‘Somewhat saddened, but not particularly surprised’: Investigating CILIP’s Workforce Mapping survey results, Librarians’ responses to it, and perceptions of diversity in the Library and Information sector.

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by

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Abstract

Background

In 2014-15 the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals and Archives and Records Association commissioned a survey of the UK Library and Information workforce. The executive summary of results showed a distinct lack of diversity in the workforce. Previous research into this matter has reinforced this, and there is concern that a culturally homogenous workforce does not reflect the ethics and values of the information profession. Furthermore, there are implications for service quality as there is concern that a non-diverse workforce is not the most able to best serve diverse communities.

Aims

This study aimed to look at the workforce mapping survey results in greater detail to get a better picture of diversity in the UK information workforce. It sought to examine perceptions of UK library and information professionals of diversity in the sector to consider ways that diversity issues in the sector can be addressed, and suggest ways that CILIP can advocate for change and make the sector more inclusive.

Methods

The raw data from the workforce mapping survey was analysed. The workforce was surveyed to gather responses to the results of the survey and respondents were invited back to take part in one-to-one unstructured interviews, of which four were carried out. The data from the survey and interviews were then the focus of a thematic analysis. A literature review was also carried out.
Results

The results of the workforce mapping survey highlight that the profession is indeed culturally homogenous - more so than the wider UK labour force and certainly not representative of the wider UK population. Librarians responses were very critical of this and deeply concerned by the implications of the figures. Interviewee respondents offered reasons as to why they believe there is a diversity issue with wider perceptions of libraries in society being a key factor. The socioeconomic conditions which surround pursuing a career in the sector were also found to affect the diversity of the profession, although it was found that there are barriers to success in the profession at all stages in career development which also have impact upon the diversity of the sector.

Conclusions

Far more needs to be done to address this issue. Previous attempts at improving diversity in the workforce have been unsuccessful and should be reviewed to help inform a better strategy for inclusion. Further research into the workforce mapping survey and diversity in the sector on a larger scale could help produce a stronger case for this. It is recommended that CILIP take heed of the survey results and use them to advocate for changes in the profession. It is recommended that employers do more to create a more flexible and inclusive working environment. Finally, it is also recommended that the sector investigates establishing a union of its own which can address issues of workplace adversity which CILIP have been historically unable to assist with.
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Introduction and context

On 24th November 2015, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (henceforth referred to as CILIP) released the executive summary of findings from their Mapping the Workforce Survey. This was conducted by Edinburgh Napier University throughout 2014 and 2015 in collaboration with CILIP and the Archives and Records Association (henceforth referred to as the ARA). Collecting workforce data can highlight access issues and service quality implications within professions. Indeed, the workforce mapping survey was conducted to help CILIP and the ARA get a clearer picture of the sector in order to ‘monitor trends in the workforce, advocate on behalf of the sector, develop relevant and robust policies, and to develop better and targeted services.’ (CILIP, 2016).

The figures published in the executive summary showed a shocking lack of diversity in the UK library and information sector, indicating that the profession may have an issue with recruiting (and developing the careers of) candidates from diverse backgrounds. The lack of diversity is particularly troubling because the results contrast the professional values espoused by the profession which claim to celebrate equality and diversity. There was a particular disconnect between the workforce mapping survey results, and the content of CILIP’s diversity statement, last amended in 2015, which states that CILIP want to ‘work towards establishing an LIS workforce that is representative of the diversity within UK society’ (CILIP, 2015).

