, leadership, and service development of the Danish public libraries. It also led to closure of many branch libraries. Nevertheless, the reform in general was positively evaluated by the major players within the Danish public library system.

Keywords: Public libraries; Denmark; library development

Die Strukturreform 2007 und die Volksbibliotheken in Dänemark


Schlüsselwörter: Dänemark; Bibliotheksentwicklung; Strukturreform

La réforme de structure de 2007 et les bibliothèques publiques au Danemark

En 2007 une grande réforme de structure fut conduite au Danemark et qui a réduit le nombre des communes de 271 à 98. Ce procès de réforme eut une grande importance directe et indirecte sur le futur progrès des bibliothèques publiques danoises et leurs fonds, prêts, services et structures d’organisation. Les bibliothèques danoises sont caractérisées par une longue tradition de législation nationale. Bien que la réforme de 2007 entraînât aussi la clôture de beaucoup de filiales de bibliothèques, les membres les plus importants du système de bibliothèques danoises jugeaient la réforme de façon positive.

Mots-clés: Danemark; développement des bibliothèques; réforme de structure

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reduced to one. Totally, the number of public library directors was reduced to less than the half of the pre-reform number. Furthermore, the mergers also were likely to create problems concerning difficulties with different organisational cultures in the involved libraries. Indeed, a growing market for organisational consultants arose. Also, the 16 county libraries were affected. Actually, in 2009, nine of them lost their present service and support responsibilities – and income – towards municipal public libraries within the counties. Also that development demanded adaptability and flexibility.

However, this article will not only focus on the immediate effects of the structural reform. Also, its effect on important general library issues will be addressed. Furthermore, the roles and reactions of key players within the Danish public library system are focused on. Among the key players we find The Danish Agency for Libraries and Media (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier), the Danish Library Association (Danmarks Bibliotekforening), the Union of Danish Librarians (Biblioteksförbundet) and the Association of Danish Public Library Managers (Bibliotekschefforeningen).

The topics of this article can be summarised into the following research questions:
- What characterised the Danish structural reform of 2007 and how were the public libraries affected immediately?
- Who were the key players within the library system and which role did they play during the reform implementation process?
- To what extent and how were key library performance measures (collections, loans, economy, bibliotek.dk, number of main units and branch libraries, number of users and visits) influenced by the reform?
- To what extent and how were the strategies behind the introduction of new and innovative services (citizen services, reading improvement and campaign, ethnic integration, net services and web 2.0 applications, information literacy, third place efforts, marketing and branding) influenced by the reform?
- How did the reform influence the ongoing development of leadership and innovation capacities within the Danish public libraries?
- How was user behaviour and preferences affected by the reform?

The article will be based on both primary and secondary sources and evidence. For example, the questions concerning leadership will be dealt with based on primary sources whereas the research question concerning new and innovative service to a higher degree – but not totally – will be based on secondary evidence such as published reports, professional journals, internet sites, and the like.

The article will provide some background information tracing the development up to and after the structural reform.

2 The immediate effects of the Danish structural reform of 2007

The structural reform of 2007 (Kommunalreformen) was the second reform within fifty years, transforming the local political geography of municipalities and counties in Denmark. The preceding 1970 reform meant the reduction of municipalities from 1098 to 275. Before then Denmark had 821 municipalities with less than 3000 inhabitants. Afterwards, only two of this small size was left. The trend towards fewer and larger municipalities was continued in 2007, when the number was further reduced to 98 among those only seven with less than 15000 inhabitants. Another characteristic trait of the 2007 reform was the substitution of 14 counties with five new regions, responsible for hospitals and the health sector. Besides, the reduction of municipalities and the closure of the counties, the aims were to concentrate the user oriented services: care of senior citizens, childcare, primary schools and social welfare. Apart from the numerous mergers of libraries within the restructured municipalities, the cultural sector and the local libraries were not directly affected by the reform. Maybe, the significant reduction of collections in the merged libraries might be considered also as a more direct consequence (this topic will be dealt with more detailed in the section below on statistics on the effects).

However, both before and after the reform, public libraries continued to be deeply rooted in a local context. This circumstance can be counted as an example of an area with rather unchanged conditions. Also, a number of indirect effects can be identified. One significant group originates from new services and tasks added to the municipal portfolio. For example, the introduction of citizen’s service offices providing one access to all public services, which was one result of the structural reform, has certainly affected public libraries in many places. Other important effects derive from the provision of existing services by public libraries. Larger units, thus, facilitated the provision of many new, especially virtual, services. Finally, the reform was heavily utilized by the principal library system players such as the Agency for Libraries and Media, the Danish Library Association and others as an opportunity to promote own agendas and key issues. Thus we can enumerate a number of indirect influences which will be further analysed below.

