

CHAPTER TWO

MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MULTICULTURAL LIBRARY: CLARIFICATION AND SCOPE

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1. INTRODUCTION

In order to determine how the multicultural nature of South African communities is reflected in the collections and services of public libraries, it is necessary to extend the definitions of multiculturalism and the multicultural library - given in Section 5 of Chapter 1. This chapter also clarifies terms and concepts related to multiculturalism, such as culture, diversity, communities and minorities. Finally, as indicated in Chapter One, the international views of multiculturalism in public libraries are examined in this chapter.

2. EXPLAINING THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM

The definition of 'multiculturalism' is complex and often depends upon the context in which it is discussed. In the Canadian environment, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1985) explains that

Canadians recognise and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage.

Carson (1999: 1) explains that in the United States multiculturalism has become a social and political movement. According to that author, multiculturalism in the United States

values the diverse perspectives people develop and maintain through varieties of experience and background stemming from racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation and/or class differences in society. It strives to uphold the ideals of equality, equity and freedom.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (Australian Government, 2005) maintains that Australian multiculturalism

recognises, accepts, respects and celebrates cultural diversity. It embraces the heritage of Indigenous Australians, early European settlement, our Australian-grown customs and those of the diverse range of migrants now coming to this country. The freedom of all Australians to express and share their cultural values is dependent on their abiding by mutual civic obligations.

Bekker and Leilde (2003: 121) note that the term, 'multiculturalism', may be used in different senses. The authors mention three distinct uses of the term multiculturalism:

1. As a description of the state of cultural diversity in a society
2. As an ideology aimed at legitimising the incorporation of ethnic diversity in the general structure of society
3. As a public policy.

For the purpose of this research the term, 'multiculturalism', is used in the first sense - that of describing the state of cultural diversity in a society. It is not the intention of this study to discuss multiculturalism as an ideology or as an official public policy. Detailed discussions of this sort do not fall within the scope of this study and are extensively published in the literature by authors, such as Goldberg (1994), Taylor (1994), Rex (1996), Baumann (1999) and Joppke & Lukes (1999).

However, in order to understand the impact of multiculturalism on services and collections provided by public libraries, further expansion of the concept - as used in the first sense above - is needed.

According to Joppke & Lukes (1999: 3) the word, 'multiculturalism', first appeared in Canada and Australia in the early 1970s when these countries had to deal with the concerns of indigenous, immigrant and minority groups. Since its first appearance, however, the concept has changed, and authors dealing with multiculturalism have provided varied interpretations of its meaning. These authors include Taylor (1994), Du Mont *et al.* (1994), Kymlicka (1995), De Ruijter (1997), Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), Okin (1999), Joppke & Lukes (1999) and Lubisi (2001).

According to Kincheloe (1997: 3), there are different multicultural movements or types of multiculturalism, such as conservative multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, pluralist multiculturalism, essential multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism. Authors have often interpreted multiculturalism in terms of the particular multicultural movement they support. Lubisi (2001: 1) notes that some of these multicultural authors, such as Gutman (1994), commonly define multiculturalism as "referring to a social mosaic of bounded and identifiable cultures cohabiting a common territory in the context of a single dominant culture." Lubisi (2001:1) points out that the cultures that form part of this mosaic have often been defined in ethnic terms only. This is supported by Taylor (1994) who similarly defines multiculturalism as a demand by ethno-cultural groups or minority cultural groups for recognition of their marginal cultures.

A broader description of multiculturalism used by other authors, such as Kymlicka (1995) and Okin (1999), goes beyond the confines of ethnic cultures and includes a wide range of other cultural or social groups. Lubisi (2001:2) summarises the definitions of the above authors by stating that besides ethnic

and linguistic communities, other groups may also be incorporated under the definition of multiculturalism, such as:

- Religious communities
- Groups defined by gender and sexual orientation
- Marginalised communities.

According to the authors that support the above interpretation, in a multicultural society all these groups should have equal access to economic, political and public resources (Taylor, C *et al.*, 1994: 5).

When describing multiculturalism in today's world, multicultural authors have also incorporated the effects of technology and globalisation. Skrzyszewski (1998: 34) maintains that information technology makes global collaboration possible. The author explains that traditionally multiculturalism focused on an individual country's minorities. These minorities were often the disadvantaged, refugees and/or immigrants. In the 21st century the focus of multiculturalism has widened to include not only minorities within a nation, but also cultural groups within a global society. In such a technological global society, people are all members of minority 'tribes', interacting and developing as individual human beings in a multicultural context. The world can, therefore, be said to be multicultural by nature.

