THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PROMOTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

A study submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Librarianship at THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

by

DANIEL GRACE

September 2011
Abstract

Background. Communities facing increasing threats from disasters precipitated by climate change, biodiversity loss, and energy and food insecurity. In the face of such threats, communities must adopt strategies that build resilience. As a public institution, the library has a role to play in such strategies.

Aims. The study aimed to understand how, through an examination of day-to-day working practices, public libraries promote and inhibit community resilience, and in doing so provide guidance for strategy, policy and practices that promote community resilience, and for further research in this area.

Methods. The methodology employed was a combination of autoethnography and situational analysis. A reflective journal was kept documenting experience in the researchers place of work across a period of four months. This data formed the basis for further reflexive processes using the toolbox of situational analysis methods, including coding, situational mapping, relational analysis and social worlds/arenas mapping.

Results. The analysis identified several areas of interest. Firstly the existence of a split between the social worlds of the library worker and user. Secondly the role of technology in this split. Thirdly the role of professionalism as discourse in rationalising the use of certain technologies. Fourthly the role of management in perpetuating this discourse. Fifthly the
place of outreach in bridging the gap between these social worlds. Sixthly the environment as an abiding concern. Deeper theoretical interpretation looked at the relationship between these factors using a variety of lenses and located the root of this split in a wider conflict between the competing logics of the space of flows and the space of places (Castells, 1996).

**Conclusions.** It is recognised that as this is a new area of research any conclusions are tentative. However, it is concluded that each of the above mentioned areas provides a potential site for the extension of both new policies and practices, and further research regarding the role of the public library in building community resilience. A combination of both new practice and research in an action research project is put forward as the most satisfactory way to proceed.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Barbara Sen for all her advice and support, and my colleagues without whom this study would not have been possible.
Table of Contents
1. Introduction and aims.................................................................6
2. Literature review...........................................................................9
3. Methodology................................................................................21
4. Results and discussion.................................................................35
5. Conclusions and further research...............................................72
Appendix 1: Reflective journal page (fragment).................................86
Appendix 2: Messy and ordered situational maps (examples)............87
Appendix 3: Relational analysis (example – economic development)....89
Appendix 4: Social worlds/arenas map.............................................90
References.........................................................................................91

Index of Figures
Figure 1: Positional map showing "Technology as a solution" against
"Adaptive capacities"...........................................................................31
1. Introduction and aims

1.1 Introduction

The definition of the research topic began with an initial desire to explore the ways in which the public library can address the issues of climate change, energy and food security and biodiversity loss. This line of research was inspired by an article by Deborah J. Slone in a 2008 issue of *Library Journal* titled “After Oil”, in which the author examines how the public library will remain, and even increase in importance as society gradually moves towards a post-oil society, with all the inherent problems that this will involve. One movement currently attempting to address these issues on a community level is the Transition Movement (Hopkins, 2008). This is a worldwide, grassroots movement engaged in developing 'energy descent plans', which seek to map a path beyond societies dependence on oil, and working in villages, towns and cities through a series of projects that target quick returns for effort, the “low hanging fruit”, such as food production and reducing energy requirements of households and businesses (Hopkins, 2008; 2010). The concept of resilience is central to the methodology of the Transition Movement in tackling at a grassroots level the issues around climate change, energy and food security and biodiversity loss (Hopkins, 2008; Pinkerton and Hopkins, 2009). Norris et al (2008: 127) define resilience as “a process linking a network of adaptive capacities (resources with dynamic attributes) to adaptation after a disturbance or adversity”. They go on to explain that adaptive capacities fall into four primary sets - *economic development*, *social capital*, *information and communication*, and *community competence* - that
together provide a strategy for disaster readiness (2008: 127). Resilience is therefore a strategic concern for any community wishing to meet the challenges posed by climate change, energy and food security and biodiversity loss and the potential disasters caused by these factors. It also has the added value of being applicable to any situation that precipitates a disaster-like scenario. Two examples of this might be economic collapse, such as witnessed in Greece in 2010-11, or social disorder of the kind witnessed in British cities during the summer of 2011. If resilience is a useful concept for communities in these contexts, it is therefore a concern for public libraries, whose role is to serve the community.

Chapter 2 tackles the literature around community resilience and its link to the role of public libraries. There is a lack of literature simultaneously concerned with both of these topics, so it is necessary to explore the connections via specific adaptive capacities and through the concept of sustainability. Chapter 3 describes the methodology by which this connection might be explored and the data analysed, and the rationale behind adopting this methodology. Chapter 4 expounds on the results of this analytical process and discusses their relation to wider theoretical concerns. Chapter 5 draws conclusions based on this discussion in line with aims and objectives outlined in the next section 1.2.
1.2 Research aims and objectives

Research question

How do public libraries promote, or inhibit community resilience?

Aim

To understand how, through an examination of day-to-day working practices, public libraries promote and inhibit community resilience, and in doing so provide guidance for strategy, policy and practices that promote community resilience, and for further research in this area.

Objectives

1. To conduct a literature review to define community resilience, explore the meaning of 'adaptive capacities', and understand how this connects with the concept of sustainability.

2. To collect data using an autoethnographic method in the form of detailed notes of my experiences in my workplace, and subject this data to analysis using situational analysis methodology.

3. To identify elements and relationships that inhibit community resilience in the context of public libraries.

4. To identify factors that facilitate the promotion of community resilience in the context of public libraries.

5. To make recommendations for action and policy in the workplace and further research.
2. Literature review

While there is a lack of literature directly concerned with the role of public libraries in promoting community resilience, there is a small body of literature on disaster management for libraries. Matthews (2003: 4), a key writer in this field, emphasises the use of disaster control plans, “the framework around which good disaster management works”. However, the approach to understanding the role of the library in the face of disaster used is more narrowly interpreted than the one adopted for this study, being limited to concern with the effects of such events on the library or archive itself, rather than the wider society. This necessitates a study of two broader areas. Firstly the literature around community resilience and its connection to climate change, biodiversity loss, energy and food security and the wider sustainability agenda must be investigated in order to define the concept in relation to our primary concern. Secondly it is necessary to look at the small amount of literature that deals with role of the public library with regard to sustainability, and the emerging concepts of sustainability literacy and ecoliteracy. By examining these two areas it will be possible to understand where there is overlap and, therefore, the link between public libraries and community resilience, putting the proposed research project in its context.

The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) has made the case for the need for societal adaptation to the effects of climate change. The same document links concerns over the effect of climate change with concerns around biodiversity loss, and energy and
food security. Resilience, as a more general concept, has many definitions, but most “emphasize a capacity for successful adaptation in the face of disturbance, stress, or adversity” (Norris et al., 2008: 129). Obrist et al. (2010), in line with a Sustainable Livelihoods approach, discuss “layers of resilience” stretching from individual, through community to the national and supra-national, emphasising the metaphorical capacity of the concept to operate at different levels across society. Changes at one level have the potential to affect changes at another, so changes to structures and institutions, for example libraries, have the potential to change individuals capacity to adapt to change (Obrist et al., 2010: 287).

2.1 Community Resilience

The ability of societies to adapt to potentially disruptive change, whatever its cause, is at the heart of the literature on community resilience (Norris et al., 2008; Newman et al., 2009; Maguire and Cartwright, 2008; Innes and Booher, 2010; Dubbeling et al., 2009; Tidball and Krasny, 2006; Hopkins, 2010). In their key paper Norris et al (2008: 130) conceive of this capacity to adapt as a process or activity, rather than an outcome, defining resilience as “a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance”. They delineate four, overlapping, sets of 'adaptive capacities' - economic development, social capital, information and communication, and community competence – each of which represent resources with dynamic attributes (Norris et al., 2008: 127). Innes and Booher (2010; 206) concur with this approach, emphasising
the uncertainty involved in predicting the future and the need to shift “from
debate of alternative solutions to working together with our diverse
knowledges to craft adaptive strategies that can help us move in a desired
direction”. This process-orientated view is echoed in Hopkins (2010) work in
the 'Transition movement', a global, grassroots movement concerned with
promoting community resilience, which focuses on “adaptive or
transformational resilience, which argues (as does the Transition movement)
that change offers huge potential to rethink assumptions and build new
systems”.

2.1.1 Adaptive capacities

*Economic development* is understood by Norris et al. (2008: 136-37) to
encompass three main points; fairness of risk, equity of resource distribution
and diversity of resources. The concern here is primarily with the material
basis for resilience and the capacity for all to access it equally, factors that
“are subject to larger sociological and economic forces” (Norris et al., 2008:
136). Harvey (2011: 123) outlines these larger forces as consisting of:

“seven distinctive ‘activity spheres’ within the evolutionary
trajectory of capitalism: technologies and organisational forms;
social relations; institutional and administrative arrangements;
production and labour processes; relations to nature; the
reproduction of daily life and of the species; and ‘mental
conceptions of the world’.”
These spheres are interdependent, their relationship mediated by the circulation and accumulation of capital, serving to influence the fairness, equity and diversity of resources at the level of the community in often unpredictable ways. That is, economic resilience at a community level depends to a large extent on “not only the capacities of individual businesses but on the capacities of all the entities that depend on them and on which they depend” (Norris et al., 2008: 136). Eco-localisation, the idea that “economic decisions should focus not on profit maximisation and economic efficiency to the exclusion of all else, but on meeting needs as locally as possible”, represents one attempt to address this problem (North, 2010: 587).

The second adaptive capacity, social capital, can again be divided up into several factors. Norris et al. (2008) split the concept down into the need for network structures and linkages, social support, and community, bonds, roots and commitments. This first factor focuses on the relationship between organisations, emphasising the need for networks over hierarchies as methods of organising, ensuring redundancy is built in to “loosely coupled” systems (Norris et al., 2008: 138). This works against the adverse influences of macro-factors as outlined above. Social support indicates the perceived or received support through social ties from different sources and of different types (Norris et al., 2008: 138). This is the relationship between individuals within a community and their capacity to receive pertinent information based upon the nature of social ties. Lastly, community bonds, roots and
commitments “encompasses the relationship between individuals and their larger neighbourhoods and communities”, that is the degree to which such larger social forms allow meaningful participation and provide grounding spaces for participative action (Norris et al., 2008: 139). This all fits Bourdieu’s definition of social capital as a social relation within a system of exchange, extending to all goods, material and symbolic (Harker et al., 1990: 13).

The third adaptive capacity is information and communication. Systems and infrastructure for informing the public are the first consideration, with trust being a key issue, tied strongly to a preference for localised sources (Norris et al., 2008: 140). Bond (2010: 219-220) demonstrates how the 'Transition movement' is putting these ideas into practice in the cause of climate change adaptation, “creating a positive message, sustaining the message, and matching the communicators to the relevant audience”. The local nature of trusted information sources is key in creating the next element; “communal narratives that give the experience shared meaning and purpose” (Norris et al., 2008: 140). The creation of such narratives is a work of locating the issues at hand in the community and creating a sense of place, an essential factor in rendering visible human-scale patterns and loss that result from climate change, biodiversity loss and energy and food insecurity (Adger et al., 2011).
The final adaptive capacity is *community competence*, “the networked equivalent of human agency” (Norris et al., 2008: 141). The concept can be split further, firstly into collective action and decision-making, a capacity that is dependent on *social capital* and communication, specifically problem solving skills and creativity, and secondly collective efficacy and empowerment, bridging the gap between *social capital* and *community competence* with its role facilitating community action (Norris et al., 2008: 141-142). This final adaptive capacity emphasises the linkages between all four, whilst drawing out the purpose of pursuing the previous three - as a prelude and facilitator to action and effective social change.

