Exploring the Social Culture of Librarianship
Through the Identifications and Experiences of Library Workers
who are Members of Marginalized Social Groups

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Abstract

Background
CILIP have created a positive action scheme called Encompass which seeks to improve the representational diversity of the library profession in the UK. However the limited success of a similar US scheme called Spectrum suggests attendance to a culture of exclusivity within librarianship may be required.

Aims
This dissertation aimed to reveal sources of cultural exclusivity with librarianship by exploring the identifications and experiences of library workers who were members of social groups that were marginalized in society.

Methods
The research was theoretically influenced by critical approaches and social identity theory. The methodology took elements from both phenomenology and grounded theory in a slurred approach. A purposive sample comprised of CILIP Diversity Group members was used and data collection methods included a questionnaire and semi structured interviews, which were analysed thematically.

Results
The social identities of the participants were found to be of great importance and highly nuanced. The meaning of being a library worker evolved over time and in context sometimes including a re-envisioning of the role. Identity motivated a wide range of initiatives, was a source of endurance, and affected how library roles were performed. Librarianship was identified with through ideals, library work, and in relation work colleagues. The social make up of the profession, professionalism, heteronormativity and heterosexism, and cultural images of librarianship emerged as sources of exclusion.

Conclusions
Identity is a powerful tool and if acknowledged, understood in all its complexity, engaged with, and supported to develop from grassroots level it could contribute strategically to the achievement of policy objectives. Small diversity initiatives do not necessarily promote an
inclusive or pluralistic culture and this may have harmful effects on those who find themselves isolated within it. A critical mass is optimal for social and work outcomes.
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1. Introduction

Librarianship has been perceived as a profession whose membership and services cater to a White Middle Class audience. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), whose membership is arguably reflective of the profession as a whole, recently conducted their first equalities audit and found that their membership is heavily skewed toward older White females (Khan, 2010). CILIP have recently devised a positive action trainee scheme, called Encompass which will be targeted at the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) population (CILIP, 2009). The American Library Association has run a similar scheme since 1997, called Spectrum, which provides library scholarships to underrepresented ethnic groups (ALA, 2011). While Spectrum has lead to accelerated career development for its benefactors (Downing et al., 2007); it has failed to make the library profession more representative of the population. Evidence has shown that the number of racial and ethnic minority students attending library schools has remained static, even as relative populations have grown, and that for racial and ethnic minorities in the profession, retention rates are poor (Hall and Grady, 2005). Hall who is the director of the Spectrum initiative has suggested that recruiting for diversity must coincide with a change in the culture of librarianship towards one of greater social inclusivity, if efforts are to be successful (Hall and Grady, 2005).

This dissertation aimed to explore the exclusivity of the social culture of librarianship. As identification is the primary mode through which people establish or fail to establish a sense of belonging, the identifications of library workers who are members of social groups that are marginalized in society were chosen as an effective way to explore this topic. The dissertation hoped to reveal what is valued in the culture of librarianship, what processes of exclusion may originate from within it, and how individuals have attempted to navigate or transform it.

Resolving the exclusivity of librarianship is increasingly important, in addition to the implications for recruitment and retention, the profession of librarianship is necessarily intertwined with services it provides. To ensure the success and continued existence of the library, it must be of relevance to the communities of users it serves.
There is little literature related to the exclusivity of librarianship as a profession or attending directly to its culture. There is a small body of literature from the US but due to the difference in historical and social contexts this has limited applicability to the UK. Literature within the UK has tended to focus on the public library sector and services to marginalised communities, with the exclusive culture of librarianship being an implicit theme. Nevertheless, *Open to All?* (Muddiman et al., 2000), a comprehensive research project which addressed the ability of public libraries to achieve social policy objectives, directly implicated a number of cultural factors in the exclusivity of public libraries. These included:

- The attitudes and philosophies of library workers who were claimed to prefer to serve users similar to themselves, exuberated by the homogeneity of the profession
- The valuing of ‘neutrality’, which was claimed to promote passive and thus exclusionary services
- The valuing of ‘access to all’, which was claimed to obscure the questions of relevance to all
- The concept of public libraries as inherently inclusive, which was claimed to promote complacency
- The image of libraries, which was claimed to create public perceptions of an institution that reflected middle class values and culture
- The marginalization of services addressing social inclusion

In a recent revisiting of the topics addressed in *Open to All?* Pateman and Vincent (2010) found that in the decade since, the public library sector as a whole had failed to prioritise social inclusion relative to other policy objectives and implicate many of the same cultural barriers. While Wilson and Birdi (2008) suggested that the correlation between empathy and identity may form a cultural barrier to working empathically with diverse user groups in what is a very homogenous workforce.
1.1 Aims and objectives

Aim

This dissertation aimed to reveal sources of cultural exclusivity with librarianship by exploring the identifications and experiences of library workers who were members of social groups that were marginalized in society.¹

Objectives

After the participation of a purposive sample of library workers has been secured, the aim will be fulfilled by through achievement of the following research objectives:

A. To explore the social identities of the participants.
B. To explore identification with librarianship through accounts of:
   i. How the participants first came to be library workers.
   ii. How the participants identities inform their library work.
   iii. How the participants identify with other library workers.
C. To explore how situations encountered in librarianship that gave rise to identity salience informed actions with the intention to navigate or transform the culture of librarianship.
D. To relate the identifications and experiences of the participants to the wider social and cultural context.

¹ Women have not been included as a social group due to the added theoretical complexity of analysing gender within a female dominated profession.
1.2 Terms used

BME - Black and Minority Ethnic

Cisgender - A term used to describe a person whose gender identity and socially assigned gender are in alignment

Culture - “a pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration-that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, cited in Kaarst-Brown et al., 2004).

Diversity – the valuing of social difference (Hepple, 2010).

Equality – the fair treatment of different social groups (Hepple, 2010).

Identification – a psychological process through which an individual becomes a group member. Individuals recognize an important commonality between themselves and other members of the group and accentuate their similarities or adopt group values, attitudes and behaviour, thus aligning themselves and the group (Hogg and Abrams, 1998).


Institutions – are “complex social forms that reproduce themselves such as governments, the family, human languages, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems” (Miller, 2011).

LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans

Librarianship - defined in this dissertation as any aspect of the profession including libraries, library work, library workers, professional bodies etc.
**Oppression** - systematic injustice which is embedded in the norms, practices and assumptions, transmitted and supported by culture, and enacted by institutions and individual (Deutsch, 2006).

**Social group** – a group of individuals with a socially important commonality. Individuals may be positioned into groups by external forces such as institutional practices and hegemonic norms, or through a process of identification (Hogg and Abrams, 1998).
2. Literature Review

Introduction

There is literature that has focused on the topics of the diversity of the library profession, minority groups within librarianship, and services to diverse populations, however there is very little literature that attends directly to the social culture of librarianship, or to librarianship through an examination of social identity or lived experiences. Thus this literature review takes a broad scope designed to offer both a theoretical and contextual background to the research. Literature from the disciplines of social psychology, social policy, and library and information science have been used. The use of library and information science literature from outside the UK has been restricted due to its limited relevance, as both identity and culture are formed in the context of specific histories and geographies. Where US library literature has been included it has been selected for the particular relevance of its theoretical and methodical approach.

The first section of the literature review provides an outline of inequality in the UK before moving on to oppression as a more useful concept which incorporates an analysis of power relations and social privilege as well as social disadvantage at different scales. Identity development, identity complexity, and the role of identity in social action and at work, are all outlined. The second section of the literature review provides a brief exploration of the concept of social justice and the way in which identity has been attended to in UK social policy. In lieu of any UK literature attending directly to the social culture of librarianship the third section focuses on the library as an institution, the social make up of the profession, their manifest concerns, and librarianships response to social policy. The final section of the literature review gives a brief review of two US studies from the library literature that are similar to this research in approach, purpose and methodology to this research.

2.1 Oppression, Privilege, Identity, Groups and Social Action

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) have a statutory remit to work for equality in the UK. In their recent triennial review they characterised social inequality in Britain. They evaluated evidence of outcomes amongst different social groups in the eight spheres judged most important in contributing to a happy, fulfilled and productive life. Findings showed measurable differences in outcomes across social groups. Key findings included that:
• Lower life expectancies were experienced by BME, LGBT, and working class people and that this could be attributed to cumulative inequality in healthcare, and greater experiences of drug misuse, hate crime, and abuse.

• Limited physical and legal security were experienced by women, BME and LGBT people with members of these groups more likely to fear crime, be victimised by crime, and to have limited confidence in systems of protection and redress.

• Women, BME, LGBT and disabled people experienced poorer health, had difficulty accessing health care, and had a lack of confidence in healthcare providers to treat them with dignity.

• Women, BME, LGBT, disabled, and working class people had limited access to education experienced through low attainment, formal or informal exclusion, bullying, and segregation.

• Women, BME, LGBT, and disabled people had limited employment opportunities in the form of low employment rates, pay inequality, exclusion through harassment or discrimination, and occupational segregation.

• Women, BME, and disabled people had greater experiences of poverty and substandard housing

• Women, BME, disabled, and working class people were more likely to need care and to provide care.

• BME, LGBT, disabled, and people who are in non professional occupations, had less levels of power in public life evidenced by a low representation in public bodies and a subjective sense of a lack of power (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a).

The report provided evidence for the existence of structural inequality in the UK in the manifestation of patterns of unequal outcome and illustrated the divergent effects on different social groups. However as it was designed to identify areas of priority for policy makers and provide a benchmark for future years, it can only illustrate patterns of inequality that are based on available data, are manifest in objective and measurable terms, and attend to social groups with characteristics that are protected by legislation (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a).

This dissertation is concerned with the often intangible and immeasurable lived experience of people who identify with marginalised groups, so the wider concept of social oppression is useful. Social oppression can be defined as systematic injustice that is:
“embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutions and rules, and the collective consequences of following those rules. It refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions that are supported by the media and cultural stereotypes as well as by the structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms” (Young, cited in Deutsch, 2006).

Oppression acts in a dialectic way to reinforce itself at cultural, institutional and individual scales. It acts not only to the detriment of some social groups in placing them in an unfairly disadvantaged position, but to the benefit of dominant groups who are placed in positions of unearned privilege (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

The EHRC triennial review highlighted the role of the institutions in creating structural inequality noting that “the greatest impacts on the opportunities open to individuals are made by everyday decisions in every part of society, most of which apply equally to everyone” (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a : 5). Institutions have been created, shaped and maintained by the dominant groups in society and therefore attend to their needs and concerns, and are imbued with their ideology. Given this, institutional operations with practices that are informed by a difference blind concept of equality, in which the same rules are applied equally to all, regardless of any individual’s specific social circumstances, tend to act to reinforce inequality. Social movements such as feminism, anti racism and the gay liberation movement have argued that to address structural inequality, social difference must be recognised and explicitly addressed, through strategies such as the targeted empowerment of oppressed groups, and reevaluations of institutional practices (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a; Sue, 2010; Young 2008; Hogg and Abrams 1998; Hardiman and Jackson 1997).

There is a dialectic relationship between institutions and individuals that operates through culture. Institutions shape individuals’ values and attitudes through the everyday acts such as socializing them, rewarding them or punishing them; while individuals imbue the
institutions of society with their values and attitudes through a range of interactions such as working for them, patronising them, or voting for them. As these attitudes and values come to be reinforced and reproduced, hegemonic cultural guidelines are established that work at both scales; these include the normalisation of the social positions such as maleness, whiteness, heterosexuality, non disability, middle-classness etc (Young 2008; Hogg and Abrams 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

While individuals are often structurally positioned into social groups and relative positions of advantage or disadvantage by external forces such as institutional practices and hegemonic norms; social groups can also be formed or strengthened through identity and the individual psychological processes of identification. Identity is the concept an individual holds of themselves giving meaning to who they are, and their relationship to others; and helps to direct behaviour. Identification is a psychological process in which individuals recognize an important commonality between themselves and other members of the group and accentuate their similarities or adopt group values, attitudes and behaviour, thus aligning themselves with the group. The need to identify with others is motivated by the fundamental human need to feel secure, to create meaning and to bolster self esteem. Group identity and self esteem can be enhanced with the presence of an out group against whom individuals can accentuate their differences in a way that positively bolsters their own social identity (Lister, 2008; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998).

Lister (2008) notes that social group movements are often organized around collective identities and have characteristically made demands for intangible social goods such as respect, recognition, and dignity. Lister relates these demands to the human importance of establishing a positive identity for oneself, and notes that a distorted reflection of the self is a key characteristic of the lived experience of marginalized individuals:

“our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves” (Taylor, cited in Lister 2008 : 110).
The remedy for this facet of oppression involves attending to cultural images, language and discourse and correcting group misrepresentation or erasure (Sue, 2010; Lister, 2008; Young, 2008; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

The dynamics of privilege and oppression also act at individual scales to alter self perception, the perception of others, and interpersonal interactions between individuals (Miller, 2005; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997). Hardiman and Jackson (1997) developed an influential model of identity development in the context of unequal power relations between groups. Their framework models the effects of privilege and oppression on identity and interpersonal relationships for both privileged and oppressed individuals. From birth individuals in society are socialised into their different statuses at interpersonal and institutional levels, often through the correction of group boundary violations. Through these processes individuals learn about societal rewards, punishments and the meaning of being a member of their group, and they unconsciously adopt and internalize the ideologies they have been socialized in (Hardiman and Jackson, 1997). The internalization of oppressive ideologies encourages individuals from privileged groups to express and engage in entitled attitudes and behaviours, which are enacted at the expense of oppressed groups, but maintain a positive self perception through the rationalization of doubts (McIntosh, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997). Meanwhile individuals in oppressed groups who have internalized the same ideology may act in collusive ways (Hardiman and Jackson, 1997). The aligned strategy to gain social power for such individuals is that of social mobility, in which individuals try to transcend their assigned group status, underpinned by the belief that this is possible. This strategy is unsuccessful by design and tends to reinforce the dominant ideology (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998).

The concept of microaggressions developed by Sue (2010), offers a framework to analyze oppressive interpersonal interactions. Microaggressions are “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership” (Sue, 2010 : xvi). The form microaggressions take tend to reflect the dichotomies created by inequality, and on analysis reveal themes such as centrality versus marginality, inclusion versus exclusion, or desirability versus undesirability etc. Sue (2010) refers to a large body of interdisciplinary literature to detail significant ill effects on the psychological health of recipients of cumulative microaggressions. Compounding factors in their negative effects on receivers are that they are cumulative and that their insidious nature may make them
difficult to recognize, and if they are recognised receivers are frequently left in a dilemma about whether or how to challenge the message. Microaggressions also cause inequality on structural scale through the creation of hostile environments which deny equality of opportunity (Sue, 2010).

Individuals in privileged groups may move beyond the stage of internalisation, this may occur through a shift in consciousness or an experience in which the dynamics of privilege and unfair disadvantage can no longer be rationalised causing a dissonance which must be resolved. Such individuals may begin to question and challenge their privileged status and experience an ideological shift. McIntosh (1998) in a seminal article detailed an extensive list of privileges she recognized and acknowledged herself as having due to her membership of a white social group such as her ability to “go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared” (McIntosh, 1998: 11). She notes the difficulty of making such acknowledgements as it challenges deeply held beliefs and self perception. This original list has inspired many others based on different systems of privilege such as classism, ablism, and heterosexism. The end stage of such work as modelled by Hardiman and Jackson (1997), is the development of a growing empathy for oppressed groups; and the building of an identity that is independent of the systems of social power. However the model is acknowledged as being a simplistic representation of the processes at work as the dialectical nature of the phenomenon means identity development is a continuous process.

Individuals in oppressed social groups are modelled as undergoing a parallel process, similarly developing an awareness of the dynamics of privilege and oppression, and working to build an ideology and identity that is independent of the systems of power (Hardiman and Jackson, 1997). Individuals may join or form collectives which aid in this development and may participate in social action that challenges the legitimacy of the dominant ideology and practices which follow from it, and offer alternative visions of society (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997). This strategy is underpinned by the belief that while the categories of group membership cannot be transcended, the relations of power between groups can be changed. This strategy presents a direct threat to the dominant ideology with its potential for transforming society (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998).
Marginalized social groups experience different oppressive paradigms which manifest differently in outcomes, as shown in the EHRC triennial review (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a; Lister, 2008). There is debate in the literature about the best way to model these differences, with discourses of social justice usually attending to class in terms of the redistribution of resources, sexuality in terms of recognition, and disability and race in a hybrid form (Lister, 2008). Young (2008) illustrates how structural inequality, may lead to a process where socially segregated groups develop group specific and socially recognizable habits, comportments and bodily affects, which are then essentialised as group attributes disparaged in such a way that they further limit access to opportunity. This process has been noted as occurring in the domain of social class in Britain, with discourses of a social underclass becoming prominent in the past decade, this makes a recognition model a useful concept for researching class issues, but may also obscure the structural component of the phenomenon (Young, 2008; Shildrick et al., 2006).