De Ruijter (1997: 10), the South African author who investigated the effects of technology and globalisation on multiculturalism, supports the international views. According to De Ruijter, the world is becoming smaller every day because advanced technology is turning the world into a global village. As a result, massive worldwide exchanges of persons, goods, services and ideas have been made possible. People from practically all societies are confronted with aspects of other societies and cultures and growth has occurred not only in the number and intensity of relations, but also in their diversity.

Based on the above discussion - and for the purposes of this research project - multiculturalism is, therefore, defined as

a society in which a diversity of cultures exists. In a multicultural society these diverse cultures are recognised, accepted, respected and celebrated. These cultures may be a result of linguistic, religious, and/or any other cultural diversity. In the global village of the 21st century the definition of multiculturalism includes not only cultural groups within a nation but also cultural groups within a global society.

3. DEFINING RELATED CONCEPTS

A variety of concepts are often associated with multiculturalism. This section briefly clarifies relevant terms, in order to avoid confusion.

3.1 Culture

The diversity of definitions given for multiculturalism is often due to the lack of agreement over what constitutes 'culture'. According to the web site of the Centre for Evidence in Ethnicity (2005), culture is a complex social phenomenon and its definition is problematic. It consists of the shared beliefs, values and attitudes that guide the behaviour of group members.

Thompson (1990: 136) defines culture as

symbolic forms, that is, meaningful actions, objects and expressions of various kinds, that are related to the historically specific and socially structured contexts and processes within which, and by which, these symbolic forms are produced, transmitted and received.

Le Roux (1997: 9) defines culture as

the universal, distinguishing characteristics, symbols and acquired aspects of a particular human society. Material culture includes objects, technology, and the arts, whereas non-material culture refers to language and other symbols, knowledge, skills, values, religion and customs.

In support of the above definitions, Baumann (1999:83) points out that the meaning of 'culture' is not static but changes according to the viewpoints and needs of human society.

The above definitions of culture allow for various social groups (not only ethnic groups) to be seen as having the potential to possess, produce, transmit and receive culture. This viewpoint is in line with the broader, more inclusive definition of multiculturalism discussed above, where the variety of cultural groups present in a multicultural society may be the result of diverse cultural experiences and backgrounds, such as language, religion, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.

3.2 Communities

WordNet (2005) provides the following relevant definition of the term, 'communities':

A group of people having ethnic or cultural or religious characteristics in common.

Although the term, 'minorities', is widely used internationally when discussing diverse groups in a multicultural society, the term, 'communities', is preferred in South Africa (Beukman, 2000:32).

3.3 Cultural diversity

Cultural diversity refers to the complex composition of society. According to Khan (2000: 1), it acknowledges that society is made up of interest groups which are often distinct, while holding a general commonality. These distinct groups include ethnic or cultural groups, religious groups, sexual orientation groups and linguistic groups. The term is often used as a synonym for multiculturalism.

3.4 Ethnicity

The web site of the Centre for Evidence in Ethnicity (2005) maintains that the concept of ethnicity is complex. It recognises that people identify themselves with a social grouping on cultural grounds, including language, lifestyle, religion, food and origins. The basis of ethnicity is, therefore, often a tradition of common descent or intermarriage and shared culture or history. According to the Centre, it is important to recognise that in a world of migration and mixing, ethnicity is dynamic rather than fixed.

3.5 Minorities

The term, 'minorities', is defined by the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Trumble, 2002) as an ethnic group differing racially or culturally from the rest of the community.

In countries abroad, multicultural authors often refer to minority groups in their discussions of a multicultural society. (Goldberg (1994); Rex (1996) and Kincheloe & Steinberg (1997))

3.6 Multilingualism

The New Shorter Oxford Dictionary (Trumble, 2002) defines the term, 'multilingualism', as the use of several languages. Therefore, a multilingual society is a society in which more than one language is used. It should be emphasised that the term multilingualism only encompasses one aspect of multiculturalism - the aspect of multiple or diverse languages.