### 2.1.2 Adaptive capacities and libraries

Despite the lack of literature on the link between community resilience and libraries there are a small amount of papers that explore specific adaptive capacities and their link to public libraries. Varheim (2009: 377) examines the link between *social capital*, understood here as the capacity to build generalised trust within society, and the public library, observing that while there have been limited investigations into this connection the results presented, which indicate a positive correlation, have been “on the macro-level, and do not say much about what is happening on the ground, about the underlying mechanisms that produce these effects”. Johnson (2010: 154) used a questionnaire based research project to find that “[w]hile it is not possible to show a causal relationship between library use and social capital...a relationship exists”, concluding that “future research will talk
directly to both patrons and staff to gain a more nuanced impression of this relationship”. A study by the Urban Libraries Council (Manjarrez, 2007) makes the case for the role of the public library in promoting *economic development*, with four key conclusions:

1. Early Literacy services are a key foundation for long-term economic success.
2. Library employment and career services are preparing workers with new technologies.
3. Small business resources and programs are lowering barriers to market entry.
4. Public library buildings are catalysts for physical development.

It is interesting to note that these conclusions do not question the influence of larger forces identified by Harvey (2011: 123), but seek to build the capacity of the public library in promoting market-based *economic development*.

### 2.2 Sustainability and libraries

In their work on sustainable cities, Newman et al. (2009: 7) identify that “in resilience thinking the more sustainable a city the more it will be able to cope with reductions in the resources that are used to make the city work”. Here resilience is understood as incorporating the idea of sustainability, the two concepts are linked. Unlike resilience, sustainability, defined as “meeting the needs of the present without diminishing the opportunities of future generations” has been connected with libraries in the literature (Marcum, 2009: 9). In her overview of the Green Library Movement, Anotelli (2008)
details the way in which libraries are contributing to the wider movement
towards a more sustainable society. Three main areas of potential action are
outlined; buildings, resources and programs.

Marcum (2009) looks at the first area, buildings, outlining the need to
address energy efficiency and toxicity of materials, and to think in the long
term when building new libraries. Further to this, libraries can be designed to
“embody the principles of ecological education” and to serve as
demonstration vehicles for green building techniques (Tseng, 2008: 321;
Boyden and Weiner, 2000). Utilising a understanding of sustainability that
moves beyond obvious ‘Green' issues, Benfield (2011) emphasises the
symbolic value of libraries in “demonstrating investment in a city
neighbourhood and its intrinsic value as a place of learning and gathering”.

In terms of Anotelli’s second point, resources, there are two major
considerations; format and content. In relation to the first of these Ephraim
(2003: 163) takes the stance that digital is preferable to paper, because of
“the problem of deforestation and document deterioration associated with the
ephemeral nature of paper-based media”. In the literature, content is
primarily dealt with in relation to academic libraries, with concerns focussed
on providing bibliographies for sustainability collections (Applin, 2009). The
common thread linking all of these papers is their concern with interior
considerations of libraries as organisations, promoting sustainability in a
relatively passive way through showing rather than engaging directly.
Cantu and Anderson (2003) discuss Anotelli’s final category, sustainability programs, in relation to Ann Arbour District Library, examining a wide range of initiatives undertaken as part of a cohesive attempt to encourage sustainability. They emphasise the value of the library as a community hub, linking programs with the kind of strategic practices outlined above and engaging in partnership working as the key factors in making the events they planned successful. This approach forms a more pro-active attempt to engage with issues around sustainability. The concepts of sustainability literacy and ecoliteracy are at the heart of such programming, whether by conscious design or not. Stibbe and Luna (2009: 10) define sustainability literacy as “the skills, attitudes, competencies, dispositions and values that are necessary for surviving and thriving in the declining conditions of the world in ways which slow down that decline as far as possible”. Ecoliteracy is similar, though more inclined to a scientific perspective, being defined as the “cumulative knowledge base that describes local ecosystem components and their interactions” offering “solutions to local, national, and global environmental challenges by providing information on the use of locally available resources” (Pilgrim et al., 2007: 1742).
2.2.1 Tools and technics

All of these areas of action fit under the rubric of “tools” as defined by Illich (1973: 20-21);

“I use the term “tool” broadly enough to include not only simple hardware such as drills...and not just machines like cars or power stations; I also include among tools productive institutions such as factories that produce tangible commodities...and productive systems for intangible commodities such as those which produce “education”, “health”, “knowledge” or “decisions”.

Clearly the library itself fits within such a description, producing, as it does, both tangible and intangible commodities, but also the attempts to move towards sustainability, and therefore resilience, within the library represent the use of a particular type of “tool”. Illich (1973: 21) classifies such tools as “convivial”, that is tools “which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision”.

Clearly such a definition is compatible with the desire to move towards a more resilient community, containing as it does many of the factors that are outlined above within the adaptive capacities. Mumford (1964) is another important thinker in this area. His contribution consists of a delineation between democratic technics and authoritarian technics. He defines this first category as the “small scale method of production, resting mainly on human skill and animal energy but always, even when employing machines, remaining under the active direction of the craftsman or the farmer” (1964: 2-3). This conception joins Illich’s (1973) idea of convivial tools in outlining a
wider understanding of how actions, technology and institutions can effect sustainability, and therefore resilience. Democratic technics and convivial tools both rest upon the premise that they can “be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user”, that is to say the user defines the tool and not the other way around (Illich, 1973: 22). In opposition to this Mumford (1964: 6) outlines authoritarian technics as a system whereby “under the pretext of saving labor...[it seeks] to transfer the attributes of life to the machine and the mechanical collective, allowing only so much of the organism to remain as may be controlled and manipulated”. Clearly such a situation is incompatible with the basic processes that go towards community resilience, dependent as they are on ideas such as equality and autonomy.

2.3 Summary

Community resilience is understood to be a process that comprises of four major factors; economic development, social capital, information and communication and community competence (Norris et al., 2008). As a concept it is concerned with the wider issue of the sustainability of our society, albeit focussing on the capacity of the community to adapt to any changes that might occur (Newman et al., 2009). While there is not any literature dealing explicitly with public libraries and community resilience, there is a small body of work that links some adaptive capacities, social capital and economic development, to the public library, although the focus of such work seems to be on the need for more detailed, qualitative research at
the micro-level. Also a slightly larger body of literature links sustainability, a concept tied up with community resilience, to the role of public libraries in the community. The approaches to promoting sustainability can be divide into two groups; a passive method, that focuses on the infrastructure of the library itself, and an active method, that pursues specific sustainability outreach programs as part of the libraries work. While the passive factors remains important, sustainability literacy and ecoliteracy form the conceptual framework for understanding the possibilities for libraries to actively promote sustainability, and therefore community resilience, in the wider community. All of these methods represent a specific relationship between the library and its users, which, as it has an effect, can be understood as the working of a particular productive system, that is tools or technics (Illich, 1973; Mumford, 1964). The promotion of sustainability, and therefore community resilience, relies specifically on the use of convivial tools and democratic technics, on the operation of the library as a convivial institution. Therefore a methodology is required that allows the exploration of the people, tools and relationships at the heart of the public library, that allows the detailed examination of the point where the concepts outlined above meet with the everyday discourse at the micro-level. From this it will be possible to understand the extent to which these day-to-day processes allow the flourishing of convivial relationships that aid the process of community resilience.
3. Methodology

The central interest of this study is to understand how two distinct discourses, the public library and community resilience, meet and interact. This necessitates two strands of research. Firstly I have conducted a literature review to provide a working understanding of community resilience and its potential relationship to libraries as understood in the literature. Secondly there is a process of data collection and analysis described below that will provide us with an understanding of what is actually happening in the public library. From these two accounts we can see where the two worlds meet and attempt to understand what this might mean for the public library role in relation to community resilience and the possibility for future research in this relatively new area.

3.1 Level of analysis: Strategy and narrative

As the study is concerned with the role of the public library, how it can increase community’s adaptive capacities, it is arguable that an analysis at the strategic level might provide the basis for creating a document that puts resilience at the heart of public library strategy. Yet work at this level has the potential to be perceived by those not directly involved in the creation of said strategies as having an abstract quality. In the end strategy is often represented, at least partially, as a narrative or myth within the organisation (Rhodes and Pullen, 2009). Understanding strategy in this way as a narrative or discourse, requires us to understand the link, or even lack of distinction between the macro- and micro-level utterances (Grant et al., 2004). Bansal
(2002) highlights the importance of individual values to strategic action within organisations – how individual concerns can become strategic concerns. Individual narratives are the 'sense-making devices', to borrow Gabriel's (2004: 80) phrase, that put facts in context. So for an organisational strategy to have leverage within an organisation, individual narratives need to be aligned. Parry and Boyle (2009: 694) contend that by focussing on individual experience we can also "illuminate the tacit and subaltern aspects of an organisation, such as how actions that lead to negative or positive organisational outcomes, actually play out". To study the narrative is to understand the strategy as it is experienced and put into action; this is the epistemological basis for the research (Carter and Little, 2007).

3.2 Analytical autoethnography

This study is concerned with providing practical guidance for the process of understanding and developing the promotion of community resilience in the context of the public library. In line with what we have explored above, the primacy of narrative in understanding strategy as it happens, this particular phase of study is located in first-person research with the intention of providing initial findings and recommendations and establishing a basis for future research. Analytic autoethnography, as described by Anderson (2006), provides the basis for this approach. This methodology consists of five key features:

1. complete member researcher (CMR) status;
2. analytic reflexivity;
3. narrative visibility of the researcher’s self;
4. dialogue with informants beyond the self;
5. commitment to theoretical analysis.

To explore how public libraries can contribute to developing community resilience we need to understand the experience of the library worker. As Ngunjiri et al. (2010) state “research is an extension of researcher's lives”. Therefore, studying my narrative of day-to-day library work provides a valid method of understanding how the public library can promote community resilience, drawing on my own experiences to extend understanding of this relatively new area (Holt, 2003: 18).

3.2.1 Data collection and validity

Considering the first aspect of analytical autoethnography, CMR, my data collection took place in my current place of work, an arena in which I am fully immersed as a member. The data for analysis is my own reflective diary entries made for each day of work for the period between the first of April and thirty-first of July 2011, a four month period, continuing with less frequency up to the date of completion of my MA dissertation and totalling forty-five separate entries. My workplace is a major UK city-centre public library. There are interesting questions to be answered about what it is possible to say in terms of conclusions from such data. Wall (2008: 45) makes some pertinent observations on this subject in relation to her own research, using memory as data:
“if a researcher had interviewed me about my experiences as an adoptive mother and had recorded and transcribed it, it would have legitimacy as data despite the fact that both the interview transcript and my autoethnographic text would be based on the same set of memories”.

Anderson's (2006: 382) analytical reflexivity, “an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants”, is vital here to ensure the validity of the data collected. As the intention of this work is to open up an area of research which, as yet, has been neglected in the library and information field, we can perhaps expect to find our conclusions providing more questions and ideas for further research than answers.

3.2.2 Ethics

There are, as Tolich (2010) has pointed out, many ethical considerations to this approach. While the data to be analysed does not directly involve others active engagement, it will relate to interactions with colleagues and therefore all individuals and the place of work have been made anonymous. I have held discussions with management and have confirmed that I do not need to seek permission to conduct this study, but contact will be made with regard to any future use of the information emerging from the work. The anonymising process does not prevent the possibility that colleagues may read this and recognise themselves. In this case it is necessary to be sensitive to this possibility, and subsequently adjust any use of specific data that explicitly touches on areas likely to cause offence or upset. As all data is
included in the process of analysis, this simply means not using such
sensitive passages from my notebooks as examples in this document. My
notebook is available in its entirety for viewing by the markers of this work.