### 2.1.1 The Complexity of Identity

Individual identity is also complex and fluid, with most individuals holding a range of identities. Different social identities become salient in different social contexts, creating expressions of identity and social behaviour that are situational. The identity that becomes important in a given social situation is the one which gives the social context and the persons place within it the most meaning; generally this tends to be the identity which accounts for the most difference relative to the group. The psychological factors influencing the situational saliency of identity are accessibility and fit. Accessibility is how easily available the identity is to the individual, usually related to how often that identity is used. The second factor is how well the identity provides a meaningful account of the social situation. Most individuals slide between identifications easily and where conflict does occur it arises from the conflict of values, attitudes, and norms rather than the identities themselves (Muir and Wetherell, 2010; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

How an individual understands the relationships between their multiple identities has implications for both self concept and the perception of others. If multiple group identities are perceived to be harmonious with one another in terms of the values, attitudes and
norms, differences between the groups and individuals in them are not noted and a simple identity structure is maintained. If however an individual recognizes a lack of overlap in terms of the values, attitudes and norms between their multiple group memberships, much of the security, self esteem, and meaning motivations, for aligning themselves with any one group or making intergroup comparisons are lost; and they are also cognitively more difficult to make. This has implications for how individuals relate to others, with such individuals being highly inclusive of individual social differences (Muir and Wetherell, 2010; Roccas and Brewer, 2002).

Identity is also fluid. It also has been argued that the distinction between social and personal identities have become arbitrary as driven by globalization and technological changes identification with traditional social groups such as social class has declined, while individualistic identities have gained importance and become the source of many new communities (Muir and Wetherell, 2010).

2.1.2 Identity at Work

Professions such as librarianship may also act as a social group. The same motivations for identification exist, with individuals seeking a sense of connection, self esteem and status. However professions have a number of characteristics which promote process of identification and are likely to intensify its consequences, in librarianship this includes a history with shared experiences, goals, and social relationships; processes of socialization such as librarianship courses; the existence of external threats such as funding cuts; and the assignation of working roles. Additionally individuals tend to seek professions that they perceive as congruent with their social identities at the outset. Identification with the occupational group leads to an individual experience of job satisfaction and commitment; and a strong and cohesive occupational group. Individuals may come to identify as library workers through identification with colleagues, or through a reified or prototypical image of what it means to be a library worker. This means it is possible for individuals to identify with a profession without identifying with any of its actual members, and that the prevailing values, attitudes and norms do not have to be internalized (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Professional groups such as those that exist within librarianship also compete with other professional groups in society. Professional bodies act to gain status for their profession by clearly defining and policing the role of the profession; claiming areas of
expertise seeking power over these; and by formalizing and protecting its knowledge. These activities are all related to preserving the privileged social and economic status of the group and its members in relation to other groups (Broady-Preston, 2010).

Within groups there is social comparison with individuals comparing other members against a prototypical image. If the prototype is consensual, individuals who are highly similar to the prototype tend to be well liked and may achieve an elevated social status within the group, perhaps as a leader. Individuals who do not fit the prototype well may similarly be positioned into roles, such as deviants or overachievers (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Additionally the same inter-group relations that are enacted in wider society are also enacted within the group, meaning that members of marginalized social groups are likely to be compared to others unfavourably and perceived as not fitting the prototype (Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Hogg and Terry, 2000). Two factors likely to intensify these processes within librarianship are the extreme homogeneity of the profession in terms of the social categories of its members, and the rapidity of social and technological change, which the profession is responding to, with the attendant uncertainty this creates. Homogeneity leads to stronger prototypes, and uncertainty increases group salience and the psychological need for a united group. These processes can elevate the need for prototypicality above other needs, leading to outcomes such as ‘group-think’ or the selection of inadequate leaders (Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Hogg and Terry, 2000).

2.2 Social Justice and Social Policy

This section gives a brief discussion of the concept of social justice and the way in which identity has been attended to in UK social policy.

Social justice is a key term in contemporary political life that attends to the creation of fair political and social institutions (Miller, 2005). There are many theories of social justice but the most influential one in contemporary use has been based on the philosophy of John Rawls (Burchardt and Craig, 2008; Piachard, 2008). Rawls’ theory of social justice defines a number of principles by which a just society would be characterised. These include equality of opportunity; equal citizenship, in terms of equal rights and the ability to exercise these; the provision of a social minimum, with which every member of society has their basic needs met, and beyond this, a fair distribution of resources according to merit (Burchardt and Craig, 2008; Piachard, 2008; Miller, 2005).
In UK politics the desirability of a just society is widely agreed upon; and social policy is created that seeks to address issues of social justice; however the influence of political ideologies influence the ways in which the term is interpreted and used, the policies and strategies designed, the way these are implemented, and the priority given to them in relation to other policy objectives (Hepple, 2010; Burchardt and Craig, 2008; Piachard, 2008; Miller, 2005). Burchardt and Craig (2008) note that Rawls’ theory of social justice lends itself to social policy that attends to rights, focuses on the whole of society and requires a high level of state intervention. They compared the approaches of the Labour and Conservative government to social justice to Rawls theory, and found that New Labour had targeted their policies towards poorest groups in society, taken a narrow interpretation of basic principles such as equality of opportunity in equating it to any paid employment, but had introduced some wider redistributive measures such as working tax credits. In comparison, the Conservative Party have tended to target their policies at the most disadvantaged groups in society through the promotion of social institutions, such as the family, marriage, and charity, whilst downplaying the role of the state. It can be argued that much of the use of the term social justice in political life is rhetorical (Burchardt and Craig, 2008; Piachard, 2008).

Nevertheless there is a long history of social policy in the UK. These have traditionally interpreted social justice through a perspective that attends to formal equality and tangible resources, however as society, the nature of inequality, and social demands for social justice have evolved so too have interpretations of social justice and the focus of their efforts (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010a, Hepple, 2010; Lister, 2008; Miller, 2005; Fraser, 1996). Hepple (2010) charts the ideological underpinnings of equality legislation in the UK through time; beginning with the Race Relations Act 1965 which was designed to tackle direct discrimination and was based on the concept of formal equality; the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 designed to tackle indirect discrimination and based on the concept of substantive equality, to the present day Equality Act 2010 which he describes as being underpinned by a comprehensive and transformative conception of equality, and claims is largely due to the influence of the interest groups, campaigners and organisations involved in its formulation.
The Equality Act 2010 is a legal framework which has combined the previously existing equality legislation into a single act. Its key features include a newly extended range of protected characteristics such as gender reassignment, and age and the enablement of positive action to address the under representation of protected groups in workplaces (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010b; Hepple, 2010). The act was devised and enacted under the Labour government, and later enforced by the Coalition government. On conception the act included a public authority duty to consider socio-economic disadvantage in the making of strategic decisions, this was much lauded as addressing class inequality on a structural scale, however the Coalition government later retracted this duty claiming it as ineffective and bureaucratic (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010b; Government Equalities Office, 2010; Hepple, 2010).

The current Coalition government has an equality strategy designed to support the government’s stated commitment to social mobility. The equality strategy outlines an approach in which the state intervenes only minimally. It describes a move away from legislation, which is claimed as bureaucratic and producing diminishing returns; the promotion of transparency, through the publication of equality information; and the transfer of the responsibility for corrective action to individuals. The approach does not address structural inequality, and a strong retreat from the recognition of social groups is in evidence with the approach to equality described as “one that moves away from treating people as groups or ‘equality strands’ and instead recognises that we are a nation of 62 million individuals” (Government Equalities Office, 2010: 8). However Muir and Wetherell (2010), note that the state are necessarily implicated in the creation and shaping of identities of their citizens through institutions; and argue that policy makers should engage with the identities of their citizens, both social and personal, in order to deliver policy effectively. They acknowledge the difficulty of engaging with identity and claim this arises primarily through a failure to understand the diversity, complexity and fluidity of identity, and suggest that policy makers can most effectively harness the power of identity through the support and scaling up of grassroots work.

Thus social policy tends to be reactive, influenced by competing ideologies and attends to only some aspects of social injustice as experienced by individuals and groups in everyday life, and this sets the parameters of discussion for much of the literature concerned with
inequality, for example it may exclude large categories such as class and more intangible forms of injustice such as disrespect.

2.3 Libraries as Institutions

The library in Britain can be modelled as a social institution, in that it is a complex social form which acts to structure human activity to fulfil social aims; consists of individuals who perform roles; and which has reproduced itself over time to become an enduring feature of everyday life in British society (Miller, 2011).

Libraries are products of wider society and as such the relations of power that exist in society are embedded in librarianship. These include for example Eurocentric classification systems which value the knowledge of western people to the exclusion of others; and the epistemologies and concerns of disciplinary fields derived from dominant subjectivities (Duraani, 2008).

As institutions of society libraries exist to fulfil a purpose. Although an institutions role in society may change over time, there will be continuities of past culture in present day manifestations. Public libraries have been described as middle class institutions, with discourses at the time of their conception focusing on libraries as a means to occupy the leisure time of the working class with the aim of distracting them from social ills or acculturating them into middle class ways of thinking. Black (2003) finds evidence of an intractable middle class dominance throughout the history of the public library which has endured even through reformative political climates. It has been suggested that the same values are evident in present day discourses as were at its inception, for example in discourses debating the extent to which libraries should provide popular literature as opposed to ‘quality’ literature, a concept that is embedded in middle class norms (Pateman and Vincent, 2010; Muddiman et al., 2000).

Influences on the culture of the library and its profession are multiple and dialectical and therefore difficult to delineate and continuously changing. Librarianship consists of many stakeholders who all exert influence on its culture. Professional bodies such as CILIP socialize of new members into the professionals through accredited qualifications and thus play a key role in forming individual and collective professional identities. Library and information science departments enact this socialization in their delivery of librarianship.
courses; and also exist within the culture of higher education where they are concerned with securing the status of their research discipline. Individual libraries work to support diverse aims within a variety of sectors and the unique organizational cultures of their parent institutions. There are also a variety of dynamic external influences including technological developments, economic circumstances, and changed user needs; as well as the competing aims and ideologies of politics at local, national, and regional levels, to which libraries are subject to and also work to enact (Broady-Preston, 2010; CILIP, 2010a; Duraani, 2008; Goulding, 2006; Kaarst-Brown et al., 2004; Muddiman et al., 2000).

Culture is complex and there is very little in the literature which attends directly or comprehensively to the social culture of librarianship as a profession, and from which solid conclusions can be drawn. The next chapter will focus on areas of librarianship which intersect most prominently with issues related to social groups in society. These include an examination of the social make up and concerns of library workers, and the relationship between librarianship and social policy.

### 2.3.1 Social Policy and Public Libraries

Public libraries enact social policy; they are subject to the political priorities of their local authority and through their statutory responsibilities to the national government. Academic libraries contribute to social policy objectives such as the widening participation agenda through their higher education institutions. Both are subject to a public sector equality duty under which they must work to actively promote equality of opportunity (Khan, 2010; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010c). In recent years the role of government in determining the public library agenda has increased and Goulding (2006) claims that social policy is a key driving force for public libraries to the extent of causing a re-evaluation of purpose. This section will briefly examine the recent history of social policy in UK public libraries and the response to it within librarianship.

*Open To All?* was a comprehensive research project that took part early in the New Labour government. Its purpose was to identify priority areas for public libraries to address and produce recommendations for action in order to align themselves with the Labour party’s social policy. The project took a wide approach addressing the management of libraries,
library users and non users and the community context. The survey of all public library
authorities in the UK found uneven and limited development of social inclusion initiatives in
terms of services and strategies. A number of cultural factors were implicated including:

- The attitudes and philosophies of library workers who were claimed to prefer to
  serve users similar to themselves, exuberated by the homogeneity of the
  profession
- The valuing of ‘neutrality’, which was claimed to promote passive and thus
  exclusionary services
- The valuing of ‘access to all’, which was claimed to obscure the questions of
  relevance to all
- The concept of public libraries as inherently inclusive, which was claimed to
  promote complacency
- The image of libraries, which was claimed to create public perceptions of an
  institution that reflected middle class values and culture
- The marginalization of services addressing social inclusion (Muddiman et al, 2000).

The report made recommendations for a number of stakeholders including local and
national government, the professional body, the library profession, library schools and
research institutes. Some of the recommendations which attended to culture included:

- The adoption of new roles more responsive to user needs with a reassessment of
  staff requirements including the need for professional qualifications, and staffing
  structures appropriate to those new roles
- Staff training and development to attend directly to staff and organizational culture
- The means for a social exclusion agenda to be heard within the professional body
  in the form of committees, branches, groups, and through liaison with relevant
  organizations (Muddiman et al, 2000)

The New Labour government produced Framework for the Future which emphasized a
need for libraries to engage with social policy objectives and created a framework that
identified three areas of focus for public libraries. These included a reading and learning
agenda, an ICT modernization agenda; and a social exclusion agenda. The social exclusion
agenda attended to issues such as community building, citizenship, the creation of
accessible and welcoming library buildings; and the need to work in partnership to provide joined up services, and reassess community needs to focus on non users and those who were most disadvantaged (Pateman and Vincent, 2010; Goulding, 2006; Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2003).

Pateman and Vincent (2010) reviewed the professional response to the social exclusion agenda at the end of the New Labour government. They found that many public libraries had made their service more inclusive, but that there was still a lack of continuity in these services and the strategy development related to them was limited. That also noted that the reading and ICT agendas of ‘Framework for the Future’ were much better received than the social exclusion agenda and generated considerably more activity, investment and professional interest.

Pateman and Vincent (2010) identified the drivers for the development of social exclusion provision as policy, funding, training and staff development, and staff commitments to a social exclusion agenda. They noted that the drivers of policy and funding were present during the New Labour government thereby implicating staff in the failure to attend to social policy objectives, and identify the same cultural barriers as attended to in Open to All? Findings by Wilson and Birdi (2008) similarly implicated the role of staff in the failure of public libraries to fully engage with social policy. They found that there was a poor understanding of social exclusion and its relation to social policy objectives; a lack of confidence in providing services to marginalised groups; demoralization amongst frontline staff related to their undervalued status; pressure from a local government culture which encouraged a surface approach by focusing on achieving objectives; and the sense that non traditional services were outside of the library service remit. It was found that staff attitudes towards social policy could be related through the concept of empathy to identity. It was found that while some staff believed a homogenous library workforce could empathetically engage with a diverse range of users, and there were high self reported levels of empathy; that other methods of data collection reported a strong cultural resistance to inclusive services, particular marginalized groups and social policy objectives. There was also a correlation between the strength of negative attitudes towards social policy objectives and library worker age and professional status, with older library workers displaying being perceived as more resistant to a social exclusion agenda and professional
librarians feeling much social exclusion work was outside of the libraries remit (Wilson and Birdi, 2008).

A recent CILIP report *Defining Our Professional Future* also shows something of the awareness of government policy objectives amongst the profession. It found that participants perceived a rapidly evolving information sector; however the role of social policy or social change in driving developments in the sector did not appear to be recognized. Finance was attributed as the main driver of developments (61%), followed by employer thinking (18%), patron needs (10%), and technology (8%) (CILIP, 2011:28); furthermore CILIP themselves did not address social policy in their vision of the future of the profession.

Many of these findings appear to support the claim by Pateman and Vincent (2010) that much of the driving force for social exclusion comes from outside of the profession in the form of committed external networks of practitioners.

### 2.3.2 Library Workers as a Social Group

The library profession is a social group, and the prevailing social make up of its membership will necessarily affect its culture, the interactions between individuals and groups within it and the way in which individuals identify with it. There is no clear profile of the social membership of the library profession however CILIP have recently conducted their first equality audit of their membership which is arguably reflective of the profession as a whole. They found that membership was extremely skewed towards a relatively homogenous demographic of older white women and not representative of national or local populations; with 86% being over 35 years of age, 76% being female, and with only 4% being BME and 1.3% being disabled. The audit provided a partial picture as the analysis was limited by the available data, which excluded some social categories such as class, gender reassignment and to a large extent sexuality (Khan 2010).

Librarianship like other professional groups are subject to government social policy that seeks to enable equal opportunities for the different social groups in society, and CILIP in particular have statutory responsibilities related to their various functions as a trade organisation, a qualifications body, and a service provider, in addition to the statutory
requirements laid out in the Equality Act 2010 (Khan, 2010; Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010c). CILIP have in place various initiatives including an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Strategy, for which the equality audit which was carried, to determine priorities and as a benchmark for future reference; membership of the Equally Professional Network for which they have committed to a framework of metrics which will measure equality indicators, enabling identification of areas to take action in, and acting as a future benchmark against other professions; and finally Encompass a positive action trainee scheme targeted at BME groups in an attempt to address the underrepresentation of BME groups in librarianship (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010d; Khan, 2010; CILIP, 2009).

The recent CILIP report Defining Our Professional Future also reveals something of the attitudes and values of library workers as group; and of its professional body (CILIP, 2011). It was produced in widespread consultation with members and non members, in an attempt to provide a vision of the future of the information section and define a mission for CILIP. A large and comprehensive sample from a range sectors and geographies were used, and the study was guided in the initial stages by an open consultation through social media, to avoid foreclosing the issues raised. Within the report deprofessionalisation within the sector emerged as a concern. Participants recognised a changed demand for skills with interpersonal, communication and soft skills gaining precedence over traditional library skills such as cataloguing and classification. This trend has raised different responses amongst the group. The finding was interpreted by CILIP as a lack of understanding of professional skills and they indicated an intended response of better promoting the value of traditional professionalism to those outside of librarianship, in order to secure recognition and resourcing (CILIP, 2011). However Wilson and Birdi’s (2008) study reveals a more complex picture with amongst library workers. The participants of this study on noting the same trends often accepted the changed demands as a legitimate response to a change in needs and questioned the necessity of a library qualification for some library roles. However those who were most tied to the professional status of librarianship, tended to feel that public library services being stretched beyond their remit, thus illegitimating the new skills demand. This reveals a tension between the demands of the external environment, and responses by library workers with a division along the lines of professional status which have implications for both inclusion within the service and approaches to social policy.
2.4 Related Work


Key findings by Hussey (2006) included that library use played the most significant role in choosing a library career, with the library environment being perceived as a safe, comfortable and inclusive space; followed by experiences of library work; and that librarians themselves were rarely mentioned as an influence. Approximately half of the participants were relating their career plans and goals to their identities in wanting to serve their communities at that very early stage of their careers. The most significant finding was that the majority of participants had grown up or been schooled in almost exclusively white cultures. Hussey suggested that this acknowledged the library as a white cultural institution, and that initiatives to redress the underrepresentation of specific social groups within librarianship may have a more limited reach and impact than first appeared by only reaching those who were already most amenable.