3 The roles of the key players

Compared to the public libraries in Germany, the library system in Denmark has several unique features. One significant difference is that although public libraries in Denmark are financed by the municipalities – like in Germany – there also exist some important national responsibilities and functions. One is a common national library law, covering both public and research libraries. The present law is from 2000. However, since 1920 we have had a number of national library laws regulating the overall purposes and different functions of libraries in Denmark. The 2000 law meant a significant step towards a library concept, based on the idea of the “hybrid” library, combining the traditional physical book library with the virtual digital library. The 2000 library law, thus, binds the libraries to offer internet and electronic data resources as well as printed books to its users. Furthermore, besides the law, an agency, the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media (until 2008 named: the Danish National Library...
Authority), has maintained, since 1920, important functions as to coordination and cooperation between the local library systems and between the public and the research libraries and the provision of the necessary technical and organisational infrastructure. Indeed, digitalisation and the creation of different online services, net libraries, e.g., a national online reference service (Biblioteksvagten), an interactive web service concerned with fiction (Litteratursiden), a web-based service for children (Spørg Olivia) and other online services have stimulated public library cooperation across municipal borders.

The most important common public library service is, certainly, “Bibliotek.dk”, a free service where you can see the holdings of all Danish libraries – both public and research – and which enable you to search and request materials in all Danish libraries. Besides, the Agency has played a significant role in developing and formulating a Danish national library strategy. Also the coordination of library sector strategies with overall national globalisation strategies is considered a key task by the Agency. As to the structural reform of 2007, the Agency considered it to be a chance to further development of the public libraries which here meant to create improved integration between the physical and the virtual library and also to establish new services alone or together in partnerships with other institutions or commercial companies. Besides, the Agency also supported the coming mergers by offering project means – six million Danish crowns (about 800 000 Euros) – for libraries involved. The Agency also cooperated with the Association of Danish Municipalities (Kommunernes Landsforening), a powerful lobby organisation promoting the points of view and interests of the municipalities, among others, by publishing a booklet with hints on how to merger library IT systems. The influence of the state on Danish public libraries has changed somewhat since 1920. Until 1983, the state provided a significant part of the budgets of the public libraries. However, in 1983, the municipalities took over the financing of the local public libraries. As mentioned already, two structural reforms have taken place during the last 50 years: in 1970 and in 2007. It has been recognised that the 1970 reform led to significant rationalisation and professionalisation; the Agency asserted that the 2007 reform would also lead to progress in terms of increased effectiveness.

One important consequence of the division of labour between municipalities and the state is that the municipality decides the service level whereas the state controls that the basic obligations to the users e.g. in terms of free services and in terms of types of materials offered are strictly kept. Therefore, the costs associated with public libraries can vary a lot from municipality to municipality. Also other types of organisations such as trade unions have influenced the reform process. Indeed, trade unions organising graduates and librarians have welcomed the reform as an opportunity to increase the hiring of their members in the larger, merged public libraries.

4 Statistics on the influences of the reform on key performance indicators

We will deal with the question concerning to what extent and how key performance indicators have been influenced by the 2007 reform. The examination relies on evidence derived from official statistical data on Danish public libraries. In general, the following traits characterise the public library system: First, in Denmark, there exists a very clear national strategy for the public libraries. Second, the public library system is integrated into the national information policy and cooperation with, for example, research libraries is mandatory. Further, there exist several national net services that integrate the different kinds of libraries. Third, the use of public libraries has always been very high compared to most other countries. Fourth, all services are free and it is mandatory for public libraries to provide music, internet access and similar services just as it is mandatory to participate in interlending activities.

In the following paragraphs, we will take a look at some of the more profound changes in the use of Danish public libraries. Here, the public libraries will be seen as a whole.