However, in early 2016, a news piece in the Exeter Daily announcing the new leadership board for Libraries Unlimited was to reveal another indicator that the profession lacks diversity. For context, Libraries Unlimited are ‘a new and independent
staff and community owned social enterprise, established in April 2016 with the support of Devon County Council.' (Libraries Unlimited, 2016). They are tasked with providing all public library services across Devon. In the Exeter Daily News piece, Chief Executive of the organisation, Ciara Eastell, is quoted in the article as saying 'I am confident that we will have a strong, effective and diverse board in place to steer the organisation forward.' (Exeter Daily 2016). However, the information provided about the board, and the photograph of them accompanying the article seemingly shows that their diversity ends at their extensive work experience, instead showing a culturally homogenous group of middle-aged white individuals. This mirrors the findings of the workforce mapping survey in presenting an image of librarians as being predominantly white, middle aged and middle-class. What is worrying here is that this cultural homogeneity is being celebrated as an example of best practice regarding diversity, which suggests potentially one of two things - either we as a sector are not prioritising diversity or we do not fully understand what a diverse workforce looks like. Either option is deeply concerning, and a key motivation behind this research project.

CILIP (2015) describe the promotion of equality and diversity as a ‘distinctive contribution of library and information professionals' in their statement, yet the results of the survey and the example from Exeter suggest that this is not reflected in the makeup of the workforce. A lack of previous discussion of diversity in the context of the LIS workforce suggests that this is an area of research which will benefit from investigation. Therefore, this dissertation intends to explore this lack of diversity, investigate responses to the findings and draw some conclusions as to why the survey produced such disconcerting results about the makeup of the library and information sector workforce.
Definition of diversity

In the context of this dissertation, diversity should be taken to refer to social and cultural diversity, particularly people who reflect a ‘heterogeneous society’ (IFLA/UNESCO, 2009). This will include people belonging to groups who have historically faced oppression and exclusion from equal opportunities in society. This may include, but certainly is not limited to:

- racial/ethnic and/or national identity
- gender and/or sexual identity
- physical/mental health and/or disabilities
- socioeconomic status and/or class

Furthermore, diversity in the context of this dissertation should also be taken to mean the following:

‘diversity means inclusion of everyone and everything; making sure that the underrepresented and the privileged get a chance to understand each other and where everybody comes from’ (Aloi, 2014).

Research aims and objectives

Aim

The overall aim of this dissertation is to examine diversity and librarians’ perceptions of diversity in the UK library and information workforce in light of the CILIP workforce mapping survey results.
Objectives

To investigate the findings of the CILIP workforce mapping survey in relation to diversity within the library and information sector.

To investigate responses from information professionals to the mapping the workforce survey

To investigate and consider UK library and information sector workers’ perceptions of diversity in the sector

To identify factors affecting the recruitment of diverse candidates in the profession

To make recommendations to CILIP about how they may address diversity issues drawing upon how current LIS workers perceive diversity in the profession
Literature review

Introduction

This chapter offers a critical review of existing literature pertinent to the topic of this study. It will start by looking at literature focused on diversity within LIS in order to provide the appropriate social and professional context in which the dissertation has been produced. The chapter will then proceed to review literature around previous instances of workforce mapping, both in a general context and within the LIS sector. The review is structured as such to highlight the gaps in existing literature. It became clear during initial reviews of literature that very little literature around diversity in the field looks specifically at how diversity issues are manifested in the workforce, and that which does could benefit from taking a broader focus on all aspects of diversity. Certainly, it seems apparent that the subject has not given the attention that the results of the Workforce Mapping Survey suggest it deserves. Similarly, there was very little literature found which focuses a critical lens on reports which give a qualitative analysis of workforces. This project hopes to address both of those gaps, offering a fuller investigation into diversity of the library and information workforce in the UK than has previously been attempted.

Diversity in librarianship

Diversity has been a very popular topic when it comes to aspects of librarianship such as service provision and resources, (see e.g. Drabinski (2008a; 2008b; 2013 and 2014) who has written extensively on cataloguing, feminism and queer theory; Greenblatt (2010) on serving LGBTIQ users; Thompson (2012) on services for trans library users, and Holt and Holt (2010) on service provision for impoverished users as some
examples). However, there is little in the way of scholarship about diversity within the actual librarianship workforce. Indeed, what scholarship there is tends to be focused on librarianship in the USA, and more specifically on racial and ethnic diversity. (Bourg, 2014; Galvan, 2015; Honma, 2006). Alabi (2015) notes this gap regarding scholarship on the workforce itself, and has researched racial microaggressions as experienced in the LIS workforce. This reports that a significant proportion of librarians who identified as belonging to a racial minority group had experienced microaggressions in the workplace. Yet again, however, this research focused on a specific facet of diversity. (Although it is worth noting that it is likely that Alabi’s findings can be taken to infer that librarians belonging to other minority groups will also have experienced microaggressions in their careers corroborating the findings from other research in diversity in LIS which reports there are problems in the sector around the topic.)