Key findings by Downing (2009) included that all of the participants felt that their social identities had a significant impact on their relationships with their colleagues and how they performed their roles, including those from privileged social groups. They felt their identities motivated them to deliver new services and informed the ways they thought about and interacted with their users. In the case of librarians of colour she found that race was a very salient identity in the library and sources of exclusion originated in frequent microaggressions both interpersonal, and environmental in having ‘solo status’, or often being the only person of colour on the service. The library workers were aware and proud of the benefits they bought to the library service through their specific cultural knowledge, however they felt their contributions to the service were judged against their colleagues using normative standards and that this left their contributions undervalued and negatively affected their chances of promotion.
Both Hussey (2006) and Downing (2009) used similar theoretical and methodological approaches, with Hussey collecting data through semi structured interviews and taking a grounded theory and phenomenological approach to analysis; and Downing using a theoretical background of critical race theory and social identity theory, and a thematic analysis of data. This dissertation has borrowed methodological elements from these papers.

3. Methodology

3.1 Approach

The purpose of the research was to represent the library workers lived experiences through rich description, find themes in these experiences, and to draw conclusions about the culture of the library profession in the context of wider society.

A qualitative approach to the research was taken. Qualitative research assumes that knowledge is subjective and exists only within the context of human experiences, meaning it is particularly suitable for researching questions of a social nature (Bryman, 2008; Clough and Nutbrown, 2007; Thorne, 2000). Many streams of qualitative research seek to understand phenomena from the participants’ point of view. This research makes the assumption that in order to create a faithful representation of the lived experiences of others and make valid interpretations about their meaning, the meanings by which the participants have understood these experiences must be understood first (Bryman, 2008).

This approach was chosen as an effective way to explore questions identity, which are fundamentally questions about how people understand themselves and others; and questions of action, for which identity often provides an impetus (Gilchrist et al., 2010; Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998).

3.1.1 Theoretical Approach

The research was approached theoretically using both a critical approach and the social identity theory. These two approaches were also evidenced to be complimentary by the presence of literature that combined them including Hardiman and Jackson (1997), and Downing (2009).
A critical approach was chosen as it aligned with the purpose of the research. The approach guided the choice to focus on the lived experiences of individuals from marginalized social groups, and to contextualize their experiences in societal relations of power. The critical approach also guided the data collection towards methods and practices which obtained narrative accounts, enabled the participant to bring forth material that was significant to them, and attempted to diminish the power differential between the researcher and the participant (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007; Kvale, 2007; Robson, 2002).

Similarly the social identity theory takes an approach that is suited to the purposes of the research. It places emphasis on subjectivities and on the influence of historical context on the present and its key assumptions include that society is comprised of groups which stand in relations of power to one another; and that while the existence of groups are inevitable, the types of groups, their characteristics and their relations with one another are not fixed. Social identity theory describes the processes of identification; the formation and nature of groups; the dynamic interactions between individuals, groups and institutions; and the role social identity plays in social action in a way that is both comprehensive and accessible (Hogg and Abrams, 1998). This theory was used to inform the formulation of the research questions and the questions put to the participants, and the interpretation and discussion of the results.

### 3.1.2 Methodological Approach

A range of methodological approaches were explored particularly phenomenology and grounded theory. Both have similar features such as inductive approaches, flexible research design, and a focus on human experience interpreted from the participants’ point of view (Baker et al., 1992).

Given the desired outcomes ‘method slurring’, that is the mixing of methodologies, was considered as an approach (Baker et al., 1992). A feature of qualitative research is that the researcher may create or adapt methodologies or methods (Thorne, 2000). However some research methodology literature cautions against this, arguing that it raises questions about the validity of the research. Arguments include the possibility of failing to fully acknowledge or describe any departures from accepted methodologies; the potential negative impact of a lack of supporting methodological literature available to the
researcher; and finally that methodologies which are inherently incompatible in either purpose or underlying assumptions may be slurred together (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007; Robson, 2002; Wimpenny and Gass, 2000; Baker et al., 1992). Nevertheless as in many disciplines it appears that the relevance of the literature on research methodology to researcher practitioners is questionable, with much of this literature appearing to be solely theoretical and therefore having limited applicability. It has been noted that in practice many researchers use method slurring in a pragmatic fashion if they produce results which are plausible and produce the desired outcome (Wimpenny and Gass, 2000; Baker et al., 1992).

Ultimately it was decided that the assumptions and products of pure phenomenology or pure grounded theory were not a good fit with what the researcher was seeking to achieve. Phenomenology is usually based in the philosophies of Husserl or Heidegger and the emphasis is on description rather than interpretation (Robson, 2002; Thorne, 2000); while grounded theory is derived from symbolic interactionism and the analysis of data usually produces a theory (Thorne, 2000). For this reason thematic analysis was chosen as a method of data analysis. Thematic analysis is a generic method of analysis and does not have a research tradition (Bryman, 2008). Pragmatically due to the lack of supporting literature about how to conduct a thematic analysis the researcher selectively borrowed procedures from grounded theory to code and derive themes from the data. This lack of research tradition and borrowing from others would seem to raise the some of the same questions of validity as method slurring, to counter this, the researcher continued to consider how the assumptions, purposes and desired products of the research were to be embedded at the data collection and data analysis stages and commented on these considerations (Mason, 2002).

### 3.2 Methods

Questionnaires and interviews were the chosen method of data collection and these were used to inform the answers to all of the research objectives. Additionally the literature review informed answers to the first research objective. This combination of methods were chosen in part to give a form of triangulation, and improve the validity of the research by better contextualizing the phenomenon, and exploring its manifestation at different scales (Robson, 2002).
### 3.2.1 Sampling

Purposive sampling has been used as the research was concerned with people with particular experiences, and the qualitative nature of these experiences rather than their generalisability. Members of the CILIP Diversity Group were identified as a source of potential participants. The mission of the group was:

“To unite those members of CILIP engaged in or interested in issues of diversity as they affect the library and information community, to foster communication between such members, to facilitate exchange of experience and the promotion of work relevant to those interests in order to promote and support library and information services to diversity and excluded communities” (CILIP, 2010b)

where diversity was given a wide definition covering “issues of race, religion, culture, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, disability - and other factors that result in discrimination and inequality” (CILIP, 2010b). The researcher felt that the group might contain a good source of library workers belonging to marginalized social groups, that the members’ evident interest in diversity issues in librarianship would make them attuned to and well placed to comment on issues of inclusivity and exclusivity from their own experience, and also that a good response would be garnered as the purposes of the research was compatible with the group ethos.

The research was initially introduced to committee members by the project supervisor at a Diversity Group meeting. Members who expressed an interest in being interviewed were invited to leave their contact details with the supervisor to be passed on to the researcher. The researcher then contacted the members who had expressed an interest via email and invited them to introduce themselves; indicate which areas of their experience they would like to talk about; and give information about their availability and location, so the feasibility of an interview could be assessed. Three interviewees were selected on the basis of the responses, with the researcher selecting for a breadth and depth of experience; and on the practicalities of conducting the interviews. Three were chosen as a minimum for triangulation to improve the research quality. All of these members were also directly emailed a link to participate in the questionnaire. To invite other potential participants to the questionnaire, information about the research project and a link to the questionnaire
were advertised via the Diversity Group’s newsletter and electronic mailing list, with a reminder issued two weeks before the close of the questionnaire.

3.2.2 Ethical Aspects

In the course of the data collection sensitive personal data was collected, including information about sexuality and racial or ethnic backgrounds. There were a number of practices taken to ensure the safety of participants. The participants were self selecting, with contact being facilitated through my dissertation supervisor, and the Diversity Group electronic mail list. Informed consent was obtained, with each participant being presented with details of the purpose of the research, the standards governing the research, the researcher’s and supervisor’s contact details; and information about their rights, and the storage, use and destruction of data. The participants were required to record their informed consent before the research could commence (refer to the Appendix A1). Additionally it was hoped that the purpose, methods and epistemological approach of the research was sensitive to the participants’ integrity.

3.2.3 The Questionnaire

A Questionnaire was chosen as a method of data collection primarily in response to the time constraints of the research project. This method removed the need for transcriptions, and it was hoped that it would provide a convenient method of communication for the participators, and produce a larger sample. Other benefits included that the use of questionnaires may have eradicated interviewer effects, which may have been marked given the personal and social nature of the subject matter (Bryman, 2008); and that the process of writing is noted as inherently reflective and it was hoped that this may have stimulated the participants’ into creating richer material than other methods (Van Manen, 1990). Conversely the disadvantages included the prerequisite requirements for reflectiveness, writing skill, persistence, and the dedication of time on the part of the participant; and a likely range of detail across the answers obtained (Bryman, 2008; Peterson, 2000). However the length of answers elicited made it easier to understand how the participant had interpreted the question (Peterson, 2000).

Questionnaires are generally not part of the research tradition for qualitative research that seeks to probe into the meaning of human experience (Robson, 2002). Most studies of this type would usually collect data through interviewing and there is much use of questioning to encourage deep and reflective answers (Moustakas, 1994). For this reason the
questionnaire consisted entirely of open questions to obtain expansive descriptive accounts and not foreclose or constrain answers in alignment with the approach and purpose of the research. It was hoped that responses with a similar level of detail and specificity as those that would be obtained from an interview would be acquired by incorporating elements of critical incident technique into the questionnaire.

Nevertheless many difficulties were anticipated in the design of the questionnaire. A particular problem was that it was not possible to follow the standard advice of asking simple questions, one at a time (Peterson, 2000). Many of the questions required explanation and instruction, and for the questions which attempted to elicit rich descriptions, a number of questions were asked to stimulate thoughts and memories (Van Manen, 1990). Additionally as the sample was expected to include individuals with a wide range of identities and experiences the questionnaire had to be designed to be equally relevant to all the participants (Bryman, 2008; Peterson, 2000). The questionnaire underwent careful design and piloting which ensured the questions were understandable and produced the quality and depth of answers that were required.

The online software application Survey Gizmo was selected to deliver the questionnaire. It had a number of advantageous features including the ability to ask a large number of questions, the number of question style options, good privacy and data protection features, and features to help deliver the questionnaire and monitor the participants’ interactions with it. However there were some limitations to the ability to design, alter and place the text of the questions, this made it difficult to make the formatting of the questionnaire consistent throughout to provide visual cues for the participants reading and answering the questions (Bryman, 2008; Peterson, 2000).

3.2.3.1 The Questions

The questionnaire broadly had two parts to it. The initial set of questions aimed to collect data about social identity, as a necessary foreground the analysis of the rest of the analysis; identifications with the role of library work, and with other library workers; and sites of librarianship in which social identity salience was stimulated. All of the answers to these questions were expected to provide data about the culture of librarianship, but to ensure a more comprehensive coverage a second set of questions were included. These were adapted from a selection of indicators of cultural competency within library organisations
as conceptualised by Smith (2008). Smith (2008) adapted these indicators from a seminal article about multicultural organisations by Cox (1991) to be specific to library organisations and developed a typology of the cultural competency of library organisations. These were underpinned by a contemporary conception of diversity as an ongoing process of integration that was fitting with the assumptions of the research. The researcher applied these indicators to questions of librarianship as a whole rather than the workplace organisations of the participants. It was hoped that with the use of these indicators the cultural consciousness of librarianship might be able to be categorised into one of the four typologies adapted by Smith (2008) which featured an unconscious, aware, accepting and blended organisation. As the length of the questionnaire was a concern the indicators that the researcher felt could be answered from personal experience of library work were included in the questionnaire, and the remaining indicators which focused on phenomenon at an institutional level left for the interviewees who all had managerial experience (Refer to the Appendix A2 for the questionnaire and Appendix A3 for piloting of the questionnaire).

3.2.4 Interviews

Interviews were chosen to add depth to the responses gathered. The interviews were semi-structured as particular aspects of experience such as identity had to be covered to gather responses that are compatible with those from the questionnaires. Otherwise participants were free to raise subjects that were of importance to them in keeping with the approach of the research. The benefits of interviews were the flexibility to follow up on answers by asking for clarification, elaboration and by encouraging further reflection. Disadvantages included the possibility of asking leading questions which was especially acute with a phenomenological approach, as well as the general difficulties of conducting interviews such as establishing a rapport and keeping the focus on the phenomenon under investigation (Bryman, 2008; Kvale, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

The interview took an oral history approach by encouraging the participants to give a chronological account of their experiences in librarianship, with invitations to contextualize their experiences in the profession with events in the wider community or society; and to reflect on how they had experienced librarianship change over time. The interview guide consisted of questions and prompts that were largely adapted from the questionnaire, ensuring a compatibility of responses and adequate coverage of the phenomenon under investigation; and a supplementary sheet of prompts was created to enable the researcher
to probe into interesting points in the participants’ narratives (Refer to Appendix A4 for the interview guide and prompts). The interviews were not piloted primarily because of time constraints, however to some extent the questions had already been tested by the questionnaire; and the establishing of a rapport with the participants and influence of them raising their own topics of interest would not have been testable (Kvale, 2007).

The participants each made practical arrangements for the interviews with the researcher travelling to their preferred location. Anna was interviewed in a meeting room at the library she managed, Ros was interviewed in a booked computer lab at the university library were she was a student, and Valerie was interviewed at home. The interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder.

### 3.3 Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis generally involves a coding process which acts to identify themes however it does not have an identifiable research tradition or a clear set of procedures associated with it. The analysis borrowed from the methods of grounded theory because there was a well documented branch of grounded theory developed by Strauss and Corbin that included a well defined set of procedures and methods which were relatively accessible to the novice researcher (Bryman, 2008). The grounded theory approach is one of induction that is designed to lead to the development of a theory from data. However the development of a theory was not in fitting with the purpose of this research, as an emphasis on understanding and interpreting the phenomenon, rather than offering explanations of how or why they happened, was already embodied in the nature of the research objectives and the selection of a phenomenological approach (Thorne, 2000). Additionally the time limitations of the research project meant it was not possible to take a truly iterative approach to data collection as is usually done in grounded theory, and the full adoption of this method would have lead to a poorly developed theory (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002). Therefore only the initial procedures of grounded theory were applied to the data collected in order to code it and reveal themes (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002).

As soon as possible after the interviews, memos were written. Memos were written throughout the analysis as an aid to memory, to capture information such as the researcher’s impressions and feelings, and during the later stages were the data was
reordered to help retain the context (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002). The initial were used as an aid to reflection and a validity check that ensured the interpretations were arising from the data and not the researcher’s impressions.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim by a hired transcriber. Although the close listening involved in transcribing would have aided the analysis it was not possible for the researcher to undertake this task due to the time limitations of the project (Bryman, 2008; Van Manen, 1990). The transcripts were checked against the interview recordings for accuracy. The researcher familiarized themselves with the questionnaire responses and interview transcripts by reading them over at least twice and created memos of any striking points or themes. The data was prepared for analysis by formatting the transcripts and questionnaire responses into paragraphs, and numbering them.

Coding is a process of labelling the data to indicate which aspects of the phenomenon under investigation the data is referring to. The researcher asked of the data ‘What research objective is this piece of info commenting on?’ and ‘What is it saying about it?’ Codes were also applied to data that appeared to have particular salience for the participants, evidenced by amount written, the richness of the description, or in the case of the interviews the tone of voice, or the researcher’s impressions. Memos were created during the coding process developing an impression of the account as a whole. Coding was a continual process that was done throughout the analysis, interpretation and writing up of the results (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002). The coding was carried out using Microsoft Word.

During the coding process the method of constant comparison was used for validity. This method is one of the main features of grounded analysis, in which the raw data is continually returned to ensure that the codes applied are true representations of the data, and where the same code has been applied to more than one piece of data, that the codes truly represent the same aspect of the phenomenon (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002). A similar process of continually returning to the data is also used during phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990).
A number of practices were used to ensure validity. As well as the writing of memos these included in two cases asking known participants for clarification on their responses, and the use of reflexive practices during the analysis and write up to identify and attend to areas of potential research bias (Robson, 2002). There were some practices the researcher would have liked to use such as participant validation and an iterative approach to data collection to confirm or disconfirm themes, however the time limitations of the project meant using these was not possible (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002; Moustakas, 1994).

Data collected from the participants were analysed holistically as individual cases. The responses were largely iterative in nature, so this enabled the researcher to interpret answers to questions more faithfully in light of participants’ previous responses and stay closer to the data by retaining its context. This was in keeping with the phenomenological approach of focusing on individual cases; and with the grounded theory approach not introducing preconceptions that may have been formed during the analysis of the other participants’ data (Bryman, 2008; Van Manen, 1990). The data was sorted and reordered by code in order to relate the codes to one another and search for themes within the individual cases; and more memos were created; but not to the extent of the grounded theory method of axial coding (Bryman, 2008; Robson; 2002).