To understand the following it is necessary to emphasise that Denmark is a small country with a population of about 5.5 million people. To fully understand the situation, it is useful to sketch a short background. In 2000, the parliament passed a library act that was rather innovative. It confirmed and strengthened the mandatory cooperation between all types of libraries. It made it compulsory to give citizens free access to internet services. It also made it mandatory to have music collections and urged the libraries to engage in other digital information resources like DVDs and so on. As already mentioned, the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media has been a prime mover in the development process implementing national net services. The most prominent net service is certainly “bibliotek.dk”. Being a database including collection data from all types of libraries – both public and research – in Denmark, it represents a unique service. Every citizen has access to the database and have the right to order a book, a CD, a DVD or other kind of materials delivered to a library of ones own choice. It means that every citizen has the right to lend materials from every library in the country, totally free of charge. The Agency has also established a system of transport that means that the library system is connected, on a daily basis, by a transport system that delivers materials from one library to another.

There is no doubt, that the Agency has heavily supported change processes and innovation by funding projects according to the national strategy in the public library system.

The total collection of physical materials has declined from 30.8 millions in 2000 to 24.1 million in 2009. It is an overall decrease amounting to nearly 20%. However, this decrease in the total collection hides remarkable different trends concerning different types of materials. For example,

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2 Holmggaard Larsen (Anm. 1).

The collection of printed books and serials has decreased from 27.6 million in 2000 to 19.8 million in 2008. It is a decrease amounting to nearly 30%. Or, in other words, books and serials have gone down from 90 to 80% of the total collection. On the contrary, the collection of music has increased from 1.9 million units in 2000 to 2.8 in 2009. This represents an increase of 47%. As to the number of films, the increase has been even greater. It is more than 150%. However, the collection of films is still a small one. It has increased from 0.2 million in 2000 to 0.5 million in 2009.

Table 1: Collections of different materials in Danish Public Libraries 2000-2009 in millions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
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<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The development of loans including renewals for the different types of physical materials in millions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from these trends that the composition of the collection has been radically changed. Books constitute still the major part of the collection but the decrease in number is significant. The increases in music and films are also significant. However, it would be unfair not to also include collections of digital materials. Compared to research libraries, public libraries still have a small collection of digital resources; however, it is growing at a nearly exponential rate. It must be mentioned that the public libraries have put up a portal for music consisting of millions of music pieces from all genres and the number of downloads are proliferating.

We will now examine the developments in lending. It has always been an indicator of to what extent the library system has penetrated its market. On the surface, loans of physical materials seem to be rather stable. For a period of the last ten years, it has fluctuated around 73 millions of loans per year. In 2004 it was 74.7 millions. In 2005, it fell to 73.7. The decrease continued further in 2006 to 72.8 millions. In 2007, the figure was 71.6 million, increasing in 2008 to 74.5 millions. However, these, apparently, rather stable figures hide a very interesting development. Loans consist of both first-time loans and renewals. First-time issues amounted to 56.8 millions in 2004 and decreased every year to only 48.1 millions in 2008. The opposite trend, here, applies to renewals. Renewals amounted to 17.9 millions in 2004 and have increased to 26.3 millions in 2008. Thus, more than every third loan (37%) in 2009 is now a renewal. In other words, first-time loans or issues have dropped with 15% from 2004 to 2009; in the same period, renewals have increased with 47%.

Two factors, here, appear to be of interest. One is the composition of the total lending. The other is the apparently stable number of total lending.

There exist a couple of other figures of interest in this context. One is, of course, the increase in interlibrary lending and the others are newer figures concerned with other activities and digital resources.

It is important to note that the reform of municipalities in 2007 ought to reduce the interlibrary lending due to larger units of library systems. However, the interlibrary lending continued to increase despite bigger administrative units; in 2009 it was a bit over 2 millions. Most of this is ordered through “bibliotek.dk” that has become automatic through a system, programmed to find the library with the material that is either home or has the shortest waiting list. The lacking reduction of interlibrary loans represent an unexpected consequence of the 2007 structural reform.

Finally, we do see a huge increase in both the collection of digital resources and in downloads. The total number of electronic resources on external servers was approximately 500 000 in 2008, which is amazing because just
a few years earlier it was close to zero. In 2009 the number of electronic resources increased to 1.5 million. We witness an increasing interest among users for electronic resources documented by the number of download. In 2008, public library users downloaded 3.5 millions documents. In 2009, this figure increased to 7.3 million. It is still just an additional service; however, it is growing rapidly and it indicates that the public libraries have embraced electronic documents. There is no doubt that the structural reform has contributed to the impressive increase of both the collection and use of electronic resources. The bigger administrative units possess the competences, the infrastructure and the possibility to run these services in a cost-effective manner.