Given the historical context of race in the USA this is unsurprising, but unfortunately means that what scholarship does exist has limited applicability in the UK (Remy, 2011). The previous tendency for research to be weighted heavily toward researching only racial and ethnic diversity at the expense of an intersectional approach to diversity however, does not diminish the importance of this scholarship, as this is still incredibly important research which needs to be highlighted and especially as some research does touch upon the intersectional nature of things such as class, gender, sexuality and racial identity to make a case for ‘intersectional librarianship’ (Ettarh, 2014). However, there is certainly scope for greater analysis of diversity in librarianship in the context of the workforce itself and in a more holistic sense than prior scholarship has afforded.
The literature which does focus on workforce diversity within librarianship is widely critical in nature, with much of the research suggesting that there is a significant diversity problem within the library and information science field. Galvan (2015) is particularly powerful in her condemnation, describing librarianship as ‘paralysed by whiteness’, and nor is she alone in her criticisms. Honma (2006) writes that the lack of diversity in librarianship is influenced by the lack of discussions around diversity happening within library and information science degree programmes and Hathcock (2015) points out that there are factors affecting diversity at the point of recruitment - noting that most recruitment processes require ‘temporal, financial, and educational privilege’ which marginalised groups do not always have access to. In all of the above, there are clear and astute attempts at identifying the reasons behind the lack of diversity in the field. Both Honma (2006) and Galvan (2015) describe what they feel are the key factors in creating this diversity problem within the library and information sector, with some suggesting that bias against diverse candidates is ingrained within the profession from the earliest stages of the career (Hathcock, 2015).

Whilst the literature mostly focuses on issues in US librarianship, conversations around diversity in the UK have happened in the past - a report commissioned over ten years ago by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (henceforth referred to as MLAC) was produced partly in response to ‘concerns surrounding the disproportionate number of BMEs employed in Museums, Libraries and Archives, in relation to the communities that they serve.’ (MLAC, 2005). Again, however, this report was exclusively focused on ethnic diversity, meaning that there is still a lack of meaningful information from other groups which are also underrepresented in the sector. This report employed qualitative research methods in order to investigate perceptions of the sector. Through a series of interviews, the report gathered the views of young people from black and minority
ethnic communities, their parents, and other authority figures such as teachers and career advisers as well as current black and minority ethnic postgraduates. Many of the responses revealed that a lack of knowledge on both the part of the young people and their families and that of careers advisers, with one stating other careers are far more ‘visible’ (MLAC, 2005), was an issue facing the sector. The report therefore suggests, much like Hathcock (2015) does, that barriers to entering and progressing within the profession exist at all stages of working in the sector. Interestingly, the report made several valid recommendations to the sector regarding improving diversity in the sector, particularly the suggestion of a critical audit of the ‘current culture’ of the sector and whether it was positive about diversity. (MLAC, 2005).