3.2.3 Objectivity and reflexivity

It is important at this point to take note of the use of first person perspective
in this document as it is integral to the methodology adopted – Anderson’s
(2006: 378) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self. I, the researcher, and
my reflections, am the focus of research, but not in a narcissistic sense, as
my attention is turned both outward and inward, observing my workplace and
exploring my reactions to it. All the data collected is explicitly recognised as
being from my own experience, there is no attempt to objectify that which
could never have been objective by denying the presence of the researcher
(Cresswell, 2007: 179). This deliberate absence of objectivity does not
preclude an analytical approach, as Anderson (2006) makes clear. As a
methodology it rises above simply narrating my story, engaging in cultural
analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2008). Regular discussion and meetings
with my supervisor were essential in maintaining focus and avoiding slipping
away from an analytical focus, as was the study of existing research that
uses this methodology. Haluza-DeLay (2008) provides a particularly relevant
model for the combination of autoethnographic texts with coding in relation to
exploring environmental concerns, albeit in the context of the church.
Schultze (2000) also provides an excellent example of how to carry out a
reflexive ethnographic study in an information setting. Finally, it is the
selection of analytical methodology, as outlined below, that plays the most vital role in ensuring a rigorous approach to analysis.

3.3 Situational analysis

The four month period over which I kept my journal provides sufficient data to see emerging patterns and themes, whilst the continuing keeping of the diary beyond this point enabled me to ensure that I do not miss any vital incidents that would be of interest. This data has been subjected to situational analysis, a methodology that has evolved from grounded theory, to understand the relationships that are at work, “articulate what we see as sites of silence in our data” and so provide a basis for identifying obstacles and promoters of community resilience (Clarke, 2003: 561). Situational analysis is a relevant tool for analysing my autoethnographic data as I want to focus on analysis/interpretation rather than the narrative/decription end of the continuum that is autoethnographic method (Ngunjiri et al., 2010). Clarke (2005: 182) acknowledges the appropriateness of marrying these two approaches, drawing attention to the way in which situational analysis “offers the ability to deeply contextualize and situate personal narratives”. Mills et al. (2007: 78) point out how situational analysis provides “tools for the researcher to use in visually opening up the field of inquiry – illustrating participants’ social worlds and their arenas of negotiation”. Clarke’s (2003; 2005) methodology is firmly rooted in the Chicago symbolic interactionism school of sociology and as such, provides a rigorous tool for analysing autoethnographic data, based as it is on integrating the insights of grounded
theory with the challenge thrown up by the postmodern turn. Its capacity to unearth sites of silence is perhaps its greatest strength, exposing those points where my gaze has not lingered and forcing me to reflect and re-evaluate their importance to my study. As a method it also draws on actor-network theory, which, in replacing humanism with heterogeneity, contains interesting parallels with the ecocentric philosophies found at the heart of the 'Green' movement (Munro, 2009: 125).

3.3.1 Coding
This analysis began with an open coding process, as in grounded theory methodology, reading through the notebook entries and recording incidents of significance as phrases and single words in the margin (Saldana, 2009; Clarke, 2005: 7-9). These phrases and words were then collated into a spreadsheet, their frequency of appearance noted, and where possible, they were assimilated under wider categories, often, although not exclusively, formed from the more frequently used phrases and words. Appendix 1 shows a page from my notebook with individuals names redacted. Visible in the margins are the initial codes in the form of words and phrases that were entered into the spreadsheet.

3.3.2 Messy and ordered situational mapping
The refining of raw data from the notebooks into broad categories to be used for further coding was an iterative process and was integrated with the early stages of the situational analysis. As Clarke (2005: 84) points out “codes, like
all other aspects of analysis, are provisional”. The codes that had emerged from the initial refining stages were put on to messy and then ordered abstract situational maps (see Appendix 2) in order to explore the potential to reduce the quantity of codes further. The nature of abstract situational maps as documents inclines them towards the creation of a particular type of code, that is they aim to include “all the analytically pertinent human and nonhuman, material, and symbolic/discursive elements of a particular situation as framed by those in it and by the analyst” (Clarke, 2005: 86). These “nonhuman, material, and symbolic/discursive elements” are Illich’s (1973) tools. It is the capacity for situational analysis to draw these factors out, so that we might see the relationships between them and the human actors and understand how they influence one another, that is precisely why this analytical method is relevant for the task in hand.

Having exhausted the possibilities of further refining the codes at this stage I was left with around forty separate codes collected under the subheadings of an ordered situational map (see Appendix 2). I now returned to my notebook and recoded all the data according to these collated codes. This can be seen in Appendix 1 by the circled numbers in the margin, which correspond to the numbers beside each code in the final ordered situational map in Appendix 2. The new codes produced gaps in the text at points where none of them seemed relevant. I examined the text at each of these gaps to ascertain whether it was irrelevant to what Clarke (2005: 89) refers to as “the situation of inquiry”, or if perhaps the process of refining the codes had eliminated
some vital point. If the latter was the case I returned to the notebook armed with my new code and worked through the entries again until all such gaps were accounted for.

### 3.3.3 Memoing

It is vital to point out the concurrent process of memoing that accompanies the iterative coding and mapping throughout the entire analytical process. This consists of a process whereby I noted ideas, themes, and potential routes to explore as they arose whilst conducting the analysis (Cresswell, 2007: 67; Clarke, 2005: 89-90; Goulding, 2009: 383). This process fosters a deeply reflexive approach to the process of data collection and analysis, and ensures that insights are recorded and considered. Memoing is not limited to the analytical stage, as Birks et al. (2008: 69) point out, but can run from the initial stages of discussing project ideas with my supervisor to the final drafting of the dissertation, providing “a mechanism for the articulation of assumptions and subjective perspectives about the area of research”.

### 3.3.4 Relational analysis

Following these initial stages of situational analysis, when I had reached a level of saturation with my coding of the data and its embodiment as elements under the subheadings of the ordered situational map, I began the process of relational analysis; literally drawing lines between these elements and specifying “the nature of the relationship by describing the nature of that line” (Clarke, 2005: 102). I adjusted Clarke's (2005: 102-109) methodology
slightly at this point, creating four separate sheets, each with one of the adaptive capacities at its centre surrounded by the various actors (human elements), actants (non-human and material elements) and discourses (symbolic/discursive elements) that had emerged from the coding process (see Appendix 3). The point of this was to draw out not only the relation between each of the actors, actants and discourses, but to attempt to understand that relationship in the light of a particular adaptive capacity, and therefore find the effect of each relationship in the specific context of community resilience. Notes were made for each element in relation to the central adaptive capacity and the role of any other elements in this relationship. Inevitably this also led to the emergence of further actors, actants and discourses as gaps in relationships emerged that needed to be understood. Returning to my notebook once more I went through the data applying any new codes that had emerged.

3.3.5 Social worlds/arenas mapping

The next stage of analysis was to focus on the concrete, tangible actors and actants at work using social worlds/arenas mapping (Clarke, 2005: 109-128). The purpose here was to locate these elements on the ground and the way they interact and overlap, providing a visual tool for understanding their relationships. In line with symbolic interactionist ideas the focus is on meaning making social groups and collective action (Clarke, 2005: 109; Vasconcelos, 2007: 126). The resulting map can be seen in Appendix 4. In mapping boundaries, and showing where they overlap and the degree to
which they are porous (indicated by the dashed line surrounding each world),

I deliberately focussed my attention at the micro-level of what is happening in
my workplace. The discourses that emerged from the coding process, and
were further examined in the relational analysis, sit on top of this map,
emerging from and mediating the worlds and relationships illustrated
between actors and actants.

3.3.6 Positional Mapping

The final tool in situational analysis is positional mapping, a method of
arraying dimensionally the already elucidated issues of the situation about
which there are different positions (Clarke, 2005: 128). Of all the methods
used in situational analysis, I found this the least useful. The major issues
identified in the previous stages of analysis did not seem to be opened any
further by exploratory positional mapping. For example technology, a theme
which was covered by multiple headings in my ordered situational map and
which I will discuss in great depth in the following section, produced the
following positional map when arrayed against adaptive capacity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptive Capacities</th>
<th>Technology makes no difference to adaptive capacities</th>
<th>Technology increases adaptive capacities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology decreases adaptive capacities</td>
<td>Adaptive capacities not a concern, technology a good thing in and of itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Positional map showing "Technology as a solution" against "Adaptive capacities"*
For the purposes of simplification I have modified the map into a matrix. This seemed a reasonable step based on the examples that Clarke (2005: 129-134) gives, which all fit a more rigid matrix rather than a looser map. Indeed, Clarke (2005: 136) acknowledges that they “are very systematic modes of interrogating the data, and systematic approaches do risk rigidities”. This aside, the map doesn't provide any new insights into the relationship between adaptive capacities and technology, it simply lays out four simplistic, theoretical positions, which may or may not be represented in the data. It is true that in this way we might draw out “sights of silence”, however my experience revealed that their utility in this particular study was limited. It may be that future studies of the areas I explore can make use of this method, however I feel that the nature of the autoethnographic data I am collecting, representing a culture from my perspective, means that using the is particular tool is inappropriate. The last word is with Clarke (2005: 304); “situational analysis offers another toolbox from which researchers will likely take a little of this and a little of that”.

3.4 Limitations of the methodological approach

With any methodological approach there will be limitations. I have already highlighted the exploratory nature of this study and the put forward the point that any conclusions drawn will likely provide more questions than answers. The use of autoethnographic methods in combination with situational analysis is unusual, and in focussing on my view of events that surround me in my workplace I leave myself open to charges of writing memoir or
autobiography. However, this ignores the “systematic and intentional approach to the socio-cultural understanding of self [that] sets autoethnography apart from other self-narrative writings” (Ngunjiri, 2010). In Holt's (2003: 19) words:

“autoethnographers may vary in their emphasis on graphy (i.e., the research process), ethnos (i.e., culture), or auto (i.e., self). Whatever the specific focus, authors use their own experiences in a culture reflexively to look more deeply at self-other interactions”.

In my study, whilst acknowledging the other two areas, I am mostly concerned with ethnos, and therefore situational analysis, where the main aim is to provoke the researcher to analyse more deeply, provides a means of entry and method of opening up the data and understanding the culture with which I interact on a daily basis (Clarke, 2005: 83). As a researcher I am not a tabula rasa, and situational analysis allows for my prior knowledge to work with the analysis yet not be privileged, as we start “from the assumption that we seek to represent all the major narrative discourses related to the situation in which we are interested” (Clarke, 2005: 184-185).

3.5 Summary

The epistemological basis for this research study is found in the location of the site of concern at the micro-level, in the day-to-day working practices of a library worker. This is based on the realisation that strategic concerns are realised through the actions of workers and so best understood by studying those actions (Rhodes and Pullen, 2009; Bansal, 2002). This factor
combined with the relatively new nature of this field of study requires that our methodologies of data collection and analysis act to open up the field to further enquiry. Analytic autoethnography provides the basis for this process (Anderson, 2006). The data collection method is a reflective journal, with the my own reflected-upon experiences of my workplace forming the data for analysis. A concurrent process of memoing, along with attention to already existing studies and regular discussions with my supervisor ensures a deep reflexivity in my approach to the data. The analytical methods used are Clarke's (2003; 2005) situational analysis model, with minor adjustments made in line with the nature of the current area of research. These consist of a series of mapping exercises that open out the data. In line with the symbolic interactionist school from which the situational analysis emerges, these methods attempt to understand the ways in which meaning is constructed through collective action (Clarke, 2005: 109; Vasconcelos, 2007: 126). This matches with the concern around productive systems, tools and technics as the key theoretical considerations for understanding community resilience (Illich, 1973; Mumford, 1964). The use of situational analysis tools, informed by the literature around resilience, allows the emergent facts and relationships on the ground to be integrated with existing theories around community resilience. This analytical work is complemented by interpretative work, bringing meaning to the structures, relationships and discourses exposed. The following section will attempt this, illustrating how work in public libraries, as it is now, promotes or inhibits community resilience, and what we might do about it.
4. Results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine the key discourses that emerge from the data collection and analysis processes in Chapter 3 and scrutinise them in the light of the theoretical considerations brought forward in Chapter 2 and from other sources. To that end each section will tackle a different emergent aspect, identify what it is, where it is located in relation to actors and actants, where it originates and how it effects the process of community resilience, that is how it contributes towards the public library being/becoming a *convivial institution*, that is an institution that fosters *convivial* relationships through the use of *convivial tools* (Illich, 1973). Each section will begin by laying out an example from my data, a situation observed from my perspective, before moving into a discussion of the wider implications of this scenario drawing on the literature.