Without doubt, the 2007 structural reform has also influenced the total collection. In 2007, we do witness a rather huge decrease in the total collection. This is certainly the result of weeding processes taking place because many of the new merged library system used the opportunity to weed duplicates or triplicates of documents.

The reform also had an effect on another important issue. In 2007, the closing of branches and service points in the public library sector was rather great. From the middle of 1990’s, there has been a trend reducing the number of service points. In 1997, there existed approximately 900 service points. This number decreased to 680 in 2006. In 2007, it was furthermore reduced to 550. The reduction has continued and in 2009 there are only 510 service points. This reduction was a result of the structural reform. It correlates with the number of total opening hours in the public library sector. The number of opening hours per week had been rather stable from 1997 to 2006 fluctuating between 15 000 and 16 000 hours. In 2007, it dropped to 14 305 hours. In 2009 it has decreased further and in 2009 it was only 13 300 opening hours.

The reduction in the number of branches and service points is closely connected to another consequence of the structural reform and it is reductions in the spending on libraries. It is impossible to judge whether the reduction in the budgets is a direct or indirect consequence of the reform as it coincides with the financial crises sweeping all over the world from 2007 and onwards. However, the budgets and the spending in the public library sector were lower in 2007 than in the previous years.

From 1999 to 2006, the public libraries spent approximately 2 200 million Danish Crowns each year. The amount fluctuated very little and it is measured in fixed prices. The budget for the public libraries, however, dropped rather much in 2007. The decrease amounted to 10 %; that level has been kept the following years. A 10 % cut is rather much and it has, of course, affected especially the acquisition activities. The reduction in acquisition of physical media is compensated through the growth in web-based collections.

The number of employees in the public library sector has changed as well as the composition of different staff members. In 2000, the public libraries employed in total 5 000 staff members. At that time, there were the same number of librarians and library assistants. In 2009, the number of employees decreased to 4 300 staff members. However, the number of librarians has remained nearly unchanged during the period, whereas the number of library assistants has decreased with nearly 20 % during the period and the number of university graduates has started to grow rather significantly. This change in the composition is an effect of technological development in the libraries but it is also a consequence of a goal-oriented policy directed towards an average upgrade of qualifications.

During the period, the public libraries have also intensified their work with other tasks like citizen services, information literacy teaching, exhibitions and other user-oriented activities.

5 Leadership Issues

In general, the focus on and interest in leadership and management has been very high during the last couple of decades. This trend should be considered to be an element in the growing need to adapt organisations to the environment and to make them ready for changes. In Denmark, the interest took an impetus when the new 2000 Library Act passed the parliament. Indeed, the situation was changed radically for librarians since the law cancelled their monopoly to positions as public library directors. Therefore, coordinated efforts took place to ensure that leadership development was up-to-date in the library sector. Thus, many library directors and middle managers participated in leadership courses or took different forms of master degrees in management.

One result of this growing interest was the beginning of regular leadership surveys in the libraries in 2001. The intention was to establish a measurement instrument to take the temperature of leaders and leadership in the library sector, enabling comparisons with leaders and managers from other parts of the public sector and the private sector.

In fact, a nation wide survey was conducted in Denmark in 2001 including library directors and managers from both public and research libraries. This survey was translated into English in 2002; a similar data collection took place in 2003 in Great Britain. In 2004, directors and managers in the public library sector were surveyed again in Denmark. This time, however, the survey only included public library leaders and managers as it was part of a larger research project concerned with change processes, organisational culture and leadership. Part of the study was based on extensive interviews with directors and staff members in 24 public libraries from different parts of Denmark. This predominantly qualitative study also included a rather extensive analysis of the personality traits of a number of the involved directors; the findings concerning personality traits were correlated with the organisational culture and the style of change management. Finally, in the autumn of 2007, a fourth survey including directors and managers from all library sectors was conducted. Here, a special sec-
tion of this investigation was directed towards the problems of institutional mergers. The questions and statements in the surveys were organised in the following sections that were included in all the four surveys:

- Perceptions of future leadership challenges
- Decision processes and organisational structure
- The library and the environment
- Leadership styles and processes
- Leadership roles
- Management tools
- Competences, continuing professional development and need for further development
- The leadership job, the working environment, job satisfaction and general well-being
- Demographic information about the manager and the library/

There is obviously a still growing interest in library leadership. This is probably due to at least two factors. One is a general increase in interest of leadership and management of all public institutions. The other is the challenges posed on libraries. These challenges are due to the prominent role played by the internet and services on the internet and changed information behaviour among library user. There is no doubt that management of public institutions including all kinds of libraries has become more complex and this fact calls for new and more theoretical leadership skills.