4. DESCRIBING THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Lubisi (2001: 2) notes that because of the geographical location of leading authors on the subject of multiculturalism (Western Europe, Great Britain, Australia and North America), the dominant culture often corresponds to the culture of the majority of citizens, while the marginal cultures - which demand recognition - are often the cultures of minorities. Therefore, multiculturalism abroad usually refers to the promotion of the rights of minority groups.

In South Africa, on the other hand, while certain minority groups have been protected and promoted, the majority cultures have often been marginalised. This is pointed out by Beukman (2000: 138) who notes that the protection of minorities in an international context refers to environments where the majority discriminates against minorities. As a result, international perspectives are of limited value in South Africa. The difference between the situation in South Africa and that in many countries abroad is that it is the majority in South Africa which has been disadvantaged. The author, therefore, argues that the notion of community rights is preferred when discussing multiculturalism in South Africa.

Beukman (2000) is supported by the views of President Mbeki (1998) who, in his opening speech at the Establishment of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, stated

that it is not only the needs of minorities in this country that had to be addressed, but also those of the previously disadvantaged majority communities. In his Speech, Mbeki (1998) supported the inclusion of all communities when referring to community rights in a culturally diverse society. He mentioned the necessity for South Africans to protect minority cultural and language groups which might feel threatened, and the need to promote the diverse indigenous cultural and linguistic groups which make up the majority, but which have been marginalised.

It is also important to highlight here that when referring to multiculturalism in countries abroad, the literature often refers to cultural diversity which has resulted from immigration. In South Africa, cultural diversity or multiculturalism has not only been the result of immigrant groups, but is largely the result of indigenous diversity.

In South Africa, therefore, multiculturalism should not be seen in terms of promoting and protecting disadvantaged minorities' rights - as is the case internationally. It should rather be seen as an equitable concern for every community living in South Africa, including both majority and minority communities.

The diverse communities that should be included under the scope of multiculturalism in South Africa are:

- Religious communities (Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other religions)
- Linguistic communities (English, Afrikaans and isiZulu, amongst other linguistic communities)
- Any other cultural communities, such as the diverse nationalities, ethnic and immigrant communities (South Africa, Act 19 of 2002).

Finally, in the South African context it is important that the recognition of diversity and multiculturalism be considered within the context of nation building. Carrim (1999: 258) points this out and cautions that this is especially important because

of our history of Apartheid, in which diverse communities were forced to live apart:

...the challenge facing South Africa is the provision of space for people to express their multiple identities in a way that does not dislodge the quest for a South African identity.

Mc Allister - as quoted in De Ruijter (1997: 10) - further explains that although we should respect diversity, South African multiculturalism should avoid international multiculturalism trends that often promote institutionalised boundaries which may lead to a categorisation and polarisation of people with greater ethnic stereotyping and mobilisation along ethnic lines.

This is also supported by President Mbeki (1998) who encourages South Africans

to find intelligent ways and means by which we would organise ourselves to unite as a people, around common national aspirations and a common identity, while we honour and respect our diversity.

In terms of the above discussion, one can conclude that multiculturalism in South Africa is only relevant if it is concerned with all cultural, religious and linguistic communities that live in this country. In line with the broader definition of culture and multiculturalism described in this Chapter, any community that has the potential of having, producing and transmitting its own culture - such as ethnic groups and religious communities - is seen as being a social group and is, therefore, included in this study's definition of a multicultural society. Within the South African context, minority and majority communities are included. In line with the above discussion, it may be said that in a multicultural society all groups should have equal access to power, economic, and public resources. Finally, in our South African environment multiculturalism needs to be viewed in the context of nation building.

5. DESCRIBING THE TERM, 'MULTICULTURAL LIBRARY'

The Australian Working Group on Multicultural Library Services (1982) identifies several principles regarding multiculturalism that help clarify its relevance to libraries. The Working Group (1982:1) describes multiculturalism as fair and equitable treatment without discrimination of cultures represented in society. According to the Working Group, the principles of multiculturalism entail the following:

- All members of the society must have equal opportunity to realise their fullest potential.
- Every person should be able to maintain his/her culture without prejudice or disadvantage.
- Members of a society should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures
- Community members must have *equal access to programmes and services*.

To achieve the above in a multicultural society, equal access to resources and services should be made available to all. This includes library resources and services.

The findings of the Working Group (1982) support the views of Rasmussen & Kolarik (1981: 25) who state that

multiculturalism involves four basic fundamental concepts, namely equality, tolerance, understanding and diversity. The notion of equality implies equal access to resources and services available in the community.