To identify themes across participants a short profile was written for each participant detailing the themes running through their responses, and used as an aid to compare the individual cases to one another. On identification of a theme all units attending to it were compiled in a document and coded cross sectionally. However the initial emphasis on holistic analysis may have imposed limitations on the ability to discover themes across cases (Mason, 2002).

The process of writing up was analytic in itself involving a continual return to the data; and the choices made in the selection of material which was included and how the write up was structured also imposed limitations on what could be communicated (Mason, 2002; Robson; 2002; Van Manen, 1990).

A difficulty noted in the literature on grounded theory includes the influence of the researcher. Practices such as the creation of memos and reflexivity were used to reduce researcher bias, however it is questionable whether putting aside ones preconceptions is
truly possible; and it has been argued that such knowledge is the knowledge of human experience and may be helpful in the research process. While this possibility has not been explored in the literature relating to grounded theory, it has been endorsed by many critical approaches (Bryman, 2008; Kvale, 2007; Robson, 2002).

A further difficulty is concerned with the presentation of the results. Thorne (2000) found that “systematic, rigorous, and auditable analytic processes are among the most significant factors distinguishing good from poor quality research” (Thorne 2000 : 70). As the analytic processes in this research project cannot be made visible they have been described in detail (Bryman, 2008; Robson, 2002).

4. Results and Discussion

There were eleven participants, three interviewees Anna, Ros, and Valerie; and eight questionnaire participants including Beatrice, Carol, Elena, Linda, James, Peter, Susan, and Victoria the pilot participant who was also a member of the CILIP Diversity Group. Anna who was interviewed also completed the questionnaire.

4.1 Research Objective A: Identities

Profiles

Profiles have been created for each participant to elaborate on the meaning of their social identities as a preface to the rest of the results and discussion.

Anna

Anna lists a range of identities including being Black, “British maybe, but born and bred in Nigeria” (AI3), Christian, Heterosexual, Labour, and Working Class.

Anna’s account of her group memberships expands on her relations to her family, church partners, fellow Nigerians, and the library world. Her account conveys the high regard she holds for all of them. Anna appears to have a very holistic sense of self, experiencing her identities as linking together in mutually reinforcing ways to provide networks of support, for example, she says of her family and librarianship:
“My family is the most important part of my life because they are always there for me and vice versa, and after so many years of trying to climb up the professional ladder, I've come to the conclusion that they are the best achievement I have made in my entire life” (A6).

“Profession is important in that I have fed and educated and supported my family through it…The highlight of my profession is the people I met on the way up, the influence I had on them and the support I've given to both the colleagues and library users” (A9).

There is evidence of particularly strong in-group identification with her fellow Nigerians whom she represents as one united group who make little of distinctions between one another:

“My Nigerian community are important because of the bond that holds us together - they have unique approach to life - always there for any fellow Nigerian in times of trouble and they also enjoy good times together. Most Nigerians identify with their people no matter their social or economic status” (A8).

She also describes how her identities are embodied in her in a way that makes them evident to all those around her:

“Most aspects of my mannerism and behaviour - the way I speak and express myself; my attitude to life, nature and people around me show where I originated, my belief and the season in my life” (A2).

When asked if she attributed any of her values to any of her social identities, Anna describes the influence of her disciplined Nigerian upbringing in instilling her with respect for herself and others, and a high regard for education which extended to notions of how people should behave in libraries and how books should be treated:
“My mum she was a real disciplinarian... there were some young people who didn’t have the privilege of going to secondary school, and you’re held very highly, you know when you are in secondary school, you come back on holiday, you behave in a certain way. So the discipline of looking after books and the way I thought children or even library users would behave started from the experience I had back home” (AI18).

Anna’s identities were formed in the context of Nigerian society. She described the experience of being recently arrived in Britain and being unaware of the social meanings and implications of class and race in the British context, and so these having no impact on her:

“I had just got into the country, and you know you didn’t think about things, that who is who, but the first seminar we had at the library school, the lecturer put ‘The Class System in Britain’, and we got in and he started to ask, you know which class do you think you are from?, which class are you from? Which class are you from? Which class are you from?” (AI39)... “I didn’t understand the class system and to be honest something about racial you know either discrimination or whatever, or segregation... when you’re from outside, all those things are highly alienated from you. As far as I’m concerned, I am myself. So! (laughter) It’s what I make out of my life, that’s what is important to me and not what anybody else say about me. You know. I never thought of pigeonhole” (AI49).

Asked if her experiences in Britain over time have made her more aware of social differences like class and race, or altered her sense of self she replied:

“It’s part of you, the way you’re bought up becomes part of you, until maybe so many years, you decide, or you may not decide, but other things may come to wipe away those aspects of your life...I think now maybe, but, it still hasn’t deterred me from what I want to do in life” (A149).
Anna is a qualified librarian and works in the public library sector.

**Beatrice**

Beatrice listed a large range of identities including being White, British, Working Class, Female, Christian, Labour, Heterosexual, mid fifties, having a background in the arts, belonging to UNISON, being disabled, and being resident in an estate and part of the local community.

Beatrice attributed her values of respect for people, equal and fair treatment, and concern for her local community as originating in Christianity, Labour and UNISON.

Beatrice’s wrote that her most salient identities were being female and disabled. Her household arrangements in which she works full time and her husband runs the home, and reactions to this made her female identity salient, and she also indicated that she had a feminist politics. She wrote about the impact of ignorance of her disability on her work life, and gave an account of her work within librarianship much of which is focused on organizing around disability issues.

Beatrice was a qualified librarian and worked in the public library sector.

**Carol**

Carol listed a range of identities including white, British, upper working class, female, Christian, Socialist, Heterosexual, late fifties. Carol acknowledged the potential influence of all these identities even if only to say she is sure they do influence her but she could not detect how at present.

Carol attributed her belief in the equal treatment and the equal value of people to her conventional, secure, Christian, and upper working class/lower middle class upbringing. Carol identified how her class, gender and age identities have shaped her life practices giving the example of doing most of the work of looking after her family and household despite her belief that these should be shared. Carol also related some of her personal attributes to her class, gender and age saying they may account for a lack of confidence at times.
Carols remarks how her sense of which identities were most salient have shifted through time dependent on the implications of them, clearly showing how the situation nature of identity salience is related to structures of inequality:

“When I was younger it was class and gender. Now it is age! 30 or 40 years ago accent and background (class) were important - they affected who you mixed with and the type of job you could get. The glass ceiling for women meant that advancement at work could be limited for women. In libraries women made up the larger part of the workforce but most services we run by men. Now, towards the end of my career age means I have more experience (and cunning) to draw on and more confidence. On the other hand retirement beckons with the concerns about finance and pensions that will bring” (C1).

Carol was a qualified librarian and worked in the public library sector.

**Elena**

Elena listed a range of identities including White, Working Class, Heterosexual, mid fifties, left wing, British, and her local background living in a multicultural city.

Elena attributed her belief in equality to her upbringing in which she was taught to treat everyone equally. She described her working class identity as holding the most importance for her because they were her roots. She appeared to relate some aspects of her experience to her class for example noting that she was the first person in her family to study for a degree, and to her gender in reporting that she had experienced sex discrimination at work.

Elena was a qualified librarian and worked in the public library sector.

**Linda**

Linda listed a range of identities including White, British, socialist, heterosexual, mid fifties and from being a South Yorkshire mining family.
Linda eschewed class labels, but wrote that her values were strongly influenced by her family. She described her father as a socialist, and an intelligent self taught man who did not have access to good formal education and gives him as the influence for her values in egalitarianism, and developing and using ones talents.

Linda was aware that her values frequently became salient in everyday life particularly in response to work environments where she perceived people as not always having opportunities to use their talents. Her values are also made salient around gender discrimination, though she declined to call herself as feminist.

Linda worked in the academic library sector and had a library qualification.

**James**

James listed a range of identities including White, British, Heterosexual, Communist, mid fifties and Romany Gypsy.

James personal values of inclusivity and a belief in liberation were strongly driven by his class and politics. For James class was the most salient part of his identity as he believes it has shaped his life chances, he gives a sense of this when writing about being a working class graduate but looking for manual jobs.

James worked in the public library sector.

**Peter**

Peter listed a range of identities including White, British, Middle Class, Gay, early sixties and a sense of being an outsider or different.

Peter recognized the influence of all his social identities as informing his values, but he singled out experiences of growing up feeling different before realizing he was gay as influential in how he related to outsiders; and his experience of his father’s racism as influential in making him value fairness and anti racism.
Peter’s most salient identity is being gay, he wrote: “Rightly or wrongly, I tend to see the world through my identification with being gay” (P4).

Ros

Ros labeled herself with a range of social identities including being Feminist, Heterosexual, “half-Jewish and half-not-Jewish” (R14), Middle Class, and White; and personal identities including being an extrovert and an outsider.

For Ros her identity and its meaning was an ongoing project, she described how although she had long been interested in issues of identity and difference it was only now that she was doing an auto ethnography for her higher education course and had been made redundant, that she had the impetus and time to reflect more deeply on identity and its meaning:

“What I’m being charged to do by my supervisor is establish who I am and my point is, well, how do I know who I am except in by how I’m reflected in what others see. So I’m a bit perplexed about my identity really” (R8).

Ros appeared to have a complex identity structure being very aware of a disjoint between the meanings other people might ascribe to her identities and who she felt she was. This was evidenced in relation to her Jewishness, being a Librarian who was also an extrovert, and particularly in being middle class:

“I’m middle-aged, middle-class, middle England, and yet I’m not, because I think that conjures up an image of a woman... I think it conjures up an image of a woman who isn’t like me... you only have to look at me and hear me talk and everything to see that I’m not that” (R9).

The gap between how she perceived herself and other middle class people was given meaning when talking about attributes. She spontaneously and recurrently designated the tendency of failing to engage with difference to middle class people, describing one particular such incident she said of them:
“I felt they had this middle-class veneer of, “This is just not for talking about.” There was nothing, nothing at all... there wasn’t the curiosity even, there was just nothing. It’s all, “We don’t talk about this” (R49).

Ros distances herself from these tendencies giving an account of herself in contrast as someone that attended to life and her library work in developing multicultural services, with an open curiosity:

“I can’t remember how many times, people would always tell me I’m naive. That’s like a leitmotif that’s run through my life, I’m naive. But they (library colleagues) also then more recently would say to me, “You always ask the question that all the rest of us want to ask, but, we don’t like to ask it.” (R43).

Ros gives numerous examples of what she calls her naivety leading to social upset. Despite this evidence of risk, she posited her tendency to engage authentically with people as one of her key strengths:

“Just stumbling through this whole process but I think a sincere and good heart can take you a long way, actually. So I made my mistakes, but I think people could see the integrity of my ambition” (R93)

For Ros the sense of difference she feels within her social groups seems to lead to two divergent experiences. Firstly, that of passing amongst other middle-aged, middle-class white woman and being privy to protected knowledge, she said of this: “I can play my ambivalence. I can sound middle-aged, middle-class white woman and I’ve got all the credentials” (R118), and “I play with that, that duality (laughs)” (R114). However, she also experiences an uncomfortable and perplexing feeling of being “a bit odd” (R115), not fitting in, or being an outsider.

When asked if she attributed any of her values to her social identities. Ros could not clearly describe their influence but attributed her commitment to diversity variously to her upbringing around her family’s diverse range of friends, an empathy which emanated from her own sense of being an outsider; and an intrinsic sense of inclusivity being the right thing.
Towards the end of the interview Ros reflected on the relationship between the development of her identity and her library work and described a dialectical relationship:

“While (library manager) taught me an awful lot, it was pushing at an open door. It was who I was. He superimposed on that a better understanding of who I am, um, language to support who I am” (R161).

Ros worked in the public library sector to develop a multicultural service before being made redundant and is taking a library qualification.

**Susan**

Susan listed a range of identities including Working Class, Arabic and British ethnicity, Humanist, Heterosexual, Left, late thirties.

Susan’s class identity is the most salient in her everyday life. She is aware of class imposing limitations on her life including a lack of money to participate in activities, and her access to a high quality education. Susan attributed her awareness and desire to battle inequality and unfairness to her class identity. She also attributed lack of confidence to her class and educational background. Similarly she writes about how having a hidden disability gives her an awareness and concern about disability issues.

Susan is a qualified librarian and worked in the academic library sector.

**Valerie**

Valerie labeled herself with a range of identities including being Atheist, Feminist, a Lesbian, a Librarian, a woman and White.

Valerie described being a woman, a lesbian, and a feminist as a central part of her identity and as something that her social life and energies revolved around:

“I think being a woman is a huge part of my life, which might seem like an obvious thing to say but um, my whole life revolves around women, the wellbeing of other women um, and myself....my sexuality’s a very big part of my everyday life. Um, because I am totally immersed in the
scene. I don’t mean, sort of, you know, I’m spending my life socialising. I just mean, you know, I’m involved in a women’s group... which is part-funded by Terence Higgins Trust...I’m part of that group not to get support for myself but to give support to women who are coming out. Um, so that’s a big part of my life” (V23).

She describes how this immersion gives her a different set of norms and underlying assumptions from the straight women at work, which become salient in the work environment:

“I think when you’re so immersed in something it just becomes totally normal and you kind of forget to mention it’s part of your life because it’s totally normal. But then I suppose when I think about women at work who I’m totally different to and I compare myself to them um, I think, gosh, you know, I don’t think they know anything about feminism or about lesbians or about...you know, I can’t relate to them in any way, shape or form” (V27).

Valerie is the only participant to explicitly mark librarian as one of her identities, and comparing it to her other identities she said this was her most salient identity:

“I’d actually say that being a librarian is probably the biggest part of my identity now. Um, and it probably always has been. Although it has been since I’ve been working, I think coming out was the biggest thing in my teens. Then, my professional career was the biggest thing, sort of in my twenties and thirties” (V15).

Valerie has been able to integrate her identity as a lesbian woman with her library work in which she has developed pioneering services for LGBT library users and is an out librarian. Reflecting on the interview at the end of the session she said: “I suppose talking about it, I just...I suppose I have realised that my identity as a lesbian actually has really overtaken my library world, hasn’t it?” (V164).
Equally it is clear even when away from the library, Valerie’s thoughts often turn back to her work:

“I’d gone to a Pride event in Birmingham and I’d seen a roll of sticky tape which was rainbow-coloured so I thought, “Right, oh I’ll buy that” and we can use that to stick on the spines of the LGBT books.” (V81).

Given the importance of her identification as a librarian, not being a qualified one is highly salient to her. She experiences it not only as a barrier to progressing upwards but also limiting her opportunity to work in a different public library authority:

“Oh, it’s a really big thing (not being qualified). I’ve mentioned it so many times it’s such a big thing...Now, the consequences of it now...are...yeah, the consequences now is that for example, you know, I can’t progress any higher in librarianship which is to me the biggest thing in my life... I feel now to go anywhere else I...to get that opportunity to get in somewhere else, I feel that I need some kind of qualification” (V15; V19).

Another salient identity for Valerie was her class. She describes having a middle class background, attitudes, and expectations, and these jarring with her financial inability to access higher education and gain professional status as a librarian, leaving her unsure how to define herself:

“the family history would say that I am middle-class if you go on education or wealth or, um, politics or that sort of thing... I went to a Grammar school and so um... yeah, after spending a few years at Grammar school obviously the presumption was I was going to go to University but because of my mother’s mental health problems I never went... I’m not qualified but I don’t see myself as working-class either, even though perhaps I am, I don’t know. But my attitude is middle-class” (V11; V13).
Valerie was not a qualified librarian, and worked in the public library sector, in the area of the home library service, before taking voluntary redundancy.

Victoria

Victoria listed a range of identities including being White, Middle Class, British, Left wing, Atheist, Bisexual, and Cisgender.

Victoria attributed her commitment to equality for all marginalized groups with her bisexuality but more so with her left wing politics.

Victoria's bisexual identity was most important in everyday life. She was conscious of being a minority, and thought about frequently particularly in respect to outness, which she describes as an ongoing process. Being female was also a salient identity, her awareness of gender inequality informs the decisions she makes about how to live her life on both a practical day to day basis, and with respect to her longer term plans. Her research work around LGBT library provision is very important to her and she is very aware of being cisgender in this context.

Victoria was a qualified librarian and worked in the public library sector.

Profile Discussion

As suggested by the literature, the identities found were important to the participants, and they were multiple, complex, and fluid. It was necessary to understand these nuances for any exploration of identity to be meaningful. The participants related how they felt their values, attitudes and concerns originated from their identities, and this allowed these meanings to be used interchangeably (Muir and Wetherell, 2010; Bryman, 2008; Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Most participants displayed relatively simple identity structures, such as Anna who had identities that were easily labelled, were felt to be apparent to others, and which seamlessly reinforced and supported each other. However the identity structures of other participants were more complex with the differences between self categorisation into a group and the internalisation of its values. Linda eschewed identity labels such as feminist
and working class that may have communicated her values and background to others very effectively. While Ros categorised herself into a number of social groups in which she did not feel she uncomplicatedly belonged. The perplexed feeling Ros described which stemmed from her awareness of her marginality in the various social groups she belonged to, seemed to indicate a complex identity structure. Roccas and Brewer (2002) suggested that such individuals are highly inclusive because they lose much of the motivation and cognitive ability to make intergroup comparisons. In addition to this it is clear that Ros’ internal experience motivates her to learn more about identity, social groups and society in an attempt to better understand herself and that this also acts to make her a particularly inclusive person (McIntosh, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

The accounts of identity salience given by the participants were mostly supported by the theoretical literature in that the identities described as being the most salient were generally aligned with those that were most marginalised in society; Carol also explicitly described how the salience of her identity had changed over her lifetime in relation to her sense of which ones were most disadvantaged by society (Muir and Wetherell, 2010; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Additionally only half of the working class participants felt their class as a salient identity possibly reflecting Muir and Wetherell’s (2010) account of the declining importance of traditional social groups. A significant finding was the lack of salience of Susan and James’ respective mixed Arabic and English, and Romany Gypsy ethnicities given the marginality of those social groups in society.