Merging of libraries involves new policies and structures for phenomena like collection policies, service levels, organisational structures and cooperation patterns, library systems, homepages, adaptation to a new political environment, new networks and a new cultural setting just to name some of the most significant phenomena that leaders and managers must adapt to or confront.

In the 2007 survey, a whole section of the questionnaire was devoted to the process of merging. The section was formulated as a filter section implying that only managers directly involved in the merging process have answered the statements. In 2007, 65 % of the library directors or managers had been involved in such processes. 11 statements about the merging and the interpretation of the merging process were formulated. The results are shown in table 3:

Table 3: Attitudes of public library leaders in 2007 towards library mergers. The average is based on a scale from 1 to 7 where 7 represents total agreement with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>% of agreement</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had influence on the process of merging.</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process was open and transparent.</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff had influence.</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all, the staff was positive.</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The merging has a benefit for the users.</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the organisational changes.</td>
<td>3,6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in organisational culture influenced the process.</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The process made me less satisfied with my job.</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find that my influence has decreased.</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content of my job has changed.</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lost a part of my network.</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All in all, the data in table 3 indicate a rather positive attitude on average towards institutional mergers. It is obvious, that the managers perceive that they have had an influence and that the process had been open and transparent. This is rather remarkable because differences in cultures have played a significant part in the process and the single manager’s job content has changed for nearly half of them. Together, this indicates change willingness on the part of managers.

In 2004, the public library managers were aware of the coming reform and it was often debated internally in the libraries, especially in the smaller libraries. This was probably due to the fact that the merging process would change the small libraries most and they would probably be most
affected by the reform. As to table 3, it is interesting that the pattern of answers does not reflect the size of the library. This circumstance indicates that the process has not been perceived by the smaller libraries as a simple incorporation. On the contrary, they seem to have participated in the process despite the anticipations in 2004.

A process of merging calls for internal integration and external adaptability. This is the classic problem in leadership that can be stated as a challenge to integrate internally and to keep the organisation in shape to cope with challenges from outside.

Through the surveys, a very interesting picture of the Danish leaders and managers in the library sector emerge. First of all, the Danish library leaders were and are very oriented towards change. Most of them were very aware from 2001 and onwards that change is the name of the game and this change orientation correlated very well with their preferences for work-tasks. Involvement in projects, new technologies and participation in restructuring organisational structure were tasks that the leaders preferred very much in contrast to more traditional administrative routines. Their involvement in these types of innovation and change processes was in accordance both with their general perception of future challenges in the library sector and in their definition of the most important leadership roles in the library sector.

They saw the development of own and staff competencies as factors of paramount importance for the future of the public libraries; it is also fair to say that actions followed this perception. Most of the library leaders participated in the first decade of the new millennium in formalised leadership education – often leading to different master degrees and they formulated strategic plans for the continuing professional development of their staff.

During this period, it was also obvious that the leaders and managers became increasingly aware of the necessity of cooperating with other stakeholders both in the library community but probably more important with stakeholders in the political and administrative system in the municipalities. The awareness of the environment became more and more visible.

The same trend can be seen in the way the leaders and managers formulated the importance of leadership roles. Some of the most important roles they adhered to, were the roles as leaders formulating visions and as change agents.

However, it is just as important to emphasise that the leaders in relation to the leadership style are very oriented towards building good and sound relationships with the staff. Nearly all the public library leaders placed great importance on good relations with the staff and overall, the picture is that the leadership style is very democratic and based on trust and empowerment. The leaders perceive that they communicate very well and often with the staff and that they as a whole base their strategies on delegation and give the staff a rather huge influence on the processes. Dialogue and respect are the keywords often used in this context.

There is no doubt that this double orientation towards the environment and the involved changes and the orientation towards staff can explain at least to a certain degree the smooth process of merging in libraries due to the structural reform of the municipalities.

Another very interesting factor emerged from the different studies and surveys into leadership in libraries was that the public library leaders emerged as the group among public leaders with the highest degree of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is extremely important. It is probably very important for motivation of staff, that the directors and managers possess a relative high degree of job satisfaction. A dissatisfied director will probably have a very negative influence on the morale and on the organisational culture in an organisation.