Therefore, one can conclude that multiculturalism is relevant to libraries as it implies a fair and equitable distribution of public resources and services to all sections of the community.

Accordingly, IFLA (1998: 5) defines a multicultural library as

a library in which all ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups are provided with library materials and information services, in their preferred languages and reflecting their own cultures, on an equitable basis.

Tinker (1990: 40) describes the term, 'multicultural library', as

a library that includes the provision of services and materials which reflect the multicultural nature of society, one in which the multiplicity of cultures is recognised and represented throughout the library service.

Similarly, the Library Board of Victoria, Australia (2001: 2) defines the term, 'multicultural library', as

a library which includes the provision of materials and services which reflect the multicultural nature of society.

The Library Board (2001: 2) emphasises that having a multicultural collection does not, in itself, constitute a multicultural library. Multicultural libraries have to include multiculturalism in all their services, including planning, reference and information services, resource development, extension services and staffing.

Based on the above - and for the purposes of this research project - a multicultural public library shall, therefore, be defined as

a public library which strives to provide all its linguistic, religious and cultural communities with relevant services, in their preferred languages and reflecting their own cultures - on an equitable basis. The multicultural public library

recognises and represents the multicultural nature of the communities it serves in both its collections and services.

As with recent trends in multiculturalism, the definition of multicultural libraries has also changed to reflect the current climate of globalisation and the effects of technology. The Library Board of Victoria (2001: 2) maintains that multicultural library services need to incorporate changes in information technology and increased diversity - resulting from globalisation. This is also noted by IFLA (1998) in their multicultural guidelines. According to IFLA (1998: 5), in a global society, all cultures must be represented in the global information infrastructure. IFLA recommends that in our global, networked world of today, all cultures and languages must have access to - and be able to participate in - the global network. They suggest that public libraries can facilitate access to diverse linguistic and cultural networked information services through their global, networked library systems and the Internet.

6. MULTICULTURALISM IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The aim of this section is to trace the development of multiculturalism in public libraries abroad. The United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Australia and Canada are reviewed as public libraries in these countries are also confronted with culturally diverse communities and they have developed a range of multicultural services and collections. These countries have also published an extensive literature on the topic.

As mentioned in section 2 of this chapter, multiculturalism abroad has most often been linked to cultural minorities. This is also true of multiculturalism in public libraries abroad. In countries, such as the USA, the UK, Australia and Canada, when referring to multicultural library services, public libraries have focused their

attention on providing services to culturally diverse minority groups - especially disadvantaged, immigrant groups.

6.1 The United States of America (USA)

Du Mont (1994: 23) points out that in the years following the Civil War, the population of the USA increased enormously. Much of this growth was due to immigration from Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe as well as from Japan and China - each representing a variety of religions, cultures and languages. In addition, the population became urbanised where a culturally diverse or multicultural society was established.

According to Du Mond (1994: 24), the response of public libraries at that time to this diversity included the following:

- The institution of reference services in public libraries
- The expansion of public library branches
- Working with adults, children and special groups which included library programmes for immigrants.

The purpose of these library programmes was essentially to assimilate immigrants into the mainstream of American society. To achieve this, librarians offered English classes in the library; they sponsored story hours; presented lectures in native languages; and they sponsored programmes giving an overview of American political history and industrial development. Through these efforts librarians had - as a major goal - the introduction of immigrants to the duties of American citizenship. The purpose was to assimilate these newcomers into American society as quickly as possible. The primary objective of the public library towards ethnic groups during the period from the early 1900s was that of the Americanisation - or acculturation - of immigrant groups and their preparation for citizenship (Duran, 1993: 3).

By the 1950s libraries began showing an increased interest in understanding their users. Surveys of readers were completed in an effort to identify who was using the public library and why. Libraries were given a mandate to help close the cultural gaps between ethnic and racial groups by providing reading materials about the customs, habits and manners - particular of minority groups. This approach assumed a uniform national culture and suggested that ethnic values should be subservient to American ideals (Du Mond, 1994: 28).

In the 1960s affirmative action efforts began in the USA. Duran (1993: 4) refers to this period as the Promotion of Equal Access in Libraries which coincided with the Civil Rights Movement. The provision of library services to ethnic groups in the 1960s centred on the issue of equal access to those individuals considered disadvantaged. Services during this period included:

- Outreach programmes
- Ethnic resource collection development
- Mobile services
- Literacy programmes
- Recruitment of ethnically diverse staff
- Foreign language collections
- Multimedia programmes
- Reference services.