Some participants made reference to their privileged identities, including Victoria who wrote of the salience of being cisgendered in undertaking research which attended to the needs of trans people, and recognised that her advancement through the profession might be facilitated by her being middleclass and white. These conscious acknowledgements of normative identities indicate an awareness of societal privilege and oppression which may inform their perceptions of themselves and others and their interpersonal interactions (McIntosh, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).
As Muir and Wetherell (2010) suggested some aspects of personal identity were also noted as important by the participants, for by example, Linda, who listed her housing estate as a source of identity, and Ros for whom her personal identify as an extrovert was extremely salient.

4.2 Research Objective B: Identification with Librarianship

4.2.1 Why Librarianship?

The participants were asked to describe how they became a library worker and became committed to library work, as probable critical moments in identifying with librarianship. Carol, Valerie, and Victoria had very similar stories about arriving in librarianship. Informed by vague notions of what a library was, they all successfully applied for library positions they came across in their local newspapers. Carol described applying as she had “always liked reading” (C3); Victoria described having loved libraries as a child and thinking that a library job sounded “nice” and “would be much better than some random job in a shop” (Vi5); Valerie described thinking that it would be “dinky” to get a library job and imagining it as “quaint, and nice and quiet” and “really cosy” (V56). They all described a realisation after their initial experience; Carol’s response was typical of this she described: “Two weeks later standing in the middle of the library thinking, ‘This is it. This is what I always wanted to do. Why didn't someone tell me?’” (C3). James similarly describes “stumbling” into libraries after also applying to a job advert seen in his local paper, but after looking for “manual type” jobs (J3).

Peter and Elena both took librarianship as a first career. Peter described beginning his career as a Voluntary Saturday Assistant aged twelve and he embarked on a library qualification straight after school. He experienced the library as a safe space compared to school where he was bullied, and somewhere where he was treated as an adult. Elena described working in a library from school, and then embarking on a library postgraduate course immediately after her first degree.

Anna, Beatrice, Linda and Susan took librarianship as a second choice career. Anna and Linda both described their childhood love of libraries, and their experiences of having been library monitors at school. Linda was dissuaded from librarianship as a teenager by a careers advisor who suggested that teaching was “a much more suitable and satisfying job”
(L5), and later came to librarianship after a change in her family circumstances and a reassessment of her career options. However she still credits her childhood librarian with giving her eight year old self the “time, interest and spark of inspiration” that turned her into a librarian (L5). Anna’s first career choice was in accountancy, and it was not until later that she made a pragmatic choice in consultation with her family to pursue librarianship, to better attend to their needs. Beatrice chose to go to art school instead of pursuing librarianship as she thought it not “sexy” enough (B3), and later returned to it after being unable to make a living from her art. Finally, Susan decided to qualify as a librarian after working in bookshops and described this as a pragmatic choice to improve her finances and secure better working terms and conditions. She also felt general environment libraries were more pleasant. She wrote that she saw librarianship as “a job first and foremost. It is a job I like and feel has a useful purpose” (S15).

Discussion

Despite generally being familiar with libraries the participants’ ideas of librarianship seemed to resonate with hegemonic cultural ideas of what a library was. The reasons for choosing librarianship as a career were similar to those found by Hussey (2006), with the library environment, and the variety and nature of the work often cited, and librarians mostly left unmentioned. Peter was the only participant to relate his social identity to his choice of librarianship in any way, and contrary to Hussey’s (2006) findings none of the participants appeared to imagine that librarianship might be a vehicle for their values, or the source of any significant social impact. It appears that the potential and meaning of library work and the participants’ commitment to it evolved over time, and within context and this is explored in the next section.

4.2.2 Library work

Missions

In the course of the participants’ accounts of their work it became clear that James, Valerie and Anna, had combined concerns that were derived from their social identities with their experiences in librarianship, to lead to a clearly articulated redefinition of the meaning of being a library worker, or a mission.
While James describes initially stumbling into libraries, it seems his commitment to the profession evolved as he applied a political understanding of society and class to his life as a working class person:

“It was only when I came to understand the class / social control origin and nature of public libraries that I became committed to making them more inclusive. I see public libraries as being an important trench in the class war for the liberation of working class people” (J3).

He indicates that it was his commitment to this aim that has driven him to succeed in librarianship so that he is in a strategic position of power which enables him to exert influence to these ends.

Anna redefines her role as a librarian influenced by her background and her feeling that she understood better than other librarians the concerns of BME people:

“I knew very well that most people from minority ethnic groups had no experience of free library service, therefore the last place they would take their children was a public library. Moreover, as many struggle with poor economic situation, earning money for their bread seemed more important than visiting library with their children. I felt that my job was to educate and influence many non-indigenous members of the public to understand that library service was free” (A16).

Valerie mission was motivated by her experience of the importance of the library in coming out:

“when I was coming out, you know, perhaps even earlier when I was at school, the library for me was a real access point...I’d go home, devour these books and just think, do you know, thank God I’m not the only lesbian in the entire world...Access to LGBT stuff in the library was just crucial” (V65).
However she perceived the existence and accessibility of such books in the library as incidental rather than a conscious attempt made by the library to provide for LGBT users. Talking of the Women’s Press and the distinctive stripy spines of their books it was clear that she attributed the provision of the books to the presses of the time and the accessibility of the books to their design features. She explains that after the decline of many of the small publishers that existed at the time: “I kind of took it as my mission to make sure there was something there for the people” (V67).

Discussion

It is interesting that the potential and meaning of library work and the participants’ commitment to it evolved over time, and within context. Hussey (2006) found that approximately half her library school participants were relating their career plans and goals to their identities in some way at a time before many of them had gained any experience of library work. This might suggest that there may be potential to recruit a more diverse range of people into librarianship if the social remit of the work was projected more effectively.

Actions

The participants were asked if their identities had ever influenced any action they had taken in the context of librarianship. The actions undertaken included:

- Advocacy (Beatrice)
- Service development (Susan, Valerie)
- Approach (Anna, Ros, Susan, Valerie)
- Collections (Anna, Valerie, Victoria)
- Consultation (Valerie)
- Mentoring (Linda)
- Networks (Beatrice, James)
- Outness (Peter, Valerie)
- Outreach (Anna, Valerie)
- Research (Beatrice, James, Anna, Victoria)
- Subversion (Valarie)
- Training (Peter)
Discussion

Similar to findings by Downing (2009) the participants' social identities informed not only particular initiatives which were clearly targeted towards particular social groups, but also the way in which they envisioned and performed their roles. The participants' identity related motivations for the actions reported included the need to correct injustices; to gain power and agency for themselves; to feel included and be heard; and to maintain their integrity; they were also based in the esteem they held for their social groups; feelings of empathy for group members; the desire to improve librarianship; and the desire to improve society. Not only did identity provide the initial motivation for the work but it was also a source of endurance for some participants such as James and Valerie when they encountered resistance. Most participants thought about the impact of their work both at interpersonal and institutional scales, but some, particularly in relation to their participation in the Diversity Group and research, thought about the potential transformative impact of their work at wider scales. James' understanding of power relations in society through his communism seems to have explicitly guided him to take a strategic approach aimed at transforming librarianship in order to change society (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

The finding that identity motivated and sustained such a range of work suggest support for Muir and Wetherell’s (2010) recommendation that identity is a powerful tool and if acknowledged, understood in all its complexity, engaged with, and supported to develop from grassroots level it could contribute strategically to the achievement of policy objectives.

4.2.3 Library workers

The questionnaire participants were invited to imagine and describe the values and social identities of an ideal library worker and an average library worker.
There was a good consensus across participants over what values and attitudes an ideal library worker had, with the understanding, ability and motivation to work supportively with users and colleagues featuring prominently. Themes that arose from this question in order of strength were:

- **Personal attributes:** Confident, enthusiastic, charismatic, fresh, resilient, varied life experience, forward thinking, embracing change, open minded, empathetic, intelligent
- **Attitudes towards patrons:** respects, and likes people; treats people fairly; enjoys diversity; recognizes difference; has a concern with fairness, justice and equality
- **Works for inclusivity:** understands social exclusion, politically skilled, embeds equality into all decisions and areas of working life, takes a pluralistic approach using consultation and building relationships
- **Attitudes towards staff:** mentors, supports and shows same values to staff as to users
- **Professional skills, customer care skills, uses evidence based practice**
- **Integrity, accountability, and transparency**
- **Displaying pride in the library**

There was no strong consensus over what values and attitudes an average library worker had with participants giving divergent accounts. Themes attended that emerged in order of strength included:

- **A consensus that librarians did not enjoy the challenge of change** e.g. preferring to serve traditional library users, and tending to be conservative when faced with competing concerns e.g. promoting independent versus adhering to rules
- **The response to diversity:** more participants described library workers as responding poorly to diversity than well, and the explanations given varied but included discomfort, disinterest, and a lack of understanding
- **Poor management skills; a lack of professional confidence.**
- **Honour as a value**
- **Contrary attributions:** e.g. long term thinkers and short term thinkers; committed and jaded.
There were significant differences in the attributes given to the ideal and average library worker prototypes which crossed a number of domains. It was clear that the skills the participants valued were primarily ones that would enable a library worker to build interpersonal relationships and work fairly with a diverse range of people. A poor response to change was most often attributed to the average library worker prototype and traditional professional concerns were cited as a hindrance to changes towards a more customer focused service and towards more diverse user groups.

An interesting finding was that as library workers with a knowledge and understanding of professional skills the participants placed an emphasis on the value of soft skills and an understanding of social issues in society. This would seem to place them at odds with CILIP’s position as reported in Defining Our Professional Future (CILIP 2010a); and with many of the qualified individual library workers who feel that the social exclusion activities associated with that skill set are beyond the remit of the library (Wilson and Birdi, 2008). The findings may suggest that the participants’ have a greater awareness of changed user needs, the increased diversity of user groups, or social policy; or possibly a greater desire to attend to them, than was suggested by CILIP within the wider membership of librarianship (CILIP 2010a).

However it may also be that CILIP are poorly representative of the values of the profession. Some of the criticisms of CILIP found in Defining Our Professional Future (CILIP 2010a), that are not examined in detail, such as being unfocused in their purpose and the provision of courses with an irrelevant focus on traditional skills, may obscure concerns that library workers hold as group, which do attend to library work from a more socially orientated perspective. The finding that members of the Diversity Group rated CILIP significantly more poorly than members of other special interest groups (CILIP, 2010a : 2), could be attributable to the lack of representation CILIP gives to these issues, and may resonate with elements of the wider group.

Most participants suggested social identity was of no importance in being a good library worker, with only four participants of nine imagining their ideal library worker as having any particular social identity. Those who did designate an identity tended to do so tentatively and aligned the values and identities of their ideal library worker with themselves. Beatrice said she would like to believe such a person could come from any
social background, but she was not sure if this was true and indicated that possession of some kind of a political identity such as feminist would be necessary. Linda, James and Victoria imagined their library workers as having egalitarian, working class, and left wing identities respectively. These attributed identities featured artefacts from the psychological processes involved in identification and intergroup comparison as described in the literature and cannot legitimately be related to the wider culture of librarianship (Muir and Wetherell, 2010; Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

However three findings emerged from the designation of identities to average library workers and the invitation of the participants to describe how similar or different they felt themselves to be. While most participants suggested social identity had no characterisable affects on the attributes of average library workers and identified and distanced themselves on the basis of work practices and character traits; three of the participants related their differences or commonalities to social identity in some way:

Anna wrote:

“I cannot consider myself as an average library worker. An average library worker is likely to be one from a middle class background and lacking in understanding of why BME and disabled people do not use libraries. I was and still very concerned about a particular group of people - non-users.” (A43)

It was a significant finding that Anna feels class is the main source of difference between her and other librarians, as class was not an identity that she acknowledged as being particularly salient, and of which she spoke and wrote relatively little about. Additionally class appears to lack much of its common meaning for Anna who having grown up outside the British class system takes a literal interpretation of it as having to work to provide for her family. That it is Anna’s class identity that is activated in the context of librarianship suggests something of the strength of the middleclass nature of librarianship (Muir and Wetherell, 2010; Pateman and Vincent, 2010; Black, 2003; Muddiman et al., 2000; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989).
James equated library workers with the middleclass. He marked himself in opposition to the average library worker, in terms of values, and practices and in social identity describing them as “conservative, not open to new ideas, not socially inclusive, rule bound, intolerant of difference” (J9); and of their work philosophies he wrote that “they like to serve the 'dominant reader - someone who looks and thinks like themselves” (J9). James describes himself in comparison as “totally different from them in every way because I believe that public libraries should be agents of social change and not social control” (J10). James described his experience within the profession, making clear the exclusion and denigration he has experienced as a person who is working class and communist, within a middleclass profession:

“I have always felt looked down on by middle class professionals because of my background and accent. I have also felt that my 'radical' views have been dismissed as 'political' by a profession which worships 'neutrality.'” (J4)

It is a significant that James is so committed to and continues to exist within a profession that he feels so excluded by. James’ identification with librarianship appears to stem entirely from his concept of what librarians could potentially be and potentially enact.

Finally, Carol identified strongly with the average library worker based on their social commonalities, work practices were mentioned only as an afterthought. She wrote:

“Like me, many of my co-workers are white, female and of a certain age and similar class. It is a generational group that was brought up on the cusp of societal change. We both want to be "new women” with an exciting career but were brought up to cook, clean and care for our menfolk and families. Some of us do both. I cope with and enjoy change and challenge more...” (C8)

Carol gave a description of the behaviour of the average library worker which was similar to James’ conception of a preference towards the dominant reader; however unlike James her description was very sympathetic:
“They want to provide the best service they can for "their" library users and they will go to great lengths to do this. When dealing with older people they will provide the sort of service their parents would appreciate. When dealing with young families they will treat them as they would like to have been treated when at the same stage of life. They usually treat people as individuals and like to get to know them. They may be wary of people from backgrounds that they think may be very different from theirs but this is often from a fear of offending or misunderstanding” (C7).

It is significant that this description is sympathetic while also being at odds with her concept of an ideal library worker as someone who: “[treats] everyone as individuals who matter” (C5); is concerned to “‘level the playing field’ for disadvantaged customers” (C5); and embeds equality into all decisions with the idea of “if we get it right for people who have disabilities or are disadvantaged in some way then we get it right for everyone” (C5). The sympathetic description of her co-workers approach to library users despite the difference from her stated ideals is suggestive of a reduced motivation and ability to reflect beyond the perspective of the group and probably borne of her strong social identification with them (Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Hogg and Terry, 2000). This is supported by literature which suggests that contact between different social groups plays a role in fostering a more complex and therefore inclusive identity structure (Muir and Wetherell, 2010). It is easy to see how replicated many times in a workforce as homogenous as librarianship these processes may promote gross inequality in the outcomes of library services, and may also create an environment where it is difficult for individuals who have the latent desire to think or act differently, to do so.

While the account from Carol suggests that homogeneity itself promotes an exclusive culture the account from James would appear to be a caution at the way in which diversity is introduced into a homogenous workforce. James’ account reveals that being a social outsider can be damaging and isolating, and echoes with Downing (2009) and Hall and Grady’s (2005) suggestions that diversity in itself does not necessarily create a wider culture that is more inclusive or pluralistic. Downing (2008) notes the harmful effects of being the only individual from a marginalised group in an otherwise homogenous workforce in which individuals feel scrutinised and stereotyped in a way that negatively
affects their general level of comfort and their work performance. Such a situation would seem to have implications for work performance, promotion opportunities and retention rates. However Downing (2008) found if the librarians in such situations were able to forge relationships with other members of their social groups at work, whether students or faculty, the negative effects were lessened. She suggests that a critical mass of social newcomers is needed to promote role effectiveness and for a positive social outcome.

4.3 Research Objectives C: Salience and Navigation or Transformation

In addition to the actions of participants explored, in which library work was often motivated by identity salience and aimed at navigating or transforming culture; two strong themes and one undeveloped theme emerged from across the participants’ experiences, these were related to professionalism, navigating outness (Refer to Appendix B1), and cultural images (Refer to Appendix B2). These sections primarily take a phenomenological approach primarily interested in representing the participants’ experiences.

Recognition

For Valerie, Carol, Linda and Ros, the issue of Professionalism (i.e. possessing or not possessing a qualification) was made salient by the culture of the workplace and profession and was activated in a myriad of situations.

Carol, Linda, and Ros all reported being subject to the disparaging attitudes of qualified staff that considered them less important or less professional because of their unqualified status. Carol reports on attitudes from qualified librarians she had met on external training courses: “I was taken aback by the attitude of some professional staff in other authorities who were surprised that a non-qualified assistant was considered worthy of training” (C11). However Carol felt able to ignore these attitudes when she encountered them because her individual workplace was supportive of her value and ability.