Research has focused on the high level of job satisfaction among Danish library directors. Analyses have been conducted and comparisons made between the job satisfaction among Danish and British library managers. Here, one of the findings was that the sense of job satisfaction was highly correlated with the sense of freedom in the job, the power to make decisions and influence the job content.

In spite of the more turbulent environment and the decreased sense of security in the job, the data show an increase in the job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured on a simple four-grade scale. Managers were simply asked to state if they were very satisfied, satisfied, less satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. In 2001 the distribution of the answers was: 37% declared themselves as very satisfied and 55% satisfied. Only 8% was less satisfied and 0,5% was dissatisfied. The similar distribution in 2004 was 48%, 44%, 8% and 1%.

A satisfaction score of 75 is very high indicating a very high degree of job satisfaction and the absence of dissatisfaction. The satisfaction score for public library managers increased to over 80 in 2004 and in 2007 the general level was nearly the same as we saw in 2001. The scores of job satisfaction, during all the surveys, have been consistently higher than the scores in the British survey. A tentative explanation for this has been put forward in an earlier paper indicating that the degree of freedom in the job and the power to make decisions were higher in Denmark. It was also stressed that the amount of regulations, rules and requirements were less and less formalised in Denmark compared to the situation in Great Britain.

It is striking that the structural reform has not decreased the average job satisfaction among leaders and managers. This is interesting because quite a lot of library directors got new jobs and “lost their library”. This has on average not affected the general job satisfaction indicating a smooth and participatory process. In comparison to other sectors this is a very unexpected result.

6 Effects on user behaviour and preferences

In this section, we will address the final research question concerning effects on the users of the reform. In an earlier section, we have already touched the topic of user behaviour concerning lending of different library materials.
The following reports present selected findings from surveys of users\textsuperscript{10, 11}. One of the studies were a nation-wide survey of the information behaviour of high school students and the other study focused on behaviour and preferences in two suburban areas near Aarhus, the second biggest city in the country.

Table 4 shows how users place significance and importance to different library services. The significance and importance are measured on a scale from 0 to 100. We have simply asked people to attach the significance or importance for themselves on different services. The end result is a kind of ranking that probably is rather robust. The ranking of the perceived importance or the perception of the significance of the public libraries’ services can be seen in table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>High school</th>
<th>Aarhus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A kind and polite service</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance to the library</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambience</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of non-fiction</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite and peaceful place in the library</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of fiction</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places for relaxation</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of music</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless network</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of film</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work facilities</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Library’s homepage</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study places</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitions, lessons</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious that the high school students and the “traditional public library users” prefer a kind and polite service in nice quite rooms in library with ambience not too far away and filled with books.

In relation to the information in the previous section concerning closing of branches, it is remarkable that all groups of users place much importance of having a service point in the near vicinity.

There are some differences between the preferences and significance attached to services among the two groups but the main point is the indication of a very high degree of similarity in ranking the services.

The ranking between the two groups are more or less similar, but there appears to be differences in the importance as given by the numbers attached to the service. One explanation for this discrepancy is simple. It is that the group of high schools students consists of students relying heavily on public libraries and groups or segments that rarely, seldom or never use the public library. This composition of the total group tends to decrease the average figures. In comparison, the respondents from the Aarhus group were all general public library users. Further, the survey concerned with the high-school students were conducted in 2007. The survey concerning the users in Aarhus was conducted in 2009. The difference of these two years can probably explain some of the differences.

Users in the public libraries have taken the electronic media to heart. This is especially evident when we look at the increase in lending of music on a national scale. The lending of music on CD has decreased – however, the nation-wide music service in which the public libraries offer downloads of music has increased very much from 2007 to 2008. The increase is 48 % amounting to over 2.5 millions music downloads in 2008\textsuperscript{4}.

On a national level, it is also noteworthy that the number of arrangements, lectures, and the number of courses increase despite some economic troubles.

\textsuperscript{10} Pors, Niels Ole: Traditional Use Patterns?: An analysis of high school students’ use of libraries and information resources. New Library World 109 (9/10) 2008, p. 431-443.

It is evident from the above that the service profile is changing, not rapidly but in an incremental way and it is also safe to conclude that users value the digital possibilities and provision.