The aim of these services was to meet the needs of different ethnic groups - especially the information needs of the non-library users of these ethnic groups. Another emphasis during this period was that of encouraging public libraries to network with other cultural community organisations. Du Mont (1994: 29) states that this era was the period in which the social responsibility movement in librarianship in the USA developed, driven by a sense of duty to serve these disenfranchised users.

The period from the 1970s, that followed the "promotion of equal access" in the USA, is referred to as the cultural diversity period in public libraries (Duran, 1993: 7). This period differs from the previous periods in that there was a shift from considering minority groups as disadvantaged as this had a negative connotation and suggested the notion of superiority on part of the majority population. Also, this period did not have as its purpose the assimilation of ethnic groups, but rather emphasised the 'celebration' of diversity.

In response to this, public libraries in the USA provided a variety of services and programmes. These included:

- Ethnic resource centres and directories
- Information and referral programmes
- Archival collections documenting the history of the culturally diverse communities
- Cataloguing resources in non-English languages
- Radio, video and television programmes
- Multilingual brochures
- Multilingual children's services.

Another change to the views of multiculturalism in public libraries occurred in the 1990s. Rather than responding to diversity through individual programming initiatives, libraries began to view diversity more holistically. Previously, responses to diversity had been confined to the notion that service to culturally diverse groups was somehow special and should be developed and funded separately from normal library operations. Diversity services had been seen as additional services rather than an integral part of the library's make-up. This changed to the view that the provision of multicultural services and products should form part of the basic fabric of the public library services (Duran, 1993: 7).

Multiculturalism in the new millennia has also been influenced by globalisation and technological advancements in the USA. According to Donovan (2001),

vast political and economic change and the opening of international borders have promoted the mobility of world populations and increased intra-national cultural heterogeneity.

The result has been the need for information providers to serve large multilingual populations from varied cultures within their own borders, often using technologies that did not exist when they completed their own professional training. Technologies, such as the Internet and the World Wide Web, have been integrated into existing library services in the United States and into related information systems in nations throughout the world. This process has raised many issues about the implementation of information services for increasingly multicultural, multilingual populations (Donovan, 2001).

Effective strategies for using information technology to serve multicultural populations was the focus of a Buffalo Conference for Librarians (2001) held in the United States. The Conference explored how technologies and global information networks, such as the Internet, can assist in delivering multicultural services in libraries.

6.2 The United kingdom (UK)

Britain has had a multicultural society for hundreds of years (Tinker 1990: 40). Many people from all over the world have settled in Britain. Examples of those who have settled there include the French Huguenots in the 16th century and the Jews in the 19th century. In the 20th century, World War II resulted in tens of thousands of Poles and others from Eastern Europe moving to the UK. More recent immigrants include people from India, Jamaica, Africa and Hong Kong

(Olden, 1996: 1). Therefore, there are a number of cultural groups with a wide range of significant differences in language, background and culture, who are entitled to services and sources from public libraries in the UK.

For many years the responses of British public libraries to a growing multicultural society were limited. Some public libraries - with significant cultural communities - built up small stocks of books in the languages of these groups, while other libraries made a few ethnic staff appointments (Todderdell, 1981: 133).

According to Roach (1998: 11), the roots of the public library service - as it exists in Britain today - may be traced back to the Public Libraries Act of 1850. It has, however, only been since the 1960s that there has been a growing recognition among librarians that library provision must take the multicultural nature of society into account. This became especially evident after the arrival of significant numbers of people from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Many library authorities started realising that they needed to strive towards meeting the needs of all their community members.

Public libraries also had to work within guidelines laid down by the law which facilitated the move towards offering services to multicultural populations (Tinker 1990:40). This includes the Public Libraries and Museums Act of 1964 which states that a library's role is to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof."

In 1976, the Library Advisory Council and the Commission for Racial Equality jointly issued a report entitled, "*Public Library Services for a Multicultural Society*", which recommended that each library should formulate its own policies

for adapting its services to the needs of a multicultural society. It recommended that public library book and non-book stock should reflect the multicultural nature of society and that they should use all possible methods to assess and meet the needs of their culturally diverse communities (Todderdell, 1981: 134).