CILIP did appear to address these findings, launching in 2009 a positive action scheme called ‘Encompass’ which intended to address ethnic diversity in the profession. The scheme created graduate traineeships specifically for black and minority ethnic candidates to help them get into the profession. It also intended to support these trainees through a professional library and information science qualification, (CILIP, 2009). It is very difficult to find much information about the outcomes of the scheme, although the results of the workforce mapping survey can perhaps be taken as evidence that the scheme was not as successful as intended, eventually folding sometime around 2012 because, according to CILIP, issues with the UK economy meant employers were reticent to invest in the scheme. (Daines, 2012). It was recommended in the report from Daines (2012) that equality and diversity statistics should be collected and published annually, therefore it can also be inferred that the workforce mapping project was at least in part inspired by previously unsuccessful attempts at understanding and promoting diversity in the workforce of the sector.
Moreover, previous research into the subject area continues the tendency to take the broad term diversity to mean ethnic and racial diversity. Research by Wilson and Birdi (2008) revealed that racial and ethnic diversity is the foremost association made when participants were approached with the term diversity. They found that ‘when asked to discuss cultural representation, respondents...tended to refer to ethnicity in the first instance, rather than to age, gender or social class, cultural characteristics that are arguably of equal importance when considering social exclusion’ (Wilson and Birdi, 2008).

Furthermore, Wilson and Birdi (2008) noted that the sample of library staff they used in their research was particularly ‘culturally homogenous’ with a large proportion specifically of respondents who identified as female, white and middle aged. Their study also found that some respondents felt this cultural homogeneity was problematic when it came to delivering adequate services to all community groups, explaining that ‘members of vulnerable and traditionally disadvantaged groups’ respond best to seeing themselves represented in the workforces of the services they rely on, (Wilson and Birdi, 2008). IFLA reinforce this, stating that the staff of a multicultural library ‘should reflect the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the community to ensure cultural awareness, reflect the community the library serves, and encourage communication...’ (2015). Wilson and Birdi’s findings on this, however, were not universal as they also found ‘participants were divided on whether or not such a homogenous workforce had implications for the delivery of socially inclusive services, with opinion shaped by personal identity and experience. Defensive comments were made by certain respondents, who claimed that staff are capable of empathy irrespective of their own
cultural background, and that the ability to deliver socially inclusive services is dependent upon skill and personality traits rather than identity.’ (Wilson and Birdi, 2008). There is, clearly, a divide in the library and information sector with regards to the importance of representation and its impact on service quality, this in turn is likely to impact upon the diversity of the workforce because it shapes how important people view workforce diversity.

Workforce mapping

Introduction: outlining definitions and general practices

There is a significant amount of actual data about various workforces in the UK readily available for public consumption, however there appears to be little scholarly output reviewing the concept of workforce mapping projects. There is a real gap in the literature here; case studies of projects investigating workforce mapping would be worthwhile due to the fact they could be used to inform and improve upon issues arising across various professions. Of what literature that could be found, Levitan and Gallo (1990) summarise best the need for collecting data on the workforce, describing such data as a ‘barometer’ for indicating the economic health of a nation. This is a good analogy, but generally applies to data collected which focuses purely on numbers of people employed across a nation. This sort of workforce mapping is common in the UK. Labour force surveys such as the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey (ONS, 2016), for example, do not gather data on such aspects of the public sector workforce as gender, sexuality, ethnic or racial identity or socioeconomic status. Instead, these sorts of workforce mapping projects focus on a more literal understanding of mapping by detailing the numbers of people in employment at a given time across the different regions of the UK. This only serves to give a snapshot of how many people are actually in employment and does not go very far toward producing meaningful statistics about
how workforces are made up and whether they are fairly or accurately representing the communities they exist within and serve. It is therefore important that workforce mapping projects such as that completed by CILIP are undertaken, as this sort of project can - to develop Levitan and Gallo’s (1990) analogy - work as a barometer to measure how representative of the overall population workforces are.

However, the literature has also shown that when workforce mapping projects are including diversity data collection, they have likely been commissioned to address especially problematic areas of diversity therefore having too tight a focus if considering representation in a more general sense. Davies and Shaw (2008) for example, compiled a report focused exclusively on ethnic diversity in the museums sector for the Museums Association, but as they were looking at positive action schemes for recruiting black and minority ethnic candidates within the heritage sector, looking at data other than ethnicity was not appropriate for their study. Gathering data such as this is useful for pinpointing specific areas which are problematic to inspire (or in this case monitor the efficacy of) diversity initiatives. However, there appears to be a lack of even very specific diversity data monitoring across the literature and especially lacking in anything attempting to give a more in depth and holistic picture of workforces.