Linda reported being new to her role in an academic library and encountering in the everyday conversation of the workplace: “frequent comments along the lines of 'we're just the drones/plebs’...’our opinions don't count because we're not dealing directly with academics’” (L6). Linda reports being so surprised at this that she questioned her own perceptions, however over time it became abundantly clear that these comments were
expressions of the beliefs held about the frontline staff. These experiences in conjunction with Linda’s egalitarian identity motivated her to counter the demoralising and undermining effects of this hierarchy through mentoring her frontline staff. She writes:

“I’ve set about changing this perception and want the staff in my area (Customer Services) to feel they are valued, understand that their views do matter and that they are also doing a professional job...I decided it was partly to do with empowering staff, allowing them to have a voice and raising the image of themselves and our part of the service. This has started to pay dividends with many staff more confident about making decisions, taking initiative and taking a more professional approach.” (L6)

Ros reported a similar destabilising event early in her library career, she said:

“I worked for the school’s library service and the librarian, she was a senior librarian, she used to organise trips to go to book suppliers. And my job was to sit in the office and stamp books. And then one day I said, “Could I come because I’d be very interested to come.” Then, I just knew that she’s like...no, you’re a library assistant, you know, what makes you think you’re entitled to come!? We’re dealing with teachers and far more important people than you, and librarians, far more important people than you! She wasn’t rude but I knew that was the message” (R115).

And these attitudes extended beyond work roles to enforce a hierarchy on the social relationships between members of her workplace:

“They would have two coffee breaks in [library], one for the professionals - that was the other thing, this word [Professional] was always bandied about - and one for the rest... That rankles with me, it really does. That rankled with me then” (R115).
These experiences have formed a strong impression on Ros and the theme is recurrent through her interview. In a large part she attributes her feelings resulting from these experiences to her tendency to “talk about librarians as Other” (R113), indicating that this aspect of the culture of librarianship acts as a strong source of social exclusion. These experiences informed her approach when she became a manager during which time Ros exerted her influence on other managers to encourage them to reconsider their approaches. She describes attempting to convince her Head of Services to spend some time on the frontline:

“I think that managers should go and work frontline. And I used to have this debate with [Head of Service] and I was always challenging [Head of Service], that as Head of Service, whatever small percentage it was of his working life a year, he should be out there on the frontline. He should be delivering the service because the other thing that is really wonderfully refreshing is it’s a role reversal because he won’t know what to do because he doesn’t do this daily. So he’s going to have to say to the frontline person, “Where do I put this book? How do I do this?” And I think that’s a very, very stimulating change of relationships, stimulating for both parties and an acknowledgement that actually we’re all colleagues. A bit like, we’re all humans, so the vast majority of our experiences we have in common, as colleagues, the vast majority of what you do, you have in common” (R199).

Ros was also motivated by her experiences to make a symbolic act of resistance when she eventually chose to pursue a library qualification. She decided to do ACLIP to be recognized ‘professionally’, but not ‘Professionally as a librarian’, she said:

“[I choose to do] the lowest one [qualification], to show my identity with the workers, because that’s what I’d been all those years, the people who weren’t professional and who couldn’t go and do interesting things, couldn’t be trusted to do anything because they weren’t professionals” (R146).
Despite Ros’ experiences of a hierarchical workplace, she experiences CILIP as much more inclusive. On being encouraged to join CILIP by her manager so she could attend a conference and finding she was eligible she said:

“I thought it was quite an honourable thing that they...as a non-qualified librarian, I could join the professional body as an associate... I was so proud, I’m still proud. I carried my old cards, my CILIP cards. That I’m a member of this professional body, I was really excited about it” (R135).

Ros ran for a position as a CILIP trustee and declared her status as non qualified library worker prominently in her campaign. Although she did not win a position she garnered a respectable number of votes leading her to see the structures of power within CILIP as very accessible, and not subject to the same social hierarchy as the workplace, she said of them: “one of the things I really like about CILIP is quite ordinary souls get quite high, important jobs” (R127), and she intends to run for as future position in order to be able to exert some strategic influence on the direction of the profession.

For Valerie the hierarchy based around qualified status created barriers in her work towards creating library provision for LGBT people. When Valerie initial put forward the idea of spine labelling the LGBT books to allow library patrons to find them more easily, this was discounted by the senior librarian with Section 28 being given as a reason. However Valerie felt a bigger factor in the refusal of her idea was that it was suggested by someone with a non qualified status:

“I remember ... going very bravely into his office because he was a bit of a dragon and just saying, “Wouldn’t it be really good if we could use some kind of stickers on the spine for the lesbian and gay books?” I remember just the look of horror on his face, not because of what I’d said but I think he was just so shocked that somebody, ‘cos I was just like a mere library assistant um... had kind of come to him with this” (V68).
Valerie describes how her LGBT work only took off after she found an ally in a senior library assistant, Fiona, some three years later, whose status in a hierarchical environment enabled the ideas to be considered. Valerie describes the partnership with Fiona: “I was coming up with the ideas but she was in the position to take the ideas to the management team and make things happen” (V83). This interpretation is confirmed by Valerie’s account of an explosion of activity when Fiona got promoted and received librarian status:

“She got...she got the job of...sort of lending librarian, or assistant lending librarian. So, there was no stopping her then. So the two of us created a LGBT working group and what we decided to do um, was start an LGBT reading group um, buy more stock for the LGBT fiction collection and then have a LGBT non-fiction collection and also expand it with having DVD’s. We’d get involved in the annual um, LGBT history month. We’d develop partnerships with the THT (Terrace Higgins Trust)... and also the two LGBT (pubs). There was just no stopping us really. We just went mad.” (V83)

Similarly to Carol, Linda and Ros, Valerie feels she faced a lack of recognition for the work she had done from most of her colleagues, however she felt much of the recognition went to Fiona. Valerie said: “I don’t think staff realise how much input I’ve had to that collection existing” (V83), and says of Fiona: “I don’t know if she actually realises that she’s getting all the credit for it, I don’t know” (V83).

Valerie justified the state of affairs by appealing to the outcome “I got what I wanted in the end and I know it was the right thing. Whether or not Fiona gets credit for it doesn’t bother me” (V86). The researcher experienced a strong felt sense of injustice at her being deprived of recognition for her work and of her seeming acceptance of this. But Valerie did display a more ambivalent attitude that was evident in the following joke:

“I’d like to think that um, that could...what was the phrase you used? Professionally um...have some kudos there. Especially when, you see...I’ve seen librarians in the past be awarded MBE’s for less! So, you know, we’re hoping that one day I will be nominated...for an MBE or
something, for services to LGBT people in [town]. I’m just dreaming now (laughter)” (V128).

Nevertheless, it appeared that Valerie had to an extent internalised the statuses allocated to her in her workplace. She seemed to alternate between these understandings of herself and a fuller recognition of her value. This debate can be seen in her discussion of her decision to take part in the research project:

“I did think maybe my colleague might be more um, interesting, if you like. But then I thought about it a bit more. I thought, “Well no,” ‘cos I felt that... ‘cos I’d initiated the entire project, I thought it was probably more appropriate that it was me rather than... my colleague... I suppose I was being modest really because I’m not a qualified librarian and she is and um, I thought that um, for you, that you might sort of um, think that she was more qualified in that sense to answer the questions when perhaps she wouldn’t be” (V3; V5).

Towards the end of the interview Valerie describes taking voluntary redundancy at work in order to move to another part of the country and her concerns of perhaps having to leave library work. She felt her lack of qualification meant that she might not have the tools, or might be arbitrarily prevented from opportunities to work within a different library authority, and she was financially unable to embark on a library qualification.

**Recognition Discussion**

The qualified-unqualified divide was the strongest theme of cultural exclusion emerging from the data. It was a salient theme for all the participants who reported it and it was frequently one of the formative experiences of their library work.

Carol, Linda, Ros and Valarie all experienced the importance of their non qualified status in work contexts where they encountered denigrating attitudes, or where their contributions were undervalued, and they navigated these situations in different ways. Carol was able to deny the attitudes any importance as she had support and recognition from her work group.
Valerie seemed to alternate between accepting the statuses allocated in her workplace and a fuller recognition of the extent and impact of her contributions. Sources of exclusion can be seen throughout Valerie’s her account in the arbitrary use of power which limited her ability to work effectively, in her undervalued status prevents her from claiming transferable expertise; and the effects on her self concept. These also have obvious implications for librarianship in the retention of individuals such as Valerie who are committed to librarianship and their expertise (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

Linda used a group strategy to transform the immediate culture of her workplace. She changed the dimensions of inter-group comparison away the status of the library user being served and towards the demandingness of the work, and this was successful in changing the self conceptions and behaviour of her group of frontline library staff (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

Ros initially resisted the exclusion by illegitimising the value of judgements made by the librarians by positioning them as Other, which can be seen as a clear sense of alienation from librarianship. Later Ros used a transformative approach in which she very publicly challenged the social meaning of an unqualified status by competing directly with qualified librarians in the professional arena of CILIP and displaying her non qualified status with pride. Ros also displayed a resolution borne of empathy to not enact the same exclusory practices on others in her role as a manager or someone who will shortly be qualified (Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

Linda and Ros’ accounts mirror many aspects of the experience oppressed social groups by being motivated into action by a need for recognition and a need to establish a positive identity for themselves that is accurately reflected back to them by others (Lister, 2008; Castells, 2004; Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Hardiman and Jackson, 1997).

The formation of this culture is a complex interplay of factors. The culture of a library including its hierarchy is partly a function of its parent institution. This is evidenced by Linda’s account, in which academic librarians gained status in being associated with academics, who had the highest status within the university. However those with professional identities are also invested in maintaining this hierarchy to secure status for
themselves with library schools acting as gatekeepers as Valarie experienced and professional bodies as battlegrounds for power as Ros acknowledges. At a time when there is a trend towards the deprofessionalisation of librarianship and many perceived threats in the environment, the group and individual motivation to police the qualified-unqualified boundary and this source social exclusivity will be strengthened (Broady-Preston, 2010; Kaarst-Brown et al., 2004; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998).

4.4 Methodological Discussion

There were twenty eight visits to the questionnaire in total, eight completions, and one partial response. A low response rate was acknowledged as a possible limitation of the questionnaire due to the pilot reports of its difficulty and length; and due to the nature of the questions which may have appealed only to a subset of the diversity group. Nevertheless there was a good completion rate amongst those who did embark on it and the responses were mostly very well developed, suggesting that personal interest in the topic may have been a motivating factor.

One participant completed both the questionnaire and the interview. Both methods were found to be similarly effective in identifying themes. Interviews gave additional benefits of a greater scope of coverage, length of descriptive answers, the opportunity for the participant to lead the discussion, and the chance for the researcher to meet the participant as another form of data as a check. The questionnaire provided much of the same information, and while it was found that very short responses to the questionnaire limited their usefulness, very thorough approaches did not seem to lead to a richer analysis. The questionnaire was highly efficient in gathering, pre-sorting and producing comparable answers, and pragmatically did not require transcription.

There may have been a low response rate to the question which asked participants to attribute social identities to the ideal and average library workers, with most participants preferring not to do so or ignoring the question. Despite employing an ‘imaginary’ device to create to allow the participants to distance themselves from their response, participants may have been deterred by these questions as they appeared to be encouraging them to stereotype.
The success of the data collection process was dependent researcher skill in listening to the participants, recognising points of interest and delivering prompts effectively. There were some omissions in the interviews for example I failed to ask these participants about their ideal and average library workers, the interviewees often addressed these areas indirectly, but not in a way that was directly comparable with the results for the questionnaires.

The sample size was sufficient for two strong themes to emerge with three or four participants commenting on the same phenomenon, providing triangulation, and was of sufficient scope for this study. As there are different oppressive paradigms which effect marginalised social groups in different ways, it may be that undeveloped themes such as image were limited by sample size or composition.

The questions adapted from Smith’s (2008) cultural indicators did not lead to emergent themes. Participants tended to comment on very divergent aspects of librarianship; however the answers to these questions were often useful in supporting information for aspects of the participants experiences described elsewhere. On reflection it may be that Smith’s framework is suited to adaption to a large scale survey within a single library organisation or library sector.

The main limitations were the vast amount of data which made it difficult to cross code and may have missed themes and points of comparison. The choice of a more holistic approach to the analysis of the results allowed the researcher to stay close to the data, grasp more of the participants’ meaning, and acted as a validity check as themes often ran through participants accounts building on one another. However this approach also limited the ability to find themes across participant cases.

The choice of what results to write up and the way in which the results were presented were also a limitation. The results could have been written in many different ways focusing on a holistic analysis or a cross sectional one and taking a thematic or a more descriptive approach. These would have explicated different aspects of the phenomenon.
5. Conclusions

Objectives A, B, and C have been met, and Objective D has been meet to a limited extent.

Aim

This dissertation aimed to reveal sources of cultural exclusivity with librarianship by exploring the identifications and experiences of library workers who were members of social groups that were marginalized in society.

Objective A

To explore the social identities of the participants:

Findings

- The social identities of the participants were found to be of great importance and highly nuanced

Conclusions

- It is necessary to understand the nuances of identity for any exploration of identity to be meaningful (e.g. in research or policy etc)

Objective B(i)

To explore identification with librarianship through accounts of how the participants first came to be library workers:

Findings

- The reasons for choosing librarianship as a career appeared to be unrelated to identity and the social potentials of library work.

Conclusions

- There may be potential to recruit a more diverse range of people into librarianship if the social remit of the work was projected more effectively
Objective B(ii)

To explore identification with librarianship through accounts of how the participants identities inform their library work:

Findings

- The meaning of being a library worker evolved over time and in the context of library work, and this sometimes included a re-envisioning of the role.

- Identity was found to motivate participants to undertake a wide range of initiatives, to act as a source of endurance when resistance was encountered, and to affect how library roles were performed.

Conclusions

- Identity is a powerful tool and if acknowledged, understood in all its complexity, engaged with, and supported to develop from grassroots level it could contribute strategically to the achievement of policy objectives.

Objective B(iii)

To explore identification with librarianship through accounts of how the participants identify with other library workers.

Findings

- The library workers identified with librarianship through visions of what library workers and libraries could be like and could enact; through their library work, and in relation to the social identities of their work colleagues.

- The skills the participants valued were primarily ones that would enable a library worker to build interpersonal relationships and work fairly with a diverse range of people

- The library context made class differences particularly salient

- It is possible to suffer social exclusion within the social culture of librarianship and still feel committed
• Social homogeneity may limit the motivation and cognitive ability to think or act outside of the perspective of a homogenous group

Conclusions
• Diversity in itself does not necessarily create a wider culture that is more inclusive or pluralistic, but may have harmful effects on those who find themselves isolated within it. A critical mass is optimal for social and work outcomes.

• Individuals and groups with a socially orientated approach to librarianship appear to be underrepresented and underserved by CILIP

Objective C:
To explore how situations encountered in librarianship that give rise to identity salience informed actions with the intention to navigate or transform the culture of librarianship.

This objectively was not fulfilled comprehensively, as the findings were limited by size and composition, however it was fulfilled within the purpose of the research which was to present the participants lived experiences.

Findings
• Professionalism, heteronormativity and heterosexism, and cultural images of librarianship emerged sources of exclusion.

Objective D:
To relate the identifications and experiences of the participants to the wider social and cultural context.

This was achieved to a limited extent. The lack of literature directly related to the culture of librarianship made it difficult to relate to prior research, rather given the scope and diffuse nature of the literature regarding culture it may have been made more accessible through an analytical process such as discourse analysis.
Implications

This dissertation has filled a gap in the literature by exploring the identifications and experiences of library workers in the UK, and the social culture of librarianship in the UK. It reaffirms the importance and influence of social identity at a time when there is a general retreat from its acknowledgment in policy and politics. I hope it has recorded some knowledge that may have otherwise been easily overlooked or forgotten.

Suggestions for future work

An examination of the dominant library culture
An examination of dominant library worker identities
An examination of how cultural images can be manipulated

Word count: 23,383
6. Bibliography


Downing, K. et al. (2007). “Library leadership development: institutional commitment, increasing underrepresented populations, and impacting the information


Appendix A: Methodology

Appendix A1: Questionnaire Information Sheet

The Culture of Librarianship

Introductory Information

The Stimulus

CILIP have recently devised a positive action trainee scheme, called Encompass which will be targeted at the BME population. The ALA has run a similar scheme since 1997, called Spectrum, which provides library scholarships to underrepresented ethnic groups. While Spectrum has lead to accelerated career development for its benefactors; it has failed to make the library profession more representative of the population. Evidence has shown that the number of racial and ethnic minority students attending library schools has remained static, even as relative populations have grown, and that for racial and ethnic minorities in the profession, retention rates and progression are poor. Tracie Hall who is the director of the Spectrum initiative suggested that recruiting for diversity must coincide with a change in the culture of librarianship towards one of inclusivity if efforts are to be successful.

About the Project

The research intends to explore the culture of librarianship. By researching how library workers from minority groups (e.g. LGBT, Working Class, BME etc) identify with, and experience librarianship. I hope to reveal what is valued in the culture of librarianship, what processes of exclusion may originate from within it, and how individuals have navigated or attempted to transform these.

You have been invited to participate because as a member of the CILIP Diversity Group it is likely that you have an interest in diversity in librarianship.