In 1985, the British Library Association issued a statement on the role of the public library in a multicultural society. The document states that

each library and information service should ensure that all its services reflect the cultural and ethnic make-up and particular needs of the community it serves and of the country as a whole (Library Association, 1985).

Since then, many British public libraries have seen it as their duty generally to provide some type of services to ethnic groups (Tinker, 1990:41). These services include the provision of relevant materials in the languages of the different cultural groups; the provision of information for advice and education to these cultural groups; and a place which assists these groups to maintain and develop their culture (Olden, 1996: 18).

Until the 1990s multicultural library services in the UK were seen as an add-on service. This was due to funding for multicultural services being provided for separately, through a special fund stipulated in "Section 11" (Commission for Racial Equality). Similar to what was happening in the USA, services to minority groups were seen as something separate. However, after the discontinuance of separate national government funding for multicultural services in 1998, the need to make multiculturalism part of the mainstream activities of public libraries and to approach it as an integral part of basic library services has been recognised (Meyers, 1998: 27).

More recently the British Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries (2003) issued a Cultural Diversity Statement and Action Plan in response to the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000 which calls for specific initiatives by public libraries in meeting the needs of users and non-users from minority ethnic communities in a sustainable manner. These include:

- The need for collections, exhibitions and activities that reflect the diverse backgrounds and cultures of communities
- Community profiling and collaboration with communities in service development
- Integration of cultural diversity with institutional policies, budgeting and planning
- Training and capacity building of multicultural library services.

Within the new millennia, British librarians have moved to viewing multicultural services as part of a larger issue of social inclusiveness. According to the Community Services Group's *Resource Guide: Social Inclusion and Libraries* (2004), multiculturalism in libraries should explore how libraries might focus their services more effectively on excluded social groups and communities based on age, gender, culture, religion, language, accent, class, appearance, sexuality, lifestyle and/or disability.

6.3 Australia

Australia's post-war immigration policy resulted in that country becoming a multicultural society (Rasmussen 1981: 25). It is a society composed of more than 100 different ethnic groups. Although these ethnic communities have always made a positive contribution to the overall progress of Australia, it was only in 1978 that their contribution was recognised. This occurred when the Australian government accepted the recommendations of the Galbally Report (1978) and funds were allocated to promote multiculturalism in Australia.

Rasmussen (1981: 26) points out that prior to 1970 Australian librarians showed little concern for multiculturalism and their services to ethnic communities. The early 1970s, however, saw a growth in professional interest in this area. This included, amongst others, the following:

- Library provision in community languages, such as the provision of non-English book materials, newspapers, magazines and audiovisual material
- The selection, acquisition and cataloguing of these materials
- The role of satisfying community information needs
- Promotional and outreach services to ethnic communities
- A concern for the appointment of adequate staff to meet the needs of specific ethnic groups.

No formal standards on the provision of multicultural library services existed in Australia or any other country. The need for standards in this area was, therefore, recognised. In 1974, in Victoria, the State Librarian's Working Group on Foreign Language Collections recommended the creation of standards for public library service to ethnic minorities. Six years later the Working Group on Multicultural Library Services (Victoria) - which had been set up in 1979 - created a Standards Subcommittee. In 1982 the Subcommittee completed the standards and they were published jointly by the Working Group and the Library Council of Victoria in that same year. These were updated in 2001 and are now referred to as *Responding to Our Diversity: Multicultural Service Guidelines for Victoria Public Libraries* (Library Board of Victoria, 2001). The Standards cover aspects, such as the responsibility for provision; the importance of statistical evidence; planning; library materials; reference services; extension services; and staffing for multicultural public library services.

In 1984 the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) issued a statement on libraries and multiculturalism which said that libraries should provide collections and services which reflect the multicultural nature of their user

groups. All members of the Australian community should have access to library materials and services which would meet their unique needs, regardless of their language, cultural background and/or country of origin.

In the 1990s a number of professional library organisations in Australia worked together in setting up Internet forums and discussion groups to discuss issues regarding multicultural library services, for example, The Open Road: MCL –Net. The Multicultural Libraries Forum was established to facilitate the discussion of issues and ideas involved in the provision of Multicultural Library Services.