What we are left with, therefore, is a gap in our knowledge of how representative our workforces are when it comes to a more intersectional view of representation. The survey commissioned by CILIP goes somewhat toward providing data which can address this within the LIS sector, and expose issues of representation therein.
Workforce mapping projects in other sectors

However, although issues with diversity data collection do exist, that is not to say that diversity data is not collected in the UK at all. Many public authorities are bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires that they monitor diversity data of their workforce in order to inform best practice and ensure equality of access to employment. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016). Areas of the private sector also actively choose to monitor the diversity of their workforces. The legal sector, for example, have diversity data collected by the Solicitor’s Regulation Authority (henceforth referred to as the SRA), who describe workforce mapping as a ‘robust tool’ for ‘tracking improvement’ (SRA, 2016). Similarly, the department for Business, Innovation and Skills (henceforth referred to as BIS) carry out workforce mapping data collection annually which they state is to monitor the workforce and ensure they’re meeting the standards set by the equality duty.

Workforce mapping is carried out regularly in the National Health Service (henceforth referred to as the NHS), indeed the literature review in the CILIP project report accurately describes the practices of workforce mapping in the health sector as ‘well developed and mature’ (Hall et al, 2015). However, in the case of the NHS it appears that economic reasons are the driving force behind ensuring such robust workforce mapping practices as some 70% of ‘recurrent NHS provider costs’ are related to the workforce, (Imison, Buchan and Xavier, 2009). The data collected and used therefore looks less at the makeup of the workforce, but rather at staffing requirements and training needs across the workforce in a geographic sense. The literature does not suggest that representation is a key priority when mapping the workforce in the health sector.
Overall however, the different sectors which make up the UK workforce clearly do have an awareness that diversity data is important for ensuring the workforce is adequately representative of the communities it serves, the SRA particularly making a point of stating that ‘a diverse and representative legal profession benefits both law firms and consumers.’ (SRA, 2016). However, there seems to be little in the way of scholarly analysis and discussion of workforce mapping results and what they can reveal about a sector - and why it is that diversity figures are still so disconcerting across some professions.

**Previous workforce mapping projects in comparable industries**

Libraries and archives are often considered in relation to areas of the heritage, arts and creative industries, which are generally criticised for sharing common diversity issues i.e. they are dominated by a culturally homogenous, white middle class majority. (O’Hagan, 2014; Neelands et al, 2015; O’Brien et al, 2016). Two major projects comparable to that of CILIP’s workforce mapping survey have been conducted in comparable industries in recent years: a project looking at the creative economy workforce compiled by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (henceforth referred to as the DCMS), and a project from the Museum Consultancy looking specifically at diversity in the workforce of the major museums partnered with Arts Council England.

The Museum Consultancy report (Davies, Griffiths and Wilkinson, 2015) introduces its findings by stating that ‘concern about lack of diversity...can be traced back over 20 years’, which seems in conflict with the literature on diversity itself, which broadly suggests that the visibility of and access to such professions remains limited unless you
belong to a specific culturally homogenous group. In some cases, there are reports that opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds are worsening - the Sutton Trust regularly report that although only 7% of people in the United Kingdom are privately educated, they often make up more than half of those employed in the top jobs in their industries. (Sutton Trust, 2016). The Museum consultancy report continues to break down its findings to cover four areas: boards; traineeships and volunteering; the shape of the museum workforce, and supporting long term change (Davies, Griffiths and Wilkinson, 2015). This is an interesting way of presenting their findings, which has not been done in other examples considered in this literature review. The choice to focus on the diversity of museum boards alongside new entrants to the profession is especially striking as it shows an awareness of barriers existing at all levels - something Hathcock (2015) points out as a key issue for the diversity of the library and information sector workforce. In the board section the report refers to age, ethnicity and gender as factors influencing the diversity of the board but makes no mention of other characteristics such as sexual orientation or class and socioeconomic background. Similarly, the traineeships section mentions ‘disadvantaged groups’ (Davies, Griffiths and Wilkinson, 2015) but fails to adequately outline precisely what or whom is these groups are, it is only later in the report that they explain that they interviewed ‘staff who are disabled, [LGBT], black and minority ethnic and from older age groups’, which shows that a concerted effort was made to look at a wider, intersectional range of individuals and thus produce a more meaningful picture of diversity in that particular sector, which is certainly positive to see.