The issues dealt with by each section are issues that have emerged from the data in the analytical process, and while they are directly related to the data, the process of analysis means that they are not always linked explicitly to single or multiple entries in my journal. They may, as is the case with the professionalism (section 4.4.1), represent silent assumptions, discourses that are not always made explicit, but at the same time underlie the data in my notebook that produces the emerging picture of the social world with which we are concerned. This is precisely the strength of the combination of the reflective approach and the use of situational analysis, to draw out these
sites of silence. However, as silences, these issues are precisely the hardest to represent with direct reference to the data. In each case I have attempted to draw the analytical line that links my theoretical discussion to the original data, but the reader is reminded that Appendices may provide useful reference points as the discussion progresses.

Of all the issues of importance drawn out by the analysis, I only discuss some in this section. The scope of my observations, every aspect of my working environment, has necessarily to be narrowed to provide key discussion points. I am, as I stated in my methodology, most interested in the ethnos aspect of autoethnography, the culture that surrounds me and provides the narrative of daily work in the library, and the discourses that shape that narrative. My selection of each of these points rests not, or at least not only, on frequency of appearance in the data, but on their reflected-upon significance, from the process of analysis, in understanding the narrative that exists at the frontline of library work in my workplace, and so understanding what is happening on the ground and its significance for community resilience. It bears repeating that this qualitative approach is intended as an exploratory study of a relatively new area, and what might be taken for a narrowing of focus can be better understood as theoretical sampling in action.
It is also necessary before embarking on the discussion of results to reassert my position in relation to this discussion. I am a library worker, working as part of the frontline staff, but I do not claim to represent the views of all frontline staff, let alone all library workers, that is I do not act as a nardoniki, someone who claims the status of a privileged indigenous observer, to use Bourdieu's terminology (Barnard, 1990: 80). However, for the following discussion to provide a way in to the subject at hand it must be understood that my experiences, despite their individuality, are that of a specific group or class, and that through the reflexive process they can provide the basis of exploring the process of community resilience as it relates to the working of the public library. It should be made clear here that I understand class as used above as:

“sets of agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, have every likelihood of having similar dispositions and interests and therefore of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances” (Bourdieu quoted in Wilkes, 1990: 114).

It might be argued that my deployment of this particular definition is inappropriate to the narrow context of a library worker. However, while it does provide some theoretical weight to my claims to be able to extrapolate from my own experience, Bourdieu's (Wilkes, 1990) conception of class as tendencies that might be realised given certain factors also provides theoretical lens with which to begin to understand the relationships between
actors in my workplace, and the role of actants and discourses in influencing said relationships.

4.2 The split between two worlds

Information Exchange is a staff meeting that occurs bi-weekly in the half hour before the library opens, providing a forum for staff to discuss any issues that they feel are pertinent and for supervisors and managers to bring wider organisational issues, such as changes in policy, to the attention of frontline staff. At this particular meeting a lengthy discussion takes place around whether we should allow library users access to staff stationary. Points were raised for (our duty to provide a public service, we would seem petty to disallow use) and against (budget cuts, increasing numbers of items gone missing, “we are not a stationers”). To the casual observer such discussion might seem insignificant, just a minor issue of this particular workplace that becomes inflated in importance in the eyes of those who work there. Such dismissal misses a vital point though. The discussion is focussed on the boundary between staff and library users. The subject of the meeting, stationary, is not the significant factor of the discussion – it is the relationship between the institution, embodied in the collective actions of the library workers, and the public that is central. The discussion emphasised the existence of the boundary between the two worlds and how decisions made in one will effect the other.
This split between these two worlds is the first major point of discussion that emerges from the analysis. It is represented most clearly in the social worlds map in Appendix 4, which illustrates the arena of the community and draws out the “meso-level...of social action” (Clarke, 2005: 110). As is evident from the above descriptive passage, when this split appears in my journal entries it is not always in an explicit manner. Once again we can draw on Bourdieu, specifically the idea of *field*, that is “a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants”, to provide a particularly useful concept in understanding what is happening here (Jenkins, 1992: 85). Rasmussen and Jochumsen (2003) locate the public library in the wider *field* of the enlightenment project, and within that the *field* that is concerned with preservation and dissemination of information. Bound up with this, they argue, is the idea of the librarian's *doxa*, another concept from Bourdieu, that is the “social field’s ideological foundation which is not open to debate and which is taken for granted by the field’s central players” (Rasmussen and Jochumsen, 2003: 86). This determines our position as library workers in relation to those who use the library. These are the power relations that structure the *field* internally, with positions standing in relationships of domination, subordination or equivalence according to their ability to access capital in its multiple forms (Jenkins, 1992: 85).
Although I have described it as a split between two worlds, it is, of course, not that simple. The categories used in Appendix 4 are simplifications of more complex situations, they contain subworlds and segments within them. However, these simplifications are based not on some reductionist agenda, but emerge from the process of analysis as credible worlds existing at a level of focus that allows discussion of the issues at hand; these worlds are the “big news” about the situation of concern (Clarke, 2005: 111). This then is the point where multiple individual actors and actants meet as social beings, where discourses are imposed or emerge and are contested. It should be noted that we can see the same social worlds extending away from this point of interaction, encompassing activities that do not occur primarily in the space where they meet. For the purpose of further discussion this leads to the emergence of two major areas; the internal organisation of the library and the interaction between the library and its users. This is not just an analytical tool for understanding what is going on in the library, but the manifestation of the imbalanced power relations between the library and its users within that field.

What must be evident then is that this idea of the field is of central importance in the ability of the library to promote or inhibit community resilience. For the library to be a convivial institution then a relationship of equivalence in respect to the ability to access capital is preferred over the struggle of domination and subordination (Illich, 1973). Indeed, one of our adaptive capacities, social capital, has at its heart the replacement of
hierarchies with networks, and each adaptive capacity is concerned in some way with greater equality (Norris et al., 2008: 138). Our focus then has to be locating the source of this split, of this imbalance of power relationships, and uncovering the ways in which we might push away from domination and subordination towards equivalence.

As the split manifests in multiple ways, in the action and words of individuals as they interact, in policy decision and organisational processes, it is directed by the latent force manifest in the structure of things and the manner in which this shapes these interactions, that is the field. An example of this first manifestation can be seen in the use of language by myself and other frontline workers; for example the word “customer”. This words use is near universal and it represents a very particular relationship, that of producer to consumer, and represents a wider factor in society, an aspect of the “field of power” that arranges the hierarchy of all other fields, of the satisfaction of a need (Illich, 2005; Jenkins, 1992: 86). Of the second manifestation, that of the field, we might consider the proliferation of information technologies and the way in which they mediate relationships both within and outside the library. Mumford's (1964; 1967) democratic and authoritarian technics and Illich's (1973) tools provide a means of distinguishing what effect such technologies have and of understanding the overarching “field of power” that determines that effect. The following sections will examine in greater detail the manner in which each of these manifestations arise in the workplace and
their effect on the split, that is the power relations which are key to understanding how the public library might promote community resilience.

4.3 Technics, tools and the “fetish of technology”

Technology saturates every experience within the library. Reading through entries in my reflective journal, there is hardly a single one that doesn't make reference to some form of information technology, whether it is the People's Network, email, digital cameras or RFID machines. Looking at Appendix 4 we can see that technology in general and IT systems specifically cross the boundary of the split, mediating relationships both between and within the two major social worlds identified. I must confess that I have a particular interest in this topic, and as a more technologically adept member of staff come into contact with issues and problems in this area on a reasonably regular basis. It might be reasonable then to contend that my focus on this area in my reflective diary is more a result of my own interests than of any emerging themes from the data, or that my observations were inevitably skewed to ensure such themes. Leaving to one side the rigour of the analytical system chosen and the ways in which it allows for precisely this problem by enabling sites of silence to emerge from the data, I would emphasise the point that any account of the public library that excluded technology would be partial to the point of uselessness.
4.3.1 Email

Take for example the use of email as a communication method. It is ubiquitous within my section of the library, and although other methods of communication persist, specifically face-to-face meetings and an “All-to-read” box containing important documents, it is increasingly the method through which decisions are made and we are informed of developments within the service as a whole. It is arguable that this is necessary due to the fragmented nature of the workforce, not everyone can physically be at staff meetings due to work patterns. The concern here then is the internal organisational context of information and communication, the extent to which technology, specifically email, influences the level of trust in information communicated by this means. Such trust, Norris et al. (2008) contend, is bound up with the localisation of information sources. It might be said to rest on convivial relationships, which consist of an “autonomous and creative intercourse among persons” (Illich, 1973: 11). This is a democratic relationship, in the sense Mumford (1967: 236) uses the word, part of a process that is “most active in small communities and groups, whose members meet face to face, interact freely as equals, and are known to each other as persons”.

Trust in information and communication is linked then with unmediated relationships, precisely the types of relationships that email discourages. This flows from, as Buchanan (2009: 144) has suggested, the observation that in the age of the internet “our body has been replaced as the principle
site of power by our profile”, we are subject to a dislocation of place and a subsequent crisis of trust. What we are witnessing here then is the intrusion of a larger “field of power” into the field of the public library. This is what I have identified in my analysis as the ‘Techno-fix’, that is the belief that technology can be applied as a solution to any problem. Harvey (2011: 129) takes this logic a step further, positing a “fetish of technology”, pointing out that “[o]nce technology became a business in its own right...then a social need sometimes had to be created to use up the new technology rather than the other way around”. In a one-dimensional analysis, to borrow Marcuse’s (1964) terminology, that is one that does not critically examine the roots of relationships, email simply allows communication between members of a workforce that do not meet face to face, it “presupposes that humanity exerts control over the technologies it uses, not the other way around” (Vail, 2004: 30). As we examine the situation in greater depth, that is attempt to uncover the consequences for building community resilience, we can observe that there is a qualitative difference between ways of communicating, that impact on the process of information and communication, and that certain ways are imposed by a logic that is outside of the immediate field of the public library.

The deployment of authoritarian technics in this case, for that is what I have just described, has implications for other adaptive capacities within the process of community resilience. Keeping our focus within the organisation, we can see that social capital, that is the links between individual workers and between individual workers and the organisation that is the library, will
be mediated to a large extent by information technology. An essential factor of these technologies is that they require specialised skills to operate and maintain, they are not *convivial tools* (Illich, 1973: 22). Email does not exist as the simple interface that is presented to us when we open Outlook or Thunderbird, which in and of itself requires very specific skills to operate, it is balanced on an inverted pyramid of technology that increases in complexity, and therefore in the need for specialisation and certification, the further you get from the day to day experience of it. The library where I work depends upon outsourced service providers to meet this specialised need, who are located outside the physical space of the library, and provide yet another essential relationship mediated by technology. In the words of Jacques Ellul (1964: 132) “the sharp knife of specialisation has passed like a razor into the living flesh. It has cut the umbilical cord which linked men [sic] with each other and with nature”.

### 4.3.2 RFID

Turning my gaze to the meeting of the two social worlds either side of the split I find the counter. Until very recently this was the primary meeting point of the public and the library worker. Covered by the accoutrements of the library, computer, pens, pencils, books, stamps, scraps of paper, the counter is sat at the very centre of the meeting of the two social worlds. All this changed quite recently with the introduction of RFID technology. Although not directly affecting the section I work in, the reference library, I experience its effects indirectly through the stories of library users and fellow library
workers, and directly through my own use of the library. As I pass through the main lending library I overhear comments; some angry, some confused, some intrigued, some pleased. One particular conversation with a regular library user stands out from my journal. She asked me if we, the reference section of the library, would be getting the machines. I replied that I doubted it, as we had no particular need for them, they could do nothing of the type of work we did in our section. She said she was glad, “I don't just come in to borrow books you know. I come in to talk to people, to have a chat.”