To summarise this part of the article one notice that the provision of the national public library system has changed much during the last decade. Digital possibilities and services become more and more important in the portfolio of services and many of these are obviously welcomed and taken up by the users. This applies especially to “bibliotek.dk”, the national database consisting of the holdings of every library in the country. Nearly half of the Danish library users employ this service to browse collections, order interlibrary loans or locate materials and make digital reservations. It is also evident in relation to the significance users place on the quality of the library webpage. It has become more and more important indicating that digital access increases in importance and significance. However, it is also evident that users have a rather traditional view of the public libraries. Two separate surveys indicate that users want public libraries not too far away from where they live and they want nice buildings with a kind and polite service in rooms filled with fiction and non-fiction. The public library has a brand in the mind of users and it is books, books and information together with a polite and kind personal service.

Two issues emerge from the reflections above. According to the one, it is rather evident that the public libraries already possess a brand in the mind of the users. This is documented both by their behaviour as documented by the national library statistics and from their perceptions of the services. It raises the interesting question how it is possible to use marketing efforts to change an existing and strong brand. The other issue concerns whether the changing information behaviour in any is related to the marketing campaigns conducted. The most profound change in users’ information behaviour is probably the pervasive effect of information technology on users behaviour. We do see this in relation to the increasing specificity of needs and requests and the increasing use of digital services like “bibliotek.dk” and the importance attached to the libraries’ webpages. However, it is difficult to relate the changes to the marketing campaigns conducted. The change is probably more a question about that supply creates its own demand. It is also very difficult to promote an argument that the goals of the different marketing campaigns have had any measurable effects for example in areas of the amount of lending, visits and activities in the library.

Finally, the surveys indicate that it is pertinent to consider further segmentation of users and their needs before one runs a marketing campaign. Even if the overall use pattern and the average perceptions on the surface appear general, the surveys indicate a variation that is important to consider in a marketing campaign.

7 Summary and Conclusions

We will now try to summarise and make conclusions concerning the six research questions raised. In general, it can be difficult to distinguish between changes and change processes directly associated with the 2007 structural reform and its more indirect influences. In the article, we have made a distinction between three different outcomes of the 2007 reform: “Direct effects”, “Indirect effects” and, finally, “No effects”. Concerning the direct effects, the mergers and changes of leaderships should be mentioned as the foremost effects. Also, the significant reductions of collections following the 2007 reform could be seen as a direct consequence. Approaching the more or less indirect effects, we could mention a number of new services made possible by larger units as examples. Also, effects on the demand for library services derived from other parts of the public sector should be mentioned here. As a prominent example one could name the establishment of user-friendly mandatory municipal access points to public services. Also, the steady and increased focus on leadership and management, already started by the 2000 library law, could be counted as a result of the 2007 reform. Indeed, the decreased number of leadership positions following the merger is likely to intensify the competition and to create incentives to optimize one’s management qualifications. On the other hand, there is no evidence on negative effects such as more stress, less job satisfaction and deteriorated work environment – at least not among the surveyed library directors and middle managers. Also, unexpected effects could be classified as indirect. For example, the unexpected increase in interlibrary loans in spite of the presence of now larger units. An effect, which has received widespread public attention and protests from local users, is the massive closure of branches and service points, especially, from 2006 to 2007. However, it is problematic to consider the 2007 reform as the direct or indirect cause of the closures. In many cases, the Agency and the library association have defended the closure of unattractive units with limited opening hours and uninspiring environments if, instead, larger and stronger units were strengthened. Finally, one could point out trends which have been nearly unaffected by the structural reform. The long term changes of user preferences from books to other materials, thus, do not seem to have been affected by the reform. Also to explain the significant increases of renewals of loaned materials one should search for other types of causes than the 2007 reform. The flourishing development of the virtual library – opened 24 hours seven days a week – could be pointed out as an example of a similar process not depending of the structural reform. However, it seems that the larger units resulting from the mergers facilitates the development of net services through larger and more diversified staff, better equipment, and the like. Finally, it also seems that the primary library sector players have used the reform as an opportunity to promote the library cause which also in itself has a stimulating effect. Then what about negative effects? Indeed, it is difficult to identify definite negative attitudes aimed against the reform in itself. Of course, there have been varying opinions within and outside the library sector on how the reform was implemented, its costs, etc. and among social scientists there is also an ongoing discussion about to what extent the desired goals concerning effectiveness and efficiency have been achieved. But this discussion has mainly taken place outside the library sector: Within the sector a broad sense of consensus towards the benefits of the reform is found.