NB As the survey is reflective it may take approximately 1 hour to complete.
**About Participating**

To participate in this research it is necessary for you to read and agree to the statements in the consent section. You are free to withdraw at any stage, and you need not provide any explanation.

**Confidentiality**

Personal data will be anonymised as soon as possible in the process of research; held securely in a password protected computer, password protected files, or in a secure physical location; and destroyed after the final marking of the dissertation.

In reporting the research non-identifiable descriptors will be used.

**About me**

My name is Benjamin Remy and I can be contacted at bjremy1@sheffield.ac.uk if you have any questions. The project has been ethically approved by the Department of Information Studies in line with the University of Sheffield’s Research Ethics Policy, and I am under supervision from Briony Birdi who can be contacted at b.birdi@sheffield.ac.uk.

**Consent**

If you wish to participate please indicate your agreement with the following statements:

- I confirm that I have read and understood the project information above and had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.
- I understand that the researcher and supervisor will have access to my responses, but that these will be kept confidential.
- I understand that my personal data will be held securely under password protection or in a secure physical location.
- I understand that in reporting the research, extracts from my responses may be used, but that these will be anonymised and care will be taken to ensure I am non-identifiable.
- I understand that any personal data will be destroyed after the final marking of the dissertation.
- I agree to participate in this research.
Q1. I agree to all of the above statements *This question is required

Appendix A2: Questionnaire

Q2. Use the boxes below to give a brief description of your social identities.

This question encouraged the participants to self categorize by choosing labels to describe themselves. This gave some information the social identities of the participants, provided descriptions to use of the participants in the write up, and allowed the researcher to deduce information about identity salience in the library context by noting which social identities were written about or omitted in answers that followed.

Q3. Think about your personal values, attitudes, practices, concerns etc. Do you attribute any of them as originating from any of your social identities? If so, explain which ones and how.

When individuals identify with a group they tend to adopt group attributes such as values, attitudes and behaviour, and accentuate similarities between themselves and their concept of the group. However this is not always the case and it is possible to self categorise as belonging to a social group without having internalized its values (Hogg and Abrams, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989). This question sought to uncover the personal meaning of the social identities to the participant as a necessary step to analysis and representation of the participants’ experiences. Additionally the relationship between an individual’s multiple social identities may indicate the complexity of their identity structure. If an individual perceives the social groups they belong to as having non overlapping attributes then they may have a complex identity structure. There is evidence to suggest that people with complex identity structures are more inclusive towards individuals with other identities and towards other social groups (Roccas and Brewer, 2002).
**Q4.** The salience/ importance of a social identity is usually indicated by how much you think about it in your everyday life. What are the most salient/ important parts of your social identity? (e.g. class identity, sexual identity etc) And why are they the most salient/ important? (Downing, 2009 : 227)

The salience of social identities have a strong situational component. The two main factors which influence which identity is felt to be salient in any context are the general accessibility of the identity to the individual in everyday life, and the extent to which the identity provides a fitting explanation of the social situation at hand. Generally the identity that becomes most salient is the one of most difference to rest of the group in the given social situation (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1998). This question sought to uncover the personal meaning of the social identities to the participant as a necessary step to analysis and representation of the participants’ experiences; and of how societal oppression might be felt and understood by the participant.

**Q5.** Give a narrative account of how you decided that you wanted to do library work. Start your account from the first time you had the idea, until you decided on it with a degree of conviction. What aspects of libraries/ librarians/ library work appealed to you? Did any of your identities influence your choice?

**Q6.** Give a narrative account of an experience in any area of your professional life in librarianship, during which, one of your identities became salient (important) for you in a striking way. (This experience may have been positive or negative.) What was the context? What identity was it? Describe what happened: What was your immediate response? How did you feel? What were your thoughts? Did you take any actions? What was your long term response? etc.

**Q7.** Have you ever initiated or taken part in any work, in the context of librarianship, that has been influenced primarily by any of your social identities? If so give a narrative account of this. What identity was it? What work did you undertake? Why did you decide to do this? What were the results?
These were questions intended to stimulate narrative answers describing what may have been critical moments in identifying with librarianship; experiencing identity salience within librarianship, or navigating some aspect of librarianship. The critical incident format was designed to elicit specific examples and the prompts were designed to stimulate the participants’ memories and help them reflect on all aspects of their experiences (Van Manen, 1990)

Q8. Imagine an ideal library worker (or if you have one, your personal library role model). What do you imagine this person’s work related values, attitudes, practices, concerns, work philosophy etc are?

Q9. Still thinking about the ideal library worker you imagined. What social identities did they have? (e.g. political identity, sexual identity etc)

Q10. Still thinking about the ideal library worker you imagined. Do you imagine that any of their social identities informed their approach to library work? If so which ones and how?

Q11. Imagine a library worker who is an average of (or typical of) all the library workers in your current, or most recent workplace. (If this proves too difficult you can imagine more than one.) What do you imagine this person’s work related values, attitudes, practices, concerns, philosophy etc are?

Q12. Still thinking about the average library worker(s) you imagined. How similar or different are you from them and why? (In terms of your work related values, attitudes, practices, concerns, philosophy etc)

Formulated on the same theoretical basis as the initial questions about social identity, these questions sought to uncover the meaning of being a library worker to the participant, the extent to which other librarians were perceived as having these attributes, the strength of identification with other librarians, and if social identity was perceived as being influential in any of these. The distinction between ideal and average library workers was necessary to make, as it is possible for individuals to identify with a group (such as library workers) without actually identifying with any of its members, through a process of reification; and because asked to describe simply ‘a library worker’ some participants may
have described an average and some an ideal (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

For the following questions think about your experiences of librarianship as a profession, that is, beyond your immediate workplace. E.g. your experiences with CILIP, in professional networks, in accredited courses etc

Q13. Has the profession tried to leverage any cultural knowledge stemming from your social identities? If so explain how? Was this done in a way you felt was appropriate?

This question was designed to stimulate answers attending to the ‘cultural knowledge integration’ of the profession. This is the ability of the profession to use the skills, knowledge and talents embodied in the diversity of its workforce, in non exploitative and non assumptive ways, in order to gain cultural knowledge and extend its social networks (Smith, 2008). This question will reveal how much the profession makes use of the cultural knowledge of its members.

Q14. How included do you feel in various informal networks in the profession (e.g. networking, social activities, mentoring etc)? …Do you think this is influenced by any of your identities? (This may be in a positive, negative or mixed way)

This is a straightforward question attending to notions of belonging which are central to psychological identification. (Smith, 2008; Hogg and Abrams, 1998).

Q15. Have you been aware of any tension (e.g. conflict, misunderstanding, ignorance etc) between different identity groups within the library profession? …If so, what the source of tension? …How was the tension managed or resolved?

This question was designed to stimulate answers attending to the level of intergroup conflict within the profession. A low level of intergroup conflict can reveal a diverse profession that manages its diversity well, a high level of intergroup conflict can reveal a profession that is managing diversity badly, or is newly diverse; while the absence of
intergroup conflict altogether indicates a highly homogenous profession (Smith 2008). This question should uncover how well diversity is managed within the profession.

**Q16.** On first entering the profession, did you feel there was there a good fit between its norms, attitudes, concerns etc, of the profession and yours? ...If not, how was this reconciled? (e.g. how did you change yourself? how did you change your environment? etc) (Downing, 2009 : 227)

This question was designed to stimulate answers attending to how individuals are acculturated into the profession. Individuals may feel they have to assimilate to be included, or differences may be acknowledged and accepted creating a pluralistic environment, or if differences are acknowledged but not integrated separatism may occur (Smith 2008). The answers to this question will indicate the nature of the cultural environment.

**Q17.** Do you feel like you have access to opportunities for advancement / to high profile appointments within the wider profession? (not your immediate workplace) ...Do you think your access is influenced by any of your identities? (this may be in a positive, negative, or mixed way)

This question attends to formal integration (Smith, 2008); and should indicate if participants feel they face discrimination in being promoted or have privileged access to opportunities.

**Q18.** What is your impression of the professions commitment to diversity as a whole? (e.g. within the profession, in service etc). (Downing, 2009 : 225)

This is a straight forward question designed to capture any general thoughts about the culture of librarianship with respect to inclusivity.
Appendix A3: Questionnaire Piloting

The questionnaire was revised a number of times before implementation, initially after the researcher tested it, after being commented on by the dissertation supervisor, and then after piloting on two participants Miles and Victoria (whose results have been included in the write up).

Revisions made included:

- The rewriting of some poorly formulated questions that did not ask what was intended.
- The rewriting of ambiguous questions that had been interpreted differently than intended.
- The removal of compulsoriness of questions so participants were not deterred if they could not answer a question.
- The inclusion of definitions of some of terms used (e.g. ‘salience’, ‘the profession’).
- The inclusion of brief examples in the question to remind the participant to use terms consistently throughout the questionnaire (e.g. political identity, sexual identity).
- The splitting up of some long questions where possible into their smallest possible constituent parts.
- The removal or altering of questions that were not well received, for example both pilot participants were happy to attribute values as originating in their social identities but declined to assign any values as being characteristic of a whole social group. Some of these questions were reconstructed to be more acceptable to the participants (e.g. imagined ideal and average library workers).
- The removal of non essential questions to make the questionnaire shorter. Victoria reported that she took eighty minutes to complete the questionnaire and that she tired approximately two thirds of the way through, while Miles returned the questionnaire with the last section incomplete.
- The reordering of questions so that the least important ones were towards the back in the event of a partial questionnaire completion.
- The changing of ‘marginalised groups’ to ‘minority groups’, as Victoria commented that this may be off putting to some potential participants.
- The rewriting of the information page about the research for the participants with greater detail, and a note about the length of time to set aside to complete the questionnaire.
A possible limitation in the piloting was that the participators were LGBT. Because of different characteristic experiences between different social groups this may have lead to some questions being attended to over others, and given a misleading image of which questions would yield the most informative material when implemented on a wider sample. This point was considered carefully during the removal of extraneous questions and the reordering of the remaining questions.

Appendix A4: Interview Guide and Prompts

The interview guide consisted of questions and prompts that were largely adapted from the questionnaire, and a supplementary sheet of prompts was created to enable the researcher to probe into interesting points in the participants narratives. The sheet of prompts included questions that addressed the indicators of culture competency from Smith (2008), which were institutional as well as personal in nature. These were included at the interview stage as all the interviewees had management experience.

The interview guide

NB ** indicates possible prompt questions depending on the interviewees response

Q1. Briony introduced my research topic and you kindly agreed to volunteer - Can you tell me what about the topic interested you?
How would you describe your identity?
If many – which of those identities do you tend to think most about in your everyday life?
Why?
Do you feel being (specific identity) is an important part of who you are? How so?
Do you think any of your personal values are influenced by being (specific identity)?

Q2. Can you tell me a story about how you came to librarianship – starting from the first time you had the idea... and then what happened... and then what happened... etc
What was your experience of that? *being new* *networking*

Q3. Can you tell me about your experience of library school?
How good do you think the fit was between you and library school? *being new*  
*networking*  
What was your experience like socially within the library school?  
What did you think of the syllabus? Was it relevant? Did it reflect your interests? Did it reflect your identity?  

Q4. Can you tell me about your early professional experiences?  
Q5. Can you tell me about your route to being a manager?  
*formal integration*  
*networking*  

Q6. Have you taken part in any social actions/initiatives within the profession – Can you describe your experience of that?  
What do you do?  
Why did you decide to do that?  
What was the response?  
*social action*  
*institutional*  
*conflict*  

Q7. (Questions derived from the institutional culture indicators were asked if they had not been touched upon in the previous accounts - Go to the prompts).  

Q8. Reflecting things we’ve talked about – how have you found the experience and is there anything else you would like to bring up?  

The prompts  
*Social action*  
How did you recognise the need?  
What motivated you to do that? ID, emotionally, contextually, beliefs  
What did you do?  
How did you decide on your strategy?  

*Being New* (Acculturation/ adjustment):  
asimilation (to feel included/ toeing the line)
pluralism (differences acknowledged and accepted)
separatism

How good do you think the fit was between you and who/whatever’s (goals, values, ways of doing things)?
How much did your values and personal and professional goals good fit with who/whatever?

How were you different? What did you do about the differences? Why?
Did you feel like you had to change to fit in?

Were differences acknowledged and accepted as valid?
Did you feel like you could bring all of you to work?

A split/ divide?

*Networks* (sense of inclusion in informal networks e.g. mentoring, networking)

Can you tell me about the professional networks you are part of?
How did you decide to join?
How included do you feel in them?
Do they feel different to be in?
Have you ever been actively sought out?

*Group Member* (inclusion/exclusion)

Are you proud to be a library worker? Do library work? be a member of CILIP?
Do you feel part of the profession?
How typical a manager are you?
Do you think there are any differences in values, attitudes, etc

*Conflict*

How did people react to..?
How do you think they understood it?
If there was conflict how was it managed?

*Knowledge Integration*

The profession fully uses the knowledge it has in its members?
Was it done sensitively? How did you feel about it?
*Formal integration*
How do people advance in this profession?
How did you advance?
Do you think your identity has played any role in the way you have progressed?

**Institutional** (worldview, bias, awareness, integration)

*Bias*
In your experience how committed do you think the profession is to diversity?
How do you think it understands diversity?
Do you think it a diverse profession?
How does this manifest in its policies/practices?

*Integration*
How in touch do you think libraries are with the rest of society?
How in touch are people in the profession with society?
How in touch are people in the profession with each other?
How does this manifest?

*Awareness*
How would you describe the social awareness of the profession?
Are they are of having a location?
Are they aware of how they are perceived?

*Worldview*
What does the library profession care about?
What would you say are their priorities?
Appendix B: Results

Appendix B1: Actions

These are actions the participants undertook which were motivated or informed by their identities.

Advocacy

Beatrice wrote that she kept abreast of changes and cuts in the mobile library service in her and surrounding boroughs and their implications for disabled people. She encouraged her service users to use their political power by complaining to the council over reductions in provision.

Approach

Susan informed by her class and educational background works to counter perspectives of other librarians in her academic library particularly with regard to the assumptions librarians have about what students should know about libraries:

“I often hear comments from colleagues which are critical of students and their perceived lack of knowledge or ability to use a library properly. This upsets and annoys me, and I often find myself countering this with other perspectives.” (S4).

Anna informed by her understanding of the assumptions staff may have about how much the public understand libraries encourages her staff to take a more interventionist approach:

“When I see parents, even here [in the library], I try to make sure, say to staff, “When you see a parent with a child, always ask them whether their child is a member” because some of them do not know that... there are some parents that would come to the library. A child is three years of age and you say to them, “Has the child joined the library?” They will say “No, no, he’s too young to join the library”. So, it was really, I saw it as a job to promote library to these people” (AI67).
Ros’ approach in engaging with people authentically (which can be related to the affects of her complex identity structure), aided in the development of her multicultural library service firstly in the levels of empathy she displayed and secondly in her willingness to learn despite the risk this may have involved to her self image:

“so black history month and so, you know, I hadn’t heard of it. Um, and it was quite exciting... it was terribly exciting to do it and it was terribly exciting for...as I say and I think perhaps I tend to be intuitive, so I intuit this is a good thing... I read about it. I had colleagues to help me find the words to explain, well, the term ‘politically black’ for instance, because we didn’t have that many black people... in part of the county. So, I learnt that. Another thing, again this is back to my naivety um, my black colleague is very politically black and I’m very close to her now. But, two things: the lesser thing is she made quite clear, she explained to me, “I am a black woman so I have a common heritage and experience with other black women and you are apart from that. You will never be close to me, like those women.” And I found that quite hurtful. I’ve gone on from finding it hurtful to, you know, processing the point she was making” (R91).

Valarie describes challenging preconceptions and encouraging her colleagues to take a more thoughtful and questioning approach to their work:

“I do remember one of my members of staff saying, “Well, we haven’t got any gay people on our service” and I was just thinking, well! So I said, “How do you know? You know, you don’t know.” They kind of think about it and OK, well so-and-so is a bit camp and maybe they are gay. You know, OK , think about it a bit more. Um, but of course... it’s just about subtle ways and hopefully just getting them to think about their borrowers... So it’s just little things like that I think we can all try and do” (V166).

Valarie allows her own experiences as an LGBT library user to inform her decisions. Here she describes thinking about the placement of the LGBT collection:
“we thought long and hard about where we were going to put it in the library um, because we didn’t want it to be in full view of the staff. I mean I certainly know from my personal experience that when I was going into the local library, looking for these Women’s Press books there was a degree of embarrassment, shame associated with it. You know, hoping to God that no-one would know I was a lesbian because I was looking for these books. So I thought that was really important to have the books in the library but not in broad...in full view of the staff. But equally we didn’t want it hidden up a corner so we thought very carefully about where we would put it” (V96).

Collections

Anna describes a time when book selection for her borough was largely dictated by the tastes of the small group of librarians in charge, she found that:

“traditional librarians, you know, they had this cold shoulder over books that were foreign, because of the English, they were always saying, “Oh, we don’t like this because American English, we don’t really want our children reading American English. We don’t want this, we don’t want that. And for that reason, BME stock was not accepted quite easily in libraries.” She described using her influence as a librarian to broaden the library collections: “There were quite a few BME book suppliers in London and... we would visit, er, there were about three or four that we would go to, to pick up books and um, and it really helped because librarians would say, “This is what we want” and they’d say... so, the authority, the head of libraries started to listen to BME staff” (AI96).