The above example highlights the centrality of the library as a place where information and communication occurs. In meeting face-to-face there is a relationship between the public who use the library and the people who work there. This informal communication sits alongside the more formal communication of the various types of media present in the library (Budd, 2001: 499). However, as we saw in the previous section, it is the unmediated informal communication that builds trust that is so vital to information and communication, which pushes the library towards becoming a convivial institution (Illich, 1973). To the extent that RFID machines remove the possibility of informal communication with library staff, they remove degrees of trust in the information provided and push the library user in the direction of more formal communication, in the form of the stock held by the library. RFID mirrors more of the points made in the section above in that it requires specialist intervention when the machines go wrong, specific skills to work
the machines and rests at the pinnacle of the same inverted pyramid as email.

The question asked now must be why introduce these new technologies if they are detrimental to the relationship between the library and its users? Contained within that question is an assumption that those responsible for their introduction can see the effects as detrimental, that is are they perhaps viewing it not with community resilience in mind or as a strategic objective, but with some other logic, the logic of a wider “field of power”. We are reminded here of Harvey's (2011: 123) seven activity spheres (see section 2.1.1), the wider forces that constrain the form economic development takes within the community. While these may help make sense of the areas in which change occurs and is disputed, it is to Castells (1996: 412-423) that we must turn to for an explanation of from where the logic of this wider “field of power” emerges, specifically to the conflict between the space of flows, the “material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows” that form the “dominant spatial logic of our our society”, and the space of places, where “form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity”.

To clarify then, “the real powers that shape up the conditions under which we all act these days flow in the global space, while our institutions of political action remain by and large tied to the ground; they are, as before, local” (Bauman, 2003: 18). Our idea of the resilient community prioritises the local
and the autonomous in creating convivial relationships, putting forward an argument for the prominence of the space of places over the space of flows in order to build a community that might withstand the challenges that the 21\textsuperscript{st} century has in store. However, the space of flows refers to the space where dominant, managerial elites organise and from which they exert dominance (Castells, 1996: 415). Returning to RFID machines in libraries, we follow Castells (1996: 416) observation that “the more a social organization is based upon ahistorical flows, superseding the logic of any specific place, the more the logic of global power escapes the socio-political control of historically specific local/national societies” with my own observation that the insertion of technology into libraries marks a step away from conviviality, and therefore grounded local, experience, recognising that this latter process is but an aspect of the wider processes described by Castells.

The appearance then of RFID in the library marks another example of authoritarian technics (Mumford, 1964; 1967). As a technology it reorganises the space of the library in accordance with the logic of the wider “field of power” that determines the narrower field of the public library, our arena of concern the community. That “field of power” can be identified as the space of flows and “the structural domination of its logic essentially alters the meaning and dynamic of places” (Castells, 1996: 248). The implementation of RFID is not a choice so much as an obvious step that libraries, as a collective actor, must take when framed by the logic of the space of flows, or
be faced with the threat of disengagement as “power rules because it flows, because it is able (beware ever forgetting it!) to flow – to flow away” (Bauman, 2003: 15). Where people once came to have a chat, they now interact with machines, breaking down communication between the two halves of the split between our social worlds (those of the library and the community that use it), encouraging non-convivial relationships, potentially damaging the capacity for community resilience.

4.3.3 The People’s Network

A regular, timetabled part of my duties as a library and information assistant involves working in the computer room of the library. Twenty eight PCs linked in to the People's Network in constant high demand from library users with varying degrees of proficiency makes for a challenging, occasionally frustrating place to work. Many of my journal entries focus on experiences in this room and on discussions with colleagues around the issues we face working with IT and library users. In a single day you can experience satisfaction and gratitude through helping someone set up an email account or scan a document and then verbal abuse and threatening behaviour for not having a PC available right now when the library user wants to use it. Some of my colleagues dread going to work in there, others enjoy it. Officially we have been told that we should not be offering support to those using the PCs, our job is to check people on and check them off again. In reality this simply isn't followed, it isn't the type of service myself and my colleagues feel we should be offering.
The origins of the People’s Network can be found in government policy aims of universal Internet access, based upon the idea that “cultural institutions’ (museums, galleries, libraries) are positioned as forums for ‘empowerment’ and ‘active citizenship’, attempting to bridge the so-called digital divide” (Hand, 2005: 369). Since the projects inception, the Internet has become ever more prevalent, transforming nearly every aspect of contemporary life (Buchanan, 2009: 143). The PCs in use in the library where I work are oversubscribed, and by lunchtime most days we are turning library users away or asking them to book a slot for later in the day. From the perspective of the library it might be argued that the People’s Network provides “the technical means of postmodernizing libraries for economic survival...as a way of securing both the cultural and economic position of the library as a public funded agency” (Hand, 2005: 372). To some extent we can see repeated here the same process that was identified with RFID machines, that is the field of the public library being defined by the logic of the space of flows. However, this ignores the potential of the Internet to facilitate new forms of socialised mass communication, or “mass self-communication” (Castells, 2007: 248).

The facilitation of access to the Internet via the People’s Network appears at first to extend some of the problems discussed in previous sections. The rationale for its adoption seems to be one imposed from outside, that is indirectly from the space of flows, as national governments realise the need
to reinvent and legitimise themselves as representative public institutions in the light of globalised flows of power (Hand, 2005: 369). However, as Castells (2007: 250) makes clear, there resides within the Internet the capacity for counter-power, of “building networks of meaning in opposition to networks of instrumentality”. In terms of *community competence* then access to the internet can be an empowering thing. This must be balanced against the *conviviality* of the Internet as a tool. *Convivial tools* require that they can be used “as often or as seldom as desired” (Illich, 1973: 22). The extent to which I and my colleagues have to help individuals apply for jobs online, as this is the only way of applying for them, is a clear demonstration that Internet use is not voluntary, but mandatory. Regardless of the opportunities the Internet offers we should heed Hine's (2008) warning that “[t]here are few things which are so overwhelmingly good that everyone should be forced to adopt them”.

Another consideration is the way in which the adoption of increasing use of the internet affects the relationship between the library user and the library worker. There seems to be a disjunction between what we are expected to do officially by management and what we feel it necessary to do to fulfil our public service duty. We are reminded here of Rasmussen and Jochumsen's (2003: 86) idea of librarians *doxa*, that is the *fields* ideological underpinnings that are taken for granted by central players. Whilst the structure of the *field* of the public library is defined to an increasing degree by the logic of the *space of flows*, it may come in to conflict with the idea of the way things are,
always have been and ought to be, that is the librarian's doxa. This potential conflict will form the basis of the section 4.4, looking at the idea of professionalism and its role in building a *convivial institution*.

### 4.3.4 Energy and resource use

Before summing up my thoughts on technics, tools and the “fetish of technology”, it is necessary to highlight one of the silent actants in this discourse; energy and resource use. Its silence is perhaps not total; there are stickers on a few of the light switches in the library building asking you to consider the environment and turn them off when not in use, we (nearly) all remember to switch our computers and other electronic devices off at the end of the day, we recycle paper. However, none of these things are discussed explicitly with regard to energy and my own attempts to address energy and resource use have on the whole met with failure. Take for example my idea to offer a reduced rate for double-sided printing. This would then encourage library users to print double sided, saving paper. Unfortunately, as I was informed, the material cost of printing resides mostly in the ink, that is the reduction of paper use from two sheets to one does not translate to an economic value that could be applied as a discount to printing. I suggested alternative schemes involving discounted DVD rentals, and the same issue came up again; the bottom line, the amount of money generated, determined what could be offered.
Every tool we use relies on energy to some degree. Energy security is an issue in so much as the tools we rely on to manage our day-to-day lives rely on the current energy infrastructure, we have, as Lerch (2010) points out, “designed our communities for oil...with the assumption that the petroleum fuels which make the whole system work will be available and affordable for the foreseeable future”. The public library is not exempt from this, any discussion that is concerned with tools and their effect the process of community resilience has to account for energy. In addition to this we must consider Illich’s (1974) contention that “high quanta of energy degrade social relations just as inevitably as they destroy the physical milieu”. This is tied up with ideas of conviviality. Once the energy requirement of a community reaches a certain identifiable threshold any further increases to affluence requires “decreased distribution of control over that energy” (Illich, 1974: 17).

All of the previous discussed technologies are currently dependent on the oil-based infrastructure of modern civilisation and the non-convivial relationship to energy sources that are implicit in that system. The precarious nature of this system, extending as it does well beyond the library into every facet of our lives, is the potential source of destabilisation that requires resilience in our community. Echoing the concerns raised in the introduction, Whipple (2010: 6) warns that the peaking of oil supplies means that:
“It is unlikely that there will ever be an economic recovery in the conventional sense; the economic downturn is likely to continue in one form or another for many years, perhaps overlapping the economic calamities wrought by global warming.”

If we heed such dire predictions then the imperative of addressing the concerns raised in this section comes sharply into focus.

4.3.5 Summing up on tools and technologies

For the library to contribute positively to the process of community resilience it needs to be a convivial institution that employs democratic technics. By this it is meant an institution that encourages relationships of equality using tools that remain, to a large extent, under the control of those who use them.

Examining the definitions of each adaptive capacity it becomes clear that positive expression of each is reliant on a particular type of relationship between people. Economic development requires equity, fairness and diversity. Social capital focuses on networks and the capacity for participative action. Communication and information needs trust and a sense of place. Community cohesion has as its focus empowerment and collective action (Norris et al., 2008). Illich (1973: 22) tells us that “tools foster conviviality to the extent to which they can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user”. The tools we have examined above, that emerged from my analysis as central technologies around which the library operated, email, RFID and the People's Network, do not fit that description to the extent that they require
special skills to use and that they are mandatory to survive in modern society. This is not to suggest the library is pushing some sinister agenda in deploying these technologies, it is merely responding to the demands of an ulterior logic, one that is shaping the field of the public library and the arena of the community that emerged in the analysis, that of Castells (1996) space of flows.

Yet Castells (2007) also makes the point that the counter-power in mass self-communication creates the possibility for individuals and groups to organise and fight back against this logic, to potentially use these tools to generate autonomy in the space of places. The two sides of this struggle are intertwined, as Bauman (2003: 22) points out:

“‘Space of flows’ needs its ostensible adversary - the ‘space of places’ - to cater for human needs it is incapable of meeting on its own. After all, it owes its power to the flat refusal to care about such needs. ‘Space of places’ needs its admitted adversary - the ‘space of flows’ - to pull, absorb and retain the continuous influx of human passions, its life juices.”

This wider picture is relevant because, as Norris et al. (2008: 136) make so clear in their discussion of economic development (which, of course, is interdependent with each of the other adaptive capacities), the ability for a community to exhibit resilience is “subject to larger sociological and economic forces”. The public library is just one area in Bauman’s (2003) wider struggle, just as technology is just one sphere of activity, and we would
do well to remember that “[t]he danger for social theory as well as for popular understandings is to see one of the spheres as determinant” (Harvey, 2011: 132). In the following section we will move to examine another sphere of importance that emerged from the analysis.