Conferences and seminars have also been held to promote multicultural library services in Australia. These include:

- The first and second national conferences on multiculturalism and libraries held in 1980 and 1985, respectively.
- The Multicultural Libraries Conference organised by the National Library of Australia in 1995.
- The Working Group on Multicultural Library Services participated in The Managing Diversity Conference in Melbourne. The Conference addressed a range of significant themes relating to diversity management, focusing on cultural diversity in private, public and community sector libraries (ANNUAL REPORT: 2002-2003, Working Group on Multicultural Library Services, NSW).
- The Open Road Conference held in 2004. The purpose of this conference was to assist public libraries and community organisations in exploring the potential of using the Internet to provide services to their diverse communities. The Open Road conference explored issues relating to the provision of multilingual Internet access services, web accessibility and web internationalisation. The conference also dealt with the use of technology in the provision of library services to communities (referred to

as 'e-diversity') and technology within the context of literacy and learning English programmes. Other topics included:

- The usability of public library web sites and electronic services for people of diverse backgrounds
- Multilingual public internet access services
- Adaptive technologies and public internet access services
- Technology and the provision of multicultural library services
- Technology, literacy and learning English
- The use of technology for language maintenance and first language literacy
- Indigenous communities, libraries and technology.

In the new millennium, Australian multicultural librarians are focusing their attention on the effects of globalisation and technology on multiculturalism and libraries. According to Bianco (2004: 27), electronic tools, such as web publications, enable librarians to serve multicultural communities in many ways. These information technologies - available especially in public libraries - help librarians access people and sources around the world which, in turn, allow them to assist their patrons from ethnic communities maintain their linguistic and cultural heritages.

2.4 Canada

In 2001, nearly one in every five people living in Canada was born outside the country. Almost 4 million Canadians self-identify as visible minorities. They have more than 200 ethnic origins. Projections show that by 2016, visible minorities will make up one-fifth of Canada. The aboriginal population jumped 22% in the five years between 1996 and 2001.... In sum, the rate of growth of Canada's ethno-cultural diversity is more rapid than at any point in the country's history (Gusella, 2004).

Over the last 500 years, Canada has gone through successive waves of immigration, which have created a richly diverse culture. According to Wertheimer (1981: 143), multiculturalism in Canada is set within a bilingual framework, i.e. two official languages - English and French. Added to this, millions of Canadians speak a mother-tongue other than English or French.

Developments in Canada's library services to multicultural populations have been described by various authors, including Wertheimer (1981), Godin (1994), and Skrzyszewski (2004). As in the USA, the UK and Australia, multicultural library services have focused on the needs of minority groups, especially immigrants living in Canada.

According to Godin (1994), the Canadian tradition of multiculturalism reflects a conviction that, by accepting and promoting cultural diversity, Canadian society will develop a shared sense of Canadian identity that respects the diversity of the country and its people. The author points out that the need for programmes and services - geared specifically to the interests of culturally diverse communities - has evolved as Canada's population has become more diverse. The multiculturalism policies of Canada which were introduced in the 1970s and 1980s - including the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1985 - called on public institutions to respond to the diverse needs and interests of all community members.

Public libraries responded by adapting to some of the needs of these communities (Godin, 1994). By the late 1980s and the early 1990s, Canadian libraries were offering book collections and programmes for a diverse clientele. Since then, public libraries have developed their contact with ethnic groups and offered and promoted library services relevant to these groups. Some libraries sponsor special events for diverse communities, such as 'cultural showcases' that enable members of the library's traditional users to get to know their neighbours' cultures and traditions. Some libraries have made their presence

known in diverse communities by offering information sessions on library resources and services, while libraries with multilingual collections have asked community members for help in managing the collections.

According to Nilsen (2004:1), the Position Statement on Library Services to Linguistic and Ethnic Minorities - published by the Canadian Library Association in 1987 - provides a good framework for public libraries in Canada to follow as they develop services to multicultural populations. It states that

- all citizens of Canada should have equitable access to library materials and services which will meet their needs regardless of their language, cultural background or country of origin.
- all libraries should reflect the multicultural nature of Canadian society as is appropriate to the collections and services provided for their user groups.

It maintains that Canadian public libraries have a special role to play in the provision of multicultural services to the residents of their communities as well as a unique role in not only meeting the needs of a diverse Canadian population, but also in promoting cross-cultural understanding in the interest of a harmonious and integrated society.

In 1994, the National Library of Canada and the Canadian Library Association set guidelines for multicultural and multilingual collections for Canadian public libraries. These guidelines are now known as '*A World of Information: Creating Multicultural Collections and Programs in Canadian Public Libraries*' (The National Library of Canada, 1994).