Valarie motivated by her identity and mission to serve LGBT library users initiated labelling of collections, the expansion into a non-fiction collection and a DVD collection, and the promotion of LGBT stock within her library.
Victoria motivated by both her area of research expertise and her identity undertook various tasks at work including an LGBT history month display and the development of a collection of LGBT themed books for young adults.

Consultancy

Valerie answered enquiries from other libraries trying to develop their services to LGBT library users:

“I did go on a course actually a few years ago. It was um, the Brighton and South area network basin they’re called. Um, and it was an LGBT awareness day so [name omitted] and I went, all keen to learn and when we got there we kind of realised that we’d already been there and done that. And it was really interesting because the day kind of turned round and we found people were coming to us to talk to us about what we were doing in [town] and, sort of, every so often since then we’ve had emails from people just saying, “Tell us more about what you’ve done in [town], why you’ve done it, how you consulted your users” (V127).

Mentoring

Linda had mentored her staff motivated by her egalitarian identity and awareness of her staff being undervalued:

“I’ve set about changing this perception and want the staff in my area (Customer Services) to feel they are valued, understand that their views do matter and that they are also doing a professional job...I decided it was partly to do with empowering staff, allowing them to have a voice and raising the image of themselves and our part of the service. This has started to pay dividends with many staff more confident about making decisions, taking initiative and taking a more professional approach” (L6).
Networks

All participants were members of the Diversity Group and Elena, Ros and Valerie made explicit reference to their support and participation in the CILIP Diversity Group making a positive an impact on the profession. Valerie said:

“I feel that um, being involved with the diversity group, we are sort of really digging deep and trying to find those hard to reach groups who um, who can find, who could find um, something for them in the library and hope that the library service will continue in...you know, the people who started libraries all those years ago um, hopefully probably had the kind of same intentions that we’ve got now but in a different way.” (V130)

James describes his role in setting up the Diversity Group. He tried to get race and class embedded into the CILIP equal opportunity policies soon after its conception with the reasoning that: “race and class are concrete realities which cannot be ignored. Just look at the profile of most CILIP members which does not reflect the diversity in society” (J13). James reported a hostile response to this, with acknowledgements of race and class being constructed as political, and CILIP’s Royal Charter, which prevents it from taking any political action, being given as a reason for refusal. Having failed to do this he acted with others to set up the Diversity Group, however its continued existence is an ongoing battle:

“we had no alternative but to set up an alternative structure - the Diversity Group. We were the 1st new CILIP Group in 20 years and we had to jump through a number of bureaucratic hoops - including getting 250 signatures from CILIP members (1% of total membership) - before the Group was set up.

There are now moves to merge CILIP Groups and it has been suggested that the Diversity Group is merged with CSG, which will dilute its focus on identity issues - so the struggle goes on!” (J13)

Beatrice describes experiencing discrimination when applying for a library role despite being covered by the disability discrimination act. She put down to a lack of understanding and awareness of how to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled staff and reacted by forming a disabled staff group for her borough. She wrote: “I realised that it
was necessary to network with other disabled staff to improve our working lives.” She was a founder of a Disabled Staff Group for her Local Authority (B3)

**Outness**

Valerie used being out is a deliberate strategy both to ensure her own integrity, make her colleagues think about their prejudices and signal expectations for behaviour, she said:

“I suppose by talking about um, by coming straight out and saying, you know, “I’m lesbian. I’m involved in the diversity group. I’m involved in a women’s group in [town omitted]. I’m half-Jewish.” You know, my grandparents were immigrants and kind of saying by that...so therefore I’m not going to tolerate um, racist jokes about immigrants or um...so I suppose just, sort of putting my cards on the table...seems good and then just hoping that...they’d kind of respect me for that” (V41)

Peter described his outness as creating a climate of safety for staff:

“during my latter years in the London Borough, I was the most senior officer who was out, so this had an impact across the Council. One result was that staff who’d not previously identified as lesbian or gay did so.” (P7)

**Outreach**

Anna described how her understanding of BME experiences shaped her choices about how to target her outreach work:

“I ran a lot of children’s activities, events to bring children in because I felt that if we can get children from schools, that way the parents would get to know about libraries. And that was quite my key concern that BME communities didn’t have much um, awareness of libraries as their own, there was no ownership of libraries with them... So outreach activity was quite, you know, important to me, because that
was my... the way I could um, you know, make library known to people” (AI112)

Anna describes how her connection with her home country and its people combined with her appreciation of the potential of libraries motivated her help establish a public library in Nigeria:

“Over the years, I longed to have the opportunity to take what I have learned and experienced in Britain to my home country - Nigeria. It pains me to see how little people appreciate the resources that they are freely given in this country when some other parts of the world are wallowing in abject poverty. I was on holiday in Nigeria in December 2004 and a gentleman approached me with invitation to help in setting up a new public library in a local authority. I instantly told him that it was a dream I've had for years, but how would it happen. He briefed me on the origin of the idea - the family wanted to give the community a library in memory of their father - an ex-philanthropist. The local council had given a piece of land for the library, and the family was to build and stock it. The man said that someone told him that I was a librarian and asked how we could make the dream a reality... We exchanged views on how to raise funds, stock and management of the project. Trustees were formed and on his next visit to Nigeria, the foundation was laid and project manager was appointed... As the work was going on we started to create awareness of the project and asked for stock donations from British and Canadian communities. I intimated my involvement to my library manager and the head of [borough] Libraries who gave me total support and encouragement. I spoke to my local church congregation. Altogether, we raised over 23,000 books for the library from London, Canada and Nigerian donors. I catalogued my collection - over 3,000 items and the Canadian company that shipped everything to Nigeria came and picked the stock from my home. My collection was integrated with over15,000 items from Canada and shipped to Nigeria. The library was launched in August 2006 with a very big bang. It was a great celebration - one that I will never forget because by the time we finished opening the boxes of books and arranged them on the shelves, I was completely exhausted. What I relished - the share joy of watching young university students who were on holiday as they gathered from 7am until 4pm to put the library stock on the shelves knowing that it was going to be there
for them. At the launch, the town exploded with entertainers and speeches from influential personalities... It is the best service I have ever given in my professional life” (A25).

Valerie worked in partnership with a trans group to develop a small deposit collection, she describes her thinking:

“the hope is that service users come into the [the trans] centre, see the books, hopefully then they’ll also realise they’re actually [town] Library books because there’s a sign and they’ll think, “Ah, [town] Public Libraries is really radical and cool and perhaps I’ll go there and see if there’s anything else.” Um, so yeah, I suppose with these...with that...the idea was that it would just act as an advertisement for the bigger collection at Central Library” (V89).

Research

Beatrice did research as a disabled research into the library needs of disabled people. She wrote:

“...I felt that disabled, elderly, and housebound people were not given access to the same library service as other users. I interviewed a number of users and non-users of the Bookbus and Housebound library service. I put forward suggestions regarding improving this service by consulting the users on stock selection, and providing newspapers, book groups, mobile theatre, and literature related book bus tours. I can see how vibrant and exciting a mobile library service could be, and there are examples of good practice in various parts of the country” (BS)

James took part in research around public libraries and social exclusion in which he was motivated by his class and political background to focus on class issues.

Anna also did research work on the subject doing an MSc on the lack of library usage of BME communities.
Victoria did research work on LGBT provision for young people in libraries, she was motivated by an awareness of “the amount of work which still remained to be done on diversity issues in libraries (and in librarianship research)”, as well as her identity (Vi6).

Service development

Susan has drawn on her own experiences and awareness of disability to change library policies and procedures which are a barrier to library use and identify staff training needs:

“I am hearing impaired and thus well-aware of problems with hidden disabilities. I was concerned that our disabled students were having to 'prove' their disabilities before extra help was forthcoming. I decided therefore to set up some new policies and procedures to ameliorate the need for constant 'declaration' and also arranged training for staff in dealing with hidden disabilities, including mental health issues.” (S5)

Valerie works to try and embed access to LGBT books into all library services, she talks about the home library service:

“there’s a risk that, because people feel that they can’t tell us if they are lesbian or gay either, that um, that we’re not taking that risk and taking them out a book that they might absolutely love because it’s got an LGBT theme... So actually now, so what I’ve started to do in my department, books-at-home, is I’ve started to put some rainbow stickers on our stock, um, and our DVD’s. So we do books, DVD’s, audio books um, just so that... and brief them all. This is what this rainbow sticker means. It’s not about excluding these books from your choices, it’s about including these books in your choice because we choose these books that we take out to the house-bound people” (V166).

Valarie initiated a range of library services for LGBT people which included an LGBT reading group, a LGBT non-fiction collection and DVD collection, involvement in LGBT history month, partnerships with local groups run by the Terrace Higgins Trust, partnerships with local LGBT pubs, and a deposit collection for a local trans centre.
Valerie, after an initial refusal for spine labelling the LGBT books to make them easier to find with section 28 cited as a reason, described pursuing her service to LGBT users covertly:

“I was a little bit um, sneaky...’cos at the time there was um, a group that met in [town omitted] and so we had these little flyers put off. So I’d go around myself and I’d find all the LGBT books and I’d put these flyers inside the books, not tell anyone, just do it, just saying that LGBT group meets Tuesday night, 7 o’clock at the venue...sure enough there was some people who came along to the group because of those little leaflets I put in. ...Maybe I just fancied myself as a bit of a lesbian avenger or something... I felt it was very unfair that um, [town omitted] Libraries would not take it upon themselves to promote LGBT stock. So I just thought well, if they’re not going to do it then, you know, what they...they can’t prove it was me who put these leaflets inside the book” (V73).

Training

Peter’s gay identity influenced his work as a freelance trainer around LGBT issues and he wrote that this work also had an impact on his own library and its staff.
Appendix B2: Outness

For all the LGBT participants, Peter, Valerie, and Victoria in the sample outness was an important theme made salient by a society wide culture of heteronormativity and heterosexism which manifests in the library world which produces in LGBT people about whether or not to be out and the positive and negative implications that exist whether out or in.

When asked to write about a time in his experience of librarianship in which his identity became salient Peter gives the following account of going for an interview:

“At the interview, I decided to come out from the start - it was at the time when Mary Whitehouse & the National Viewers & Listeners Assoc was very big, and they had a presence in the Borough I went to - and I was applying for a post as a children's librarian, so I didn't want there to be any gossip or any sense that I hadn't declared something vital at interview. I got the job!!” (J6)

His awareness of a homophobic society particularly the discourses around ‘protecting’ children from knowledge of difference meant that he had to give careful consideration as to how to navigate this situation and it seems as though he experienced a justified expectation that he might encounter discrimination, being surprised that he was offered the job.

Victoria writes about encountering heteronormativity and heterosexism, in a work colleague and friend who assumes her to be straight, and expresses discomfort about LGBT people to her. This puts Victoria in a double bind situation where she feels uncomfortable and finds it hard to come out, which she then in turn feels uncomfortable about. Valerie suggests that she had encountered similar situations to Victoria, and these informed her future actions, she said:

“I'd moved around a couple of departments before and I'd had previous experience of perhaps things getting a bit out of hand and I remember thinking, “Right, next time, you know, I’m in a new staff
team, I am going to kind of lay my cards down on the table straight away and start as I mean to go on” (V41).

Both Peter and Valerie report being out at work. For Valerie being out is a deliberate strategy both to ensure her own integrity, make her colleagues think about their prejudices and signal expectations for behaviour, she said:

“I suppose by talking about um, by coming straight out and saying, you know, “I’m lesbian. I’m involved in the diversity group. I’m involved in a women’s group in [town omitted]. I’m half-Jewish.” You know, my grandparents were immigrants and kind of saying by that...so therefore I’m not going to tolerate um, racist jokes about immigrants or um...so I suppose just, sort of putting my cards on the table...seems good and then just hoping that...they’d kind of respect me for that” (V41)

Both Peter and Valerie describe being out as creating a climate of safety for staff, with Peter writing:

“during my latter years in the London Borough, I was the most senior officer who was out, so this had an impact across the Council. One result was that staff who'd not previously identified as lesbian or gay did so” (P7)

Valerie recounted her resolution on hearing about a staff room incident where one member of staff was disparaging an LGBT promotion:

“I know that there was another member of staff in the staff room who sat there very quietly, cringing, because her nephew’s, you know, a gay man. And, you know, she just felt really awful about herself, awful about her situation, unable to speak up or say anything... that’s not, certainly not the kind of atmosphere or working environment that I would want my staff team to be working in. Um, ‘cos I don’t think it’s acceptable.”
In addition to the disparity in power and recognition given to Valerie and Fiona based on seniority and qualification, Valerie also attributes some measure of their different reception to their respective sexualities. She feels that her ideas when expressed by Fiona are considered on merit and likely to be acted on because she has social capital arising from her straightness and a culture of heteronormativity which positions her as neutral and unbiased:

“Fiona, as I mentioned, is a straight woman, she’s well-respected and well-liked in the library service. She’s quite vocal and I think when people, members of staff realise that she was supporting LGBT issues then I thought...I think that they think “Well, she’s not getting anything out of it so it must be a genuine cause and um, you know” (V104)

Valerie’s description of Fiona turning to her for ideas rooted in her social knowledge, presenting them, and then getting credit for the outcome could be construed as appropriation. But Valerie also later attributes the difference in reception to Fiona’s character showing some ambiguity or ambivalence in her interpretations, she said:

“I think it was Fiona’s character that made that happen. So, I suppose again I could emphasise that although the ideas were mine, because they’re presented by Fiona, (popular and lovely), they went down better” (V108)

Peter also relates experiences where he was consulted for his knowledge in an inappropriate way: “when, as a senior manager, my views on anything sexual were sought because it was assumed that, as a gay man, I’d have a view!” (P13), describing a microaggression in which his gayness was sexualized. Peter contrasts that example with his current situation where he describes being in a greater position of power and control over the way he shares his cultural knowledge, and the credit he gets for it, by operating as a free lance trainer of LGBT issues in libraries. Nevertheless this still carries a degree of personal risk evidenced by a time when “someone in a training group called me a "sinner"!” (P13)
That Victoria pursued LGBT research motivated by identity when studying for her library qualification may have legitimized her to work in LGBT service provision in her colleagues eyes, allowing her to operate from a place of safety, although discomfort as well. She hints that she may feel there is some relationship between the reception of her work by colleagues and their perception of her sexuality, writing that her actions were “reasonably well received by colleagues (some of whom I was also personally out to)” (Vi8).

Discussion Points

- Microaggressions included assumptions of straightness, the positioning of straightness as central and normal; the positioning of straightness as neutral. These experiences are rooted in and reflective of norms and oppressive paradigms which exist in society so also exist in librarianship.

- Navigating outness was the central experience. There are negative and positive implications both in being out, and not being out. Being out - openly challenging norms. Being out – creating a group whereas before people just experienced themselves as isolated individuals

- LGB identities may become salient in particular aspects of library work such as collections or working with children and young people.

- How individuals were consulted for their cultural knowledge is important. Peter’s knowledge was requested in assumptive ways; while the way in which Valerie’s knowledge has been used could be construed as exploitative (Smith, 2008)
Appendix B3: Image

The image created and projected onto society by librarianship is a salient theme in Anna’s account. She describes how early in her career she had to figure out a strategy to navigate the assumptions of library users that she was not a librarian, she described the scene:

“It was difficult to get people to accept that I was in charge of the library I managed. I was in a small library and in charge of mostly white members of staff. It took a lot of convincing to get the library users to see me as the manager. A lot of regular users would pass me and go straight to a library assistant for help. It wasn’t until the assistants started to struggle with their enquiries that they got referred to me.” (A22)

Anna’s tactic for navigating this was to use the traditional hierarchical structure of library roles to manage the public image of herself and she literally displayed her identity as a librarian:

“I started to wear my 'LIBRARIAN' badge very prominently and manned the enquiry desk as often as possible. That way, nobody could avoid me and staff were told to refer all serious enquiries to the desk.” (A22)

Anna believed that her presence in the library as a black woman changed BME patrons perceptions of the library as well, she wrote:

“My mere presence in the libraries I served helped a lot of BME communities to learn that they could actually work in a library. A lot of people approached me to ask the possibility of getting a library job.” (A17)

Ros gives a similar anecdote about image describing a young library worker with an alternative style which echoes Anna’s account of how library users behave informed by their cultural images of who a library worker is:
“He had blue hair, he had a stud there and I think he may have had things in his ears. And I loved him so much. I loved him working, he had very nice people skills and I loved him. I loved him and it meant that young people would go into the library and they would see people a bit like them there.” (R121)

His strategy was to assimilate:

“one day, I went in and he had normal-coloured hair and he didn’t have a piercing and I said, “Why?” And he said, “Because it made me invisible.” He said, “Because the customers who came in, the vast majority of them, if you were him, and a middle-aged lady was here, they wouldn’t even see you, they would just talk to the middle...” (R121)

Discussion Points

- Hegemonic cultural images of who librarians are, and what they look like leads to microaggressions in the form of disconfirming reflections back to library workers who do not fit those ideas.

- These images are long standing and ingrained however they are also a reflection of the social make up of librarianship and a lack of action as culture is dialectical and can be changed.

- Anna’s strategy was a social mobility one. She used the existing hierarchy of her library service to position herself as the manager by displaying the signs associated with it and taking on their roles.

- The blue haired library worker assimilated. The cultural image promotes it reproduction. This perhaps shows something of the strength of the library prototype as his look was likely not normative outside the library.