4.4 The library professional

The period over which I kept my journal saw drastic cuts in library budgets across the UK. My workplace was not exempt from this, and the reference library had to make serious decisions over what stock to continue our subscriptions to and which to cancel. All staff were asked for the contributions to this process and discussions focussed on use and need of particular publications against cost. I argued that we shouldn’t be stocking particular tabloid daily papers as their content didn’t represent quality information in any sense of the word. Whilst this idea was taken forward, it was dismissed by senior management as they were popular titles. A decision to end subscriptions to all faith based publications was made so as not to appear to favour any one faith or denomination. Eventually the books were balanced, and a much depleted list was settled upon. This process is perhaps most significant for the way it demonstrates the power of the library workers to select the materials that are available to the public in the library, part of our professional duty it might be said, and the way in which those selections are circumscribed by outside forces.
Throughout my studies it has featured heavily as an ideal, and subsequently it has embedded itself in my thought and approach to my work. I realised, as I reflected on my journal entries, the codes that emerged from them and engaged in the analytical process, the idea of a professional worker and of professionalism, underwrote much of the action I carried out in my workplace. In initial tallying of codes it didn't even figure as a phrase, it was only upon reflection and memoing of this immediate process of coding that I began to draw lines linking descriptors such as 'marketing' and 'provision of quality information' (visible in the maps of both Appendix 1 and 2) to the wider discourse of professionalism. It was a source of both positive and negative reaction to specific situations I found myself in throughout the working day. On one occasion I was asked by a library user to provide contact information on psychics and mediums. I felt deeply uncomfortable with this, as I understood my role to provide quality information, and my own personal view is that these individuals are at best self-deluding and at worst exploitative. I told the library user that I couldn't find such information – a lie. This was a value judgement. It felt like a deeply unprofessional act. In Bourdieu's terms my *habitus*, “the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts” and circumscribe the range of responses I can have in a given situation, came in to conflict with the librarians *doxa*, the fields ideological underpinnings, quite specifically the idea of professionalism (Webb et al., 2002: 36). It is, no doubt, a situation that many information professionals have found themselves in before, personal values conflicting with professional values.
There is no simple answer to resolving this conflict, in many ways the validity of the response could be said to be situational. The following sections will attempt to clarify how we might act, assuming that community resilience and the values that would enable it are central to our concerns, and what that means for the professional values as embodied in the discourse of professionalism.

4.4.1 Professionalism

We find ourselves now in a different sphere of activity, “mental conceptions of the world” to use Harvey's phrase (2011: 123). Professionalism is a key part of the librarians' *doxa*; the ideological underpinnings of the *field* of the public library. The Conway Report on Professional Standards of Service (2008: 5) states that professional as a word has "become devalued over the years and is now used imprecisely to describe an approach or outlook, quality and, of course, paid as opposed to voluntary status", contrasting it with an earlier ideal linked to “pursuing a higher calling linked to duty, service and obligation”. Integral to the reports understanding of professionalism is the satisfaction of information needs, both individual and community (Conway, 2008: 6-7). This language of needs is another key element of the librarians' *doxa*. It is of vital importance in understanding the relationships that exist within the *field* of the public library. However, as we saw in previous sections, the *field* of the public library, and therefore the librarian's *doxa*, is subject to influence by a wider “field of power”, namely Castells (1996) *space of flows*, which runs counter to the processes required of a resilient community.
Illich (2005) unpacks the idea of professionalism highlighting its disabling function in the modern society. At its heart, his critique is founded on the observation of “the way in which dependence on commodities has legitimised wants, coined them urgent and exasperated needs while simultaneously destroying people’s ability to fend for themselves” (Illich, 2005: 14). Needs, he argues, are not defined by general consent, a democratic process, but increasingly by professionals, that is organised bodies of specialists, who create, adjudicate and implement needs as commodities according to the logic of their own power, derived by concession from an elite whose interests they prop up (Illich, 2005: 16-17). This logic is not neutral, but is, as has been shown, a logic that comes from outside and above, from the space of flows.

By turning individuals who use the service into “a client to be saved by experts”, we create what Illich (2005: 32-33) terms “radical monopolies”, that is conditions “deprive the environment of those features that people need in a specific area to subsist outside the market economy”, an act which “paralyses autonomous action in favour of professional delivery”. Considered in the light of adaptive capacities, this dissolution of autonomy serves to undermine community resilience. Take community competence for example. Contained within that capacity are collective action and decision making and collective efficacy and empowerment (Norris et al., 2008: 141-142). Such collective capacities are by their very definition deeply democratic in nature,
that is they are fulfilled without resort to “professional delivery”. We can understand them as the capacity to define needs collectively, and act on those needs, in a crisis situation in a way that enables the continuing positive functioning of a community - something that professionalism, with its disabling effects, can be seen to undermine.

To surmise, moving beyond a one-dimensional perspective, professionalism can be seen to be an aspect of the librarian's doxa that underpins the field of the public library, and as such is subject to a logic that enters from outside, from a wider “field of power”, Castell's (1996) space of places. This attitude forges certain relationships, based on the commodification of wants as needs, limiting the autonomy of the library user, accentuating the split between the two social worlds and therefore reducing the capacity of the library to act as a convivial institution and promoter of community resilience (Illich, 2005). The data in my notebooks illustrates this most directly in the example given at the start of this section detailing the way in which we, as library workers, determine the sources of information available to library users based on our own understanding of their needs. Yet, as the second example shows, there is always the capacity to break from this simplified relationship. Habitus will sometimes come in to conflict with doxa. The conflict outlined above is not a positive one, in that it perpetuates the same relationship against which it rebels; I still determine the capacity for this individual to find the information they need. However it does represent a
beginning, a capacity to move beyond the type of relationship critiqued in this section, a capacity that will be explored further in the following section.

4.5 Outreach

Each month, two members of staff take a library stall to Conversation Club, a meeting and advice space for asylum seekers and refugees to practice their English and find support and friendship. The stall has information about the library service across the city, and we take a variety of books covering basic English as well as dual language children’s titles to demonstrate the stock available. In addition to this we sign people up for library membership and talk to them about their specific problems and needs. It also gives those of us who work in the library a chance to meet with other groups and organisations who serve this demographic, allowing us to plan joint initiatives such as library introduction packs for volunteer befrienders and book groups for those learning English. Contact with other groups can raise difficulties in terms of expectation of what the library can do. There seems to be a different ethos at work; many of these groups are volunteer led, with individuals dedicating their lives to them, whereas the library is a workplace, and those who work there limit their involvement to working time. In fact, in the light of budget cuts that are affecting all library services across the country and the fact that most individuals there seem to be library members already now, we are looking at the idea of reducing our presence at Conversation Club. This can be seen as a sign of success; library membership seems to have reached a saturation point with new arrivals being brought to the library by those who are already
members. However there is also a worry that we might miss people who need our service and we lose one of the key strengths of this program, that it takes the library outside the library. The space around Conversation Club is very much the space of those taking part in it, we are meeting these people in their own space.

Outreach, as a code and concept, figured heavily from the outset of the coding process through the subsequent analytical tasks, as is evident from the mapping exercises documented in the Appendices. Much like technology, the frequency of its appearance can partly be understood as it is an activity that I have a strong interest and involvement in. However, this does not negate its value as an area to focus on. The purpose of the autoethnographic method combined with situational analysis is to draw out those points that have significance in my experience and understand their wider significance in the narrative of library work as it happens in my workplace. Such significance can be assessed through the reflexive analytical process, as key points, such as the split between our two social worlds, are drawn out, and the utility of further concepts judge by the extent to which they clarify our understanding of these points.

4.5.1 Bridging the split between social worlds

It is, perhaps, this last point that is most significant. Outreach work is a conscious effort to bridge the split between the two social worlds of the public library and the community who use it. It is a visible example of the porous
nature of the borders between social worlds (Clarke, 2005: 111). However, it also demonstrates that this porousness is determined by an effort of will, by an understanding of class, returning to Bourdieu's definition of “sets of agents who occupy similar positions” discussed earlier, that moves beyond the limits of those we work with, that is beyond the social world of the public library (Bourdieu quoted in Wilkes, 1990: 114). In a sense the space we are engaging in when we conduct outreach work is analogous to Castells (1996: 423) space of places, the space where “form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity”. In meeting face-to-face, discussing the issues faced by groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, we begin to encourage convivial relationships that run counter to the prevailing logic, that of the space of flows, that has come to dominate the field of the public library. This, in turn, has a positive effect on the adaptive capacities on which the process of community resilience is built, as has been demonstrated previously in the link between conviviality and resilience. For example, social capital clearly benefits in terms of linkages between both individuals and organisations.

In coming in to contact with individuals whose social standing is as precarious as refugees and asylum seekers, I am forced to reconsider my own assumptions and values. Most importantly, actions, for example the inability to communicate effectively in English, are encountered as one thing in the physical space of the library, a problem or an obstacle, and another in the space of Conversation Club, a point of sharing and reciprocal learning. In
identifying myself with this wider class, moving beyond the borders of the
social world of the public library, I begin to call in to question some of the
assumptions of my work, the doxa that underpins the ideological
assumptions of the field. My actions, as a product of the reciprocal and
dialectical relationship between my habitus and objective conditions, change
as I encounter new objective conditions that call for a change in perspective,
a shift in understanding of my class (Jenkins, 1992: 79-80). Such change comes about when the “narratives, values and explanations of a habitus no
longer make sense” (Webb et al., 2002: 41). Consequently I must find or construct a new narrative, one that can make sense of this wider perception of my own class.

4.5.2 Volunteering and vernacular work

We see from the example at the start of this section that there is a definite
difference of approach between those who work in the library and those who volunteer for organisations covering the same ground. In comparing these two areas it is perhaps useful to draw on Illich (1981: 13) once again and his distinction between the shadow economy and vernacular work, that is between “forced labour or industrial serfdom in the service of commodity-intensive economies” and “subsistence-orientated work lying outside the industrial system”. Illich (1981: 21) equates the vernacular with the shift towards a convivial society. To an extent we can see in the volunteerism of the organisations involved with helping refugees and asylum seekers an aspect of the shadow economy to the extent that it meets basic needs of
individuals through unpaid work, it complements wage labour (Illich, 1981: 14). However, to characterise such volunteering as “forced labour” would be wrong. That the circumstances of the situation are defined by a relationship to the economy, to commodification, is true, and again we are reminded of Harvey's (2011) spheres of action, and the wider forces that limit our actions at a local level. Yet there is something in the nature of the actions that places this in the category of vernacular work, at least to the extent that it improves livelihoods in ways that escape definition by concepts developed in formal economics (Illich, 1981: 24).

The process so far described is that of an individual's experience, it is my experience. A change in my own way of acting, a modification of my habitus, works towards a positive impact on community resilience only so far as I am able to influence the wider workings of the public library. To change the actions of the public library in total requires a change in the collective habitus to an understanding of those of us who work in the library as one class with the community that we serve, to eliminate to the greatest extent possible the split between the two social worlds. In previous sections we have seen how this narrative is undermined by the intrusion of the logic of the space of flows into the space of places, disabling the capacity of the public library to act as a convivial institution and separating the social world of the public library from that of the community who use it via technology and tools, and the ideology of professionalism (Castells, 1996; Illich, 1973; 2005). This section has also explored the way in which vernacular work, which exists outside the
sphere of commodity exchange, has a part to play in building *convivial* relationships (Illich, 1981). In the following section I will examine internal mechanisms by which the logic of the *space of flows* perpetuates itself within the library, undermining efforts to realise a *convivial institution*.

### 4.6 Management

For many frontline staff it isn't only the public who are perceived as separate, as a group outside our particular social world. The library itself is divided between us and management. This separation is clearly visible in the social worlds map in Appendix 4. As a category, a segment of the social world of the library, management is a term that can be applied to anyone not engaged with frontline staff activities, that is dealing directly with library users on a day-to-day basis. In my journal one particular event stands out. It involved a member of management attempting to overcome a the concerns of frontline staff regarding RFID, by assuring them that as they had managed to work the machines despite not being great with technology, so library users would be fine and that there was nothing to worry about. This missed the point that the member of staff in question was making; that the introduction of RFID presaged an entirely different relationship with library users, one that they were not comfortable with and did not feel the library should be encouraging.