As is the case in other countries, Canadian librarians are also looking at the impact of globalisation and technology on multiculturalism and multicultural librarianship in the new millenium. Skrzyszewski (2004:1) suggests that globalisation and advances in technology are moving Canadian multiculturalism

along an evolutionary continuum towards a more cosmopolitan vision. According to Skrzyszewski, with globalisation multiculturalism has become a social and economic asset that should be nurtured as part of every community's social capital. The new technologies give many people access to a variety of cultural traditions and values. These technologies are helping to produce a borderless world in which an individual has a choice and can select from different values, cultures and languages. This is changing the nature of multiculturalism from a specific ethno-centric focus to one that is more cosmopolitan (Skrzyszewski, 2004:14).

3.5 Other countries

Other countries that have been focusing on issues of multiculturalism in libraries are countries, such as Malaysia and Denmark. According to an article by Yaacob & Seman (1998: 1), the multi-ethnicity of the Malaysia has posed a great challenge to the library and information services. The author reflects that the library - especially the public library - has a central role to play in meeting the information needs of one of the most culturally and linguistically diversified countries. This diversity includes Malay, Chinese, Indian and many other indigenous groups.

Yaacob & Seman (1998: 10) recommend that special bibliographic instruction be given to different cultural groups. Training in effective cross-cultural communications; the promotion of reading on cultural diversity; and studies of the needs of the different ethnic groups should be done to collect data on their information needs and to act on these results.

Multiculturalism has also been discussed by various authors in Denmark. These include authors, such as Skrzyszewski & Cubberley (1997), Berger (2002) and Elbeshausen & Skov (2004). According to Elbeshausen & Skov (2004: 131), public libraries have an important role to play in the integration process of ethnic

groups into Denmark's multicultural society. Berger (2002: 79) carried out a study on how ethnic minorities in Denmark use public libraries. According to the findings, the success of multicultural public library services depends on these ethnic communities perceiving the public library as a place which is friendly to their cultures.

Danish authors are also examining the impact of technology and globalisation on multicultural library services. According to Skrzyszewski & Cubberley (1997: 2), the focus of multiculturalism should be expanded to include not only minorities within a nation, but also cultural groups within a global society. These authors suggest that the focus should be changed so that users of multicultural library services - no matter to which cultural group they belong - receive services that are an integral part of the overall activity of the local library.

The library itself must be a participant in a global library and information system. Today's electronic information networks, including the Internet, offer opportunities to provide all ethnocultural groups with the best possible library services, in the library user's language and perspective of choice (Skrzyszewski & Cubberley, 1997: 2).

3.6 International library organisations concerned with multiculturalism: IFLA

Finally, it is important to note that other than the concerns of individual countries for multiculturalism in public libraries, there have also been international drives, especially those from the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). IFLA established the Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section in 1986 (Zielinska, 2001:4). According to their Strategic Plan for 2004-2005 (IFLA, 2004), their mission is to bring together libraries interested in the development and the provision of library services designed to reflect the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of society.

The goals of the Section (IFLA, 2004) include, amongst others:

- The creation of strategies to support multicultural services and development in libraries throughout the world, with special interest in developing countries.
- Working towards the integration of multicultural services into the general management of libraries.
- Promoting access to a full range of library and information services suitable for linguistic, ethnic and cultural communities - within a global society.

The Section published a set of guidelines in 1987 which were revised in 1998 and are referred to as "*Multicultural Communities: Guidelines for Library Services*" (IFLA, 1998). These guidelines outline the responsibility for the provision of multicultural library services; the types of library materials for multicultural communities; information and reference services; technical services; extension services; and staffing multicultural services. As in individual countries, IFLA has expressed its perspectives on globalisation and technology and its effects on multicultural library services. The IFLA (1998:5) guidelines recommend that "in global, networked library systems, all cultures and languages must have access to and be able to participate in the global network."

4. CONCLUSION

Chapter Two set out to describe multiculturalism and the multicultural library within the context of this study. This chapter has further clarified terms and concepts related to multiculturalism, such as culture, diversity, communities and minorities. Finally, based on an international literature review, this chapter has outlined the development of multiculturalism in public libraries abroad.

In this chapter it has been noted that there are guidelines and/or policies which have been developed by individual countries and by IFLA (1998) for multicultural library services. These will be investigated in the next chapter, Chapter 3.