One really important point made in the Museum consultancy report is that there are ‘serious gaps in data’ which ‘hampers understanding’ of the issue (Davies, Griffiths and Wilkinson, 2015). They suggest collecting data of this nature from staff once they feel
more settled in their role (i.e. divorcing diversity data collection from the context of recruitment) in order to get a more accurate and robust picture of the workforce. This too is certainly an issue for the library and information sector and shall be discussed further later in the review.

The DCMS survey was similar to both the Museum consultancy report and the CILIP workforce mapping survey in that it reported on employment statistics in the creative economy. This includes comparable industries to that of the library and information sector, and indeed the findings of their survey also include references to the library and information sector. Their report ‘Creative Industries: Focus on Employment’ (2015) includes statistics on gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, breaking the figures down by the separate comparable sectors within the creative economy which allows for some interesting comparison. It appears that this report had been conducted in 2014 also, but without any data collected on socioeconomic class, which suggests studies of this nature are often falling short on providing a holistic picture of diversity within workforces and therefore having to amend themselves over time – as such there is a lack of vital information from the DCMS (2015) regarding trends in the figures around socioeconomic background and the creative economy. Without this information about trends available, it is difficult to get a clear picture of how far that particular area of diversity is an issue for the creative industries. This is a similar issue that has arisen in the library and information sector, where a lack of previous substantial research into the makeup of the workforce leaves us with little knowledge of how these figures have changed over time. So although ostensibly there have been projects carried out to look at the workforce in the heritage sector and creative industries, there is a lack of substantial, synthesised research to offer a clear picture of the diversity of workforces in
these areas, which in turn means that we cannot accurately know the extent of diversity issues from these figures.

**Previous LIS workforce mapping**

As mentioned previously, a lack of substantial datasets regarding employment and workforce diversity is an issue for the library and information sector. The closest set of figures to those gathered by CILIP come from a previous library and information sector workforce survey carried out in 2012. The ‘library, archives, records and information management services workforce survey’ (Learning and Skills Improvement Service, 2012) which shall henceforth be referred to as LARIMS. This survey was broadly similar in the data it gathered on the UK library and information sector workforce, producing almost identical results showing a distinct lack of diversity in the workforce.

The report produced for CILIP regarding their workforce mapping project includes a thorough literature review which outlines some of the past attempts at researching the UK information workforce. Unfortunately, it corroborates the fact that synthesis of these datasets is untenable due to massive gaps occurring in the data collection process. Especially in cases such as Marshall, Moore and Wallace (2005) where monitoring diversity figures was clearly an afterthought, and as such did not produce data reliable enough to be used to monitor trends in workforce diversity. This report was created on behalf of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLAC) in the South East, only included analysing the ‘ethnic and disability profile’ of respondents ‘if possible’.

Furthermore, it cites projects carried out by Hall and Abell (2006), Williams (2013) and Williams (2014). These reports again however fell into the tendency to single out a specific area of diversity. Williams’ 2013 report, for example, looked at disability specifically, which would be of little use for analysing wider trends in diversity over time.
Indeed, though previous workforce data collection initiatives have been carried out in the sector, none have carried out data collection on quite the scale that CILIP’s workforce mapping project has done and none have as given as full or as shocking a picture of the cultural homogeneity of the UK Information workforce as none of them truly were looking at the wider picture of who works in the UK information sector; what kind of people specifically make up the workforce and how that relates to the overall population in terms of representation. Again, it is important to reiterate that these individual projects do have value when it comes to reporting on certain protected characteristics and