The above example demonstrates not only the way in which the social orthodoxy of the library is perpetuated through the articulation of a body of knowledge, but also how it is resisted. It is vital to make the point that there is
no conspiracy here. The actions of management in this situation are logical and seemingly motivated by a desire to calm frontline staff fears over the introduction of a new technology to the library. However, the objective reality, in conjunction with their own *habitus*, which determines their actions is that of the *field* of the public library, which ultimately derives its logic from the *space of flows*, which pitches such advances in technology as both desirable and inevitable due to the need for new areas of profitable investment (Harvey, 2011: 97). From the position of management to oppose such advances is unthinkable, it falls outside the *doxa* that underpins the *field*. It is the managers’ ability to articulate the necessity of such advances that endows them with the capital necessary to be managers and wield power in the workplace, and to continue to define capital in accordance with the logic of the *space of flows* (Webb et al., 2002: 23). Indeed, capital is for Bourdieu “a basis of domination”, and this example begins to open up the structure of the means of domination (Harker et al., 1990: 13).

There is a division then in class between frontline workers and management to the extent to which they identify as groups with separate interests. My journal appears to confirm that, at least from the perspective of frontline workers, there is some reality to this division. Illich’s (2005) contention that professionals derive their power as a concession from elites seems particularly relevant again here, although we may wish to qualify this with Castells (1996: 416) observation that:
“the real social domination stems from the fact that cultural codes are embedded in the social structure in such a way that the possession of these codes opens the access to the power structure without the elite needing to conspire to bar access to its networks”.

It is in going after these “cultural codes”, in attempting to accumulate capital, that management, regardless of their intentions, become agents of a logic, that of the space of flows, that sets them at odds with the realisation of the public library as a convivial institution and therefore against the process of community resilience.

4.7 The Environment

Finally we come to the largest silent actant of all, the environment. In Appendix 4 we can see that it contains within it all other social worlds and arenas. It is the source of the initial concern on which this study was begun; it is the site of the potentially disastrous effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, and loss of energy and food security. It appears directly in my journal entries in a variety of ways, although primarily around concerns with energy and resource use, as were discussed in section 4.3.4. Yet at the same time it encompasses all of my reflections, providing the bedrock and backdrop on which the day-to-day concerns of my workplace are played out. We are entirely dependent on its continuing good nature, the certainties of predictable climate patterns, cheap energy, room to expand, and biomass to consume, in order for us to be able to continue to live as we do now. Yet
none of these things are certain, and in fact each of these things are more than likely temporary conditions (Hopkins, 2008). This limitation and uncertainty derived from our reliance on our environment is, in Clarke's (2005: 77) terminology, a sensitizing concept, that suggested the “directions along which to look” as I undertook my study.

Realising the precarious nature of societies continuing functioning is to inherently question the logic of the *space of flows*. We are bound by the natural world and any logic that doesn’t recognise that, that rejects the primacy of place, is of debatable utility in ensuring community resilience. However, the *space of places*, where “form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity”, is not a static thing (Castells, 1996: 423). In Smith's (2001: 54) words “far from reflecting a static ontology of “being” or “community”, localities are dynamic constructions “in the making””. So the extent to which the logic of the *space of flows* is allowed expression in our localities through institutions such as the public library defines the extent to which its logic might determine the fluid, as opposed to static, ontology of our localities. It is this understanding of community resilience as a dynamic process that is central to realising the need to get beneath even the smallest of decisions in the library to determine the logic by which they are directed and expose what Illich (1973: 10) refers to as “the present deep structure of tools”.

69
Each of the previous sections has dealt with aspects of the minutiae of working life in the library. In doing so they were determining what contribution the library was making to Bauman's (2003: 21) “liquid modern” city, the “battlegrounds on which global powers and stubbornly local meanings and identities meet, clash, struggle and seek a satisfactory, or just bearable, settlement”. As this suggests, and as was discussed in section 4.3.5, the logics of space of flows and space of places are co-dependent, “[t]heir combat is not an interim condition from which one of them will eventually emerge victorious” (Bauman, 2003: 22). Yet the primacy of place, of the environment we live in, remains paramount as “[n]o one in our fast globalising world is a ‘global operator’ pure and simple” (Bauman, 2003: 20).

From the examples gathered in my data, and brought out by the analysis, the library's approach to the environment can be described as superficial at best. Representing this observation in my coding was a difficult task, as can be seen by the code “the environment” is something separate from us’ (Appendix 2). This was an attempt to capture the logic of the space of flows and its capacity to detach people from their locality. Previous sections have demonstrated the need for a deep understanding of the obstacles to community resilience. Programs that reduce sustainability, a concept bound to community resilience as was demonstrated in section 2.2, to switching off lights and recycling paper remain removed from the core of the problem and fail to make the link between everyday practice and community resilience; they remain, to borrow Marcuse's (1964) phrase again, one dimensional.
4.8 Summary

This chapter has drawn on the analysis of the data from my journals and the sensitizing concepts suggested from my literature review to understand the key narratives, tools and discourses at work in the public library and their relationship to community resilience. Through the use of selected theoretical lenses it has been possible to understand my experience in a wider frame of reference, to explore the ethnos, the culture, of my workplace and the extent to which the public library operates as a *convivial institution*. The following chapter will draw out the conclusions from this discussion, with reference to my initial aims and objectives, and make suggestions for policy and practice in public libraries and for future research.
5. Conclusions and further research

Before beginning to set out my conclusions there is a caveat that must be applied. Any conclusions drawn from this study are, by necessity and design, partial, provocative and the basis for further investigation and discussion. None of these factors detract from the validity of the study undertaken as this is an exploratory work, mapping the territory for those who follow, so they might explore in more detail each of the areas drawn out from the data. I set out to find out how public libraries promote, or inhibit community resilience. In doing so my aim was to understand this through an examination of day-to-day working practices. This would then provide guidance for policy and practices that promote community resilience. Also, the investigative nature of the study is intended to provide the basis for further research in this area. The sections below deal with each of my objectives in turn, drawing out the key points from each the previous chapters.

5.1 Community resilience and sustainability

Chapter 2 examined the literature surrounding the key concept of community resilience and its relation to public libraries. The case for focussing on adaptation to the disastrous effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, and food and energy insecurity was laid out. Norris et al. (2008) provided the model of community resilience with their seminal paper reviewing contributions from across various disciplines. Central to their understanding of community resilience was that it was a process comprising of four, interrelated, sets of adaptive capacities - economic development, social ...
capital, information and communication, and community competence (Norris et al., 2008: 127).

While there exists literature linking each of these adaptive capacities to libraries, with the exception of community competence, there is nothing in the literature that relates public libraries directly to the wider concept of community resilience. This required the introduction of another concept, sustainability, which is linked in the literature to both resilience and libraries. Illich (1973: 22) and Mumford (1964) provide us with the concepts of convivial tools and democratic technics, which both refer to methods of employing technology which can “be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user”, for understanding the relationship between the library and its users as productive systems. Consequently a methodology was needed which could explore the level at which the concepts outlined above meet with the everyday discourse at the micro-level, showing how the public library might act as a convivial institution promoting community resilience.

5.2 Autoethnography and situational analysis

As stated in the previous section the level of data collection was pitched to capture the narrative at the micro-level. I rejected a strategic level study in favour of this methodology in order to understand strategy as it is played out in the frontline. The need for such an approach was also supported by the literature around individual adaptive capacities and the public library
(Varheim, 2009; Johnson, 2010). The precise methodology employed for data collection was analytic autoethnography and the method of data collection was a reflective journal, kept for a period of four months. Integral to the process of journaling was an acknowledgement of the necessity of the visibility of the researcher's self, tempered with the reflexive awareness of the relationship between myself and that which I studied (Anderson, 2006).

Key to ensuring rigour in this approach was the selection of Clarke's (2003; 2005) situational analysis as the analytical methodology. As a methodology it contains several stages, using coding of the data, and moving through a series of mapping and memoing exercises, although not necessarily in a linear manner (See Appendices for examples). In this way, through coding, mapping and memoing, it allowed for constant reflection and revision throughout the analytical process, allowing me to draw out the significance of seemingly insignificant occurrences and avoid the potential pitfall of writing memoir or autobiography. These methods represent a toolbox for the researcher, to be used as appropriate, and I modified their use where needed (Clarke, 2005: 304). Informed by the literature around community resilience, these methods allowed themes to emerge from the data, laying the ground for the interpretive work in the following section.

5.3 Community resilience: the space of flows vs. the space of places

Chapter 4 discusses the key discourses, actors and actants that emerge from the data and the manner in which they inhibit or promote community
resilience. The specific identity of each of these factors is framed by a wider understanding of their relationships to Castells (1996) two competing logics, that of the *space of flows* and that of the *space of places*. The public library constitutes one ground where the struggle between these two logics is played out. The extent to which each of the emergent themes represent the logic of the *space of places* over the *space of flows* corresponds to the degree to which they can be considered *convivial tools*, pushing the library towards becoming a *convivial institution* (Illich, 1973). *Conviviality* corresponds directly to community resilience, as each has at its heart the key values of autonomy and equality, and so the libraries ability to act as a *convivial institution* bears direct relevance to its capacity to promote community resilience.

It is to Bourdieu's (in: Wilkes, 1990; Barnard, 1990; Jenkins, 1992; Rasmussen and Jochumsen, 2003; Webb et al., 2002; Harker et al., 1990) ideas that we turn to provide the theoretical framework for understanding how the various discourses, actors and actants relate to one another and the wider “field of power” that we have identified as Castells (1996) *space of flows*. Specifically these are the concepts of *class*, that is agents who share similar positions and therefore produce similar practices and adopt similar stances; *field*, the structured system of social positions which define situations for their occupants; *habitus*, cultural values and dispositions that stay with us in different situations; and *doxa*, the *field*s ideological foundation taken for granted by those within the *field* (Wilkes, 1990: 114; Jenkins, 1992: 75.
The next two sections will detail the factors that emerged from the data as inhibitors and promoters of community resilience.

5.3.1 Factors inhibiting community resilience

The first factor that acts to inhibit community resilience, detailed in section 4.2 and most visible in the social worlds/arenas map in Appendix 4, is the existence of a split between the two social worlds of the library and those who use it. This split has its roots in the field of the public library, which is supported by the librarian’s doxa. It represents an imbalance in power relations, one that must be pushed away from subordination and dominance towards equivalence if the library is to act as convivial institution. The field and doxa are determined to a large extent by an overarching “field of power”, identified as the logic of the space of flows. The points that follow explore the manner in which this split manifests and the reasons behind its appearance.

The largest section in my results and discussion, 4.3 and its subsections, examines the role of tools, technics and the “fetish of technology” in perpetuating this split between social worlds. It examines the function of three specific technologies, email, RFID and the People’s Network, in the light of Illich’s (1973) conviviality and Mumford’s (1964; 1967) democratic and authoritarian technics. Energy and resource use is identified as a silent actant in this discourse, with each technology underpinned by its dependence on oil. Each technology is seen to embody the logic of Castells
(1996) space of flows, the wider “field of power”, that is they are authoritarian technics, seeking “to transfer the attributes of life to the machine and the mechanical collective” (Mumford, 1964: 6). They deny conviviality in that they do not meet the criteria of being able to “be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user” (Illich, 1973: 22). Castells (2007) reminds us that, in the case of the People's Network, there is always the capacity for counter-power, using the tool against the logic from which it emerges. Despite this the question of choice still remains.

The insertion of these technologies into the public library finds its rationale in the logic of the library professional contained within the discourse of professionalism. This is dealt with in section 4.4. This forms an aspect of the librarian's doxa that underpins the field, and is subject to the logic of Castells (1996) space of flows. Illich (2005) help us see that professionalism is based upon the commodification of wants as needs, creating a particular relationship between library worker and user, accentuating the split between these two social worlds and working against community resilience. At the same time, individual's habitus may come into conflict with the doxa creating the potential to move towards conviviality.

This discourse of professionalism is embodied in management as a separate class, a segment within the social world of the public library, an area addressed in section 4.6. This class experiences the insertion of
technologies outlined above as inevitable due to the doxa that underpins the field of the public library, which derives its logic from the space of flows. Their success as managers is dependent on their ability to articulate this logic, the power derived by concession from elites through the use of cultural codes embedded in the field (Illich, 2005; Castells 1996). In this way managers, through a discourse of professionalism, smooth the introduction of tools and technologies which accentuate the split between the social worlds of the library worker and the library user, undermining the capacity of the public library to act as convivial institution and subsequently inhibiting its ability to promote community resilience.

5.3.2 Factors promoting community resilience

Section 4.5 details a means through which the public library might work to promote community resilience. Outreach work represents an extension of the conflict between habitus and doxa that emerges at the end of section 4.4 and presages a potential move towards conviviality, in that it is a conscious attempt to bridge the split between the two social worlds. It is a modification of habitus that occurs when encountering new objective conditions, in this case asylum seekers and refugees, representing the logic of Castells (1996) space of places, that results in a redefinition of class. The library worker now identifies with the library user as of the same class. Illich’s (1981) idea of vernacular work, that is work that lays outside the sphere of commodity exchange, provides a criteria for choosing volunteer organisations that can partner the library in outreach work. However, we must conclude that to
change the public library in total would require a shift in collective *habitus*, to negate the logic of the *space of flows* detailed at the end of the preceding section.

The environment is the largest silent actant in this arena, and as such neither promotes or inhibits community resilience, as it is the space in which the struggle between the logics of the *space of flows* and *space of places* takes place. However our conception of it, the extent to which it is silenced, has a definite bearing on the libraries capacity to act as a *convivial institution*. The extent to which the logic of the *space of flows* comes to dominate the approach to the environment, to our sense of place and locality, determines the extent to which it is reduced to a single dimension, and we do not examine what Illich (1973: 10) calls “the present deep structure of tools” as exposed in previous sections. That aside, the environment represents the permanence of *space of places* against the *space of flows* and the capacity to understand this enables us to move towards community resilience.

If we accept the existential threat to our society posed by climate change, biodiversity loss and energy and food insecurity, and also accept that, as a public institution, the library has a responsibility to act on this threat, then the need to place community resilience at the forefront of our thinking and action becomes clear. Those factors inhibiting community resilience are seen to derive from a logic external to the place of the public library and the community it is embedded in. One mechanism by which this is achieved is
explored in this study. Concurrent processes that work to promote community resilience and their root in an opposing logic are also identified. This study has begun the task of exposing the obstacles that stand in our way and the ways in which we already engage in building community resilience, and the following section, 5.5, will map out what we might do to move the library towards becoming a *convivial institution*.

### 5.5 Recommendations

#### 5.5.1 Action and policy in the workplace

Before making recommendations for action and policy in the workplace we should remember the caveat that applies to this study; that it opens up a new area for our understanding and so is likely to produce more questions than answers. As we have seen, library strategy does not stand separate from other considerations, it is subject to the wider strategy of the local authority within which it sits, which in turn takes a lead from central government, and so on until we reach the ultimate sphere of power, the *space of flows*. The first question that must be raised is to what extent is it even possible to eliminate those factors identified above as inhibitive to promoting community resilience.

The totality of the *field* of public libraries is hedged by the logic of the *space of flows*, and while this logic is seen as opposed to the goal of a *convivial institution*, and therefore community resilience, we should remember Bauman's (2003: 22) point that this logic serves a purpose in its capacity “to
pull, absorb and retain the continuous influx of human passions, its life juices." Illich (1973: 24) concurs, stating that "[t]he criteria by which anticonvivial or manipulative tools are recognised cannot be used to exclude every tool that meets them". As far as action and policy within the workplace are concerned then there must be a balancing act. However, if we accept that community resilience is to be central to library strategy, the discussion and decision making process that surrounds the adoption of certain tools, must be open and democratic, and subject to rigorous examination. This calls in to question the structure of hierarchical management that acts to impose the adoption of tools as inevitable. Clearly new models of organising the workplace in line with the idea of a convivial institution and the ethos of community resilience, as represented through the core values of the adaptive capacities such as equality and autonomy, must be considered.

The above considerations represent long-term concerns and as such do not provide realistic prescriptions for immediate action in the workplace. Turning to that factor which already acts to promote community resilience, outreach work, we can provide suggestions for such action. Policies that allow all workers to engage in outreach work at some point would hopefully serve to bring out the potential conflict between habitus and doxa, with the subsequent shift of perspective in regards to class. The capacity to achieve this may require a greater emphasis on outreach work in general. However, this becomes problematic as soon as we consider the current cutbacks to the budget of library services across the UK, with the attendant reduction in staff.
Putting this to one side, it would be desirable to frame all such future outreach in terms of community resilience, using adaptive capacities as criteria to set the purpose. Engagement with community groups already tackling the issues of concern, such as the Transition Movement, can potentially provide an outside impetus in the transformation of the library and provide an impact beyond the currently reduced means of library services.

The aim of both of the above suggestions is to foster a multidimensional view that springs from the logic of the space of places as opposed to the space of flows. This capacity for critical engagement with policy and practice on the part of all who work within the library is vital in developing the public library as a convivial institution. To ensure success the implementation of policy aimed at promoting community resilience must be shadowed by careful research. The following section explores some potential ideas in this direction.

5.5.2 Further research

My results and discussion identified several areas with the potential for further investigation as regards their relationship with the public libraries capacity to promote community resilience. These are the split between social worlds, the role of technology, the discourse of professionalism, the role of management, the place of outreach work and the relationship of workers and users to the environment. A variety of methods and methodologies might be used to explore any one of these areas in greater depth. Now the areas of
concern have been identified it would be desirable to move beyond the autoethnographic approach and incorporate other voices into the narrative, to both test the validity of these conclusions and expand our understanding of their significance. However the value of reflexive practice for the researcher should not be lost in any adoption of new methods.

It would seem reasonable to suggest that further research align itself with the above policy and action orientated recommendations. The longer-term recommendations with regard to adopting new organisational models in the workplace represents the first possible area for further research. Other ways of organising workplaces, as mutuals, workers cooperatives, in collaboration with the community, abound, and the appropriateness of each to the role of the public library warrants detailed study. It may be feasible to conduct studies of similar workplaces or other libraries where innovative models are in place. The possible methodologies for such projects is vast, although I would reiterate the value of situational analysis in opening up data with regard to understanding who, what and why of a given situation (Clarke, 2005).

With regard to changes that can be made and the need to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness, one particular methodology that might prove useful is action research. Denis and Lehoux (quoting Cullen, 1998 in 2009: 364) list the six generic properties of action research as:
1. A need for close interactions with practitioners through the research process
2. Experiential knowledge as a critical asset for understanding and transforming organizations
3. A close connection between objectivity and subjectivity in human action
4. The potential of research to contribute to the construction and reconstruction of social or organizational realities
5. The fundamental role of reflexivity in developing new organizational forms and social arrangements
6. A close link between the practice of research and the development of new ideas

The appropriateness of such an approach to investigating attempts to move the public library towards becoming a *convivial institution* are immediately clear, as it is rooted in the very same values of *conviviality*. Specific methods of data collection are left to be decided according to the focus of the investigation, but would undoubtedly expand beyond the autoethnographic to capture as much data as is necessary.

Adherence to my own theoretical interpretation for future research is by no means necessary, and should be subject to the facts of the situation as they emerge from the data. Potential for wider theoretical understanding might be found in actor-network theory, which has strong links to my chosen analytical methodology of situational analysis, with its capacity to examine the “tension
which lies between the centred 'actor' on the one hand and the decentred 'network' on the other” (Law, 1999: 5).

5.6 Final remarks

Community resilience and its relationship with the public library is a highly complex issue. It is also an area of vital importance in ensuring the continuing relevance of the library in these changing times. This study has outlined the manner in which, in one workplace, the public library acts to promote or inhibit community resilience. As a complex issue it warrants further, more detailed research. Yet the urgency of the concerns it addresses means this research has to be applied, it has to take place in the real world. This combination of urgency and complexity should give us pause for thought, a space for reflection, when moving to encourage the promotion of community resilience through practices and policy in our public libraries. We cannot be sure what the future will bring. Community resilience is a process, not a prescription, and we should keep in mind at all times Bauman's (2003: 24) remark that “[w]e need readiness, not plans”.

Word count: 19,903
Brought up idea of charging 15p for double-sided copying today at info exchange meeting. People seemed to agree it was a good idea to incentivise reduced paper usage.  

Sent an email and got a quick reply explaining that it just wasn’t practical economically. The cost of paper is 0.3p a sheet yet we have to charge 10p for printing to cover cost. Ink is perhaps the most expensive item in this equation. It’s arguable that it is made so expensive by the tied purchasing; so we can only buy via Capita - they have a virtual monopoly and can charge whatever they like.  

I replied to asking if there might be another way to incentivise reduced paper usage, e.g. a voucher for free DVD hire, which might also act to draw in those who use the FN but not the library.

Acknowledged the value of such a scheme, but also brought the crushing reality of economics to bear on it. It would still involve a loss of revenue.
Appendix 2: Messy and ordered situational maps (examples)
Individual human elements/actors
1. Myself;
2. Frontline staff;
3. Temporary/casual staff;
4. Managers;
5. Library users;
6. Contract staff (outsourced);
7. Politicians;
8. Volunteers;

Collective human elements/actors
9. Trade unions;
10. Local and national government;
11. Outsourced service providers;
12. Campaigning groups;
13. Outreach programs;
14. Library service;
15. The public;
16. Library management;
17. Frontline staff;
18. Private business;
19. Voluntary/community groups;

Discursive constructions of individual and/or collective human actors
20. "We're all in this together";
21. Detached management/Lack of agency for frontline staff;
22. Change a bad thing/good thing;
23. Work as a public service;
24. Provision of "quality information";
25. Neutrality and professionalism as ideals;
26. Library strategy;
27. City strategy;

Political/economic elements
28. Budget cuts;
29. Marketisation/commodification of service;

Temporal elements
30. Staffing issues - "bare bones";
31. Wage labour - why should we work beyond what we're paid for?;
32. Time for training;

Other kinds of elements
33. Adaptive capacities;
34. Personal lives;

Nonhuman elements/actants
35. IT systems;
36. Paper media;
37. Electronic media;
38. Peoples Network;
39. RFID;
40. "the environment";

Discursive construction of nonhuman actants
41. Techno-fix;
42. "the environment" is something separate from us; people in general?

Spatial elements
43. Building – Use feedback loop;

Sociocultural-symbolic elements
The public library;
Community resilience;
Technology;
Hierarchy (and structure and culture);

Related discourses (historical, narrative, and/or visual)
The role of the public library;
"Austerity Britain";
Peak oil, climate change, biodiversity loss;
The role of technology;

Major issues/debates (usually contested)
Marketisation/commodification vs. public service;
Public service vs. just a job;
"Green issues" vs. business as usual;
"library users" or "customers"?
Tech will solve everything;
central control vs. worker agency;

Implicated/silent actors/actants
(This is dependent on angle at which relationships are viewed)
Library users;
Frontline staff;
Contract staff;
Temp/casual staff;
"the environment";
???
Appendix 3: Relational analysis (example – economic development)
Appendix 4: Social worlds/arenas map
References


91


Cantú, Amy & Anderson, Beth (2003). “It's not easy being green, but it sure is fun: Sustainability programming at the Ann Arbor District Library.” *Public Libraries*, 42 (4), 240-244.


100

Obrist, Brigit et al. (2010). “Multi-layered social resilience : a new approach in mitigation research”. *Progress in Development Studies [online]*, 10 (4), 283-293. (Accessed 02/05/11 - [http://pdj.sagepub.com/content/10/4/283](http://pdj.sagepub.com/content/10/4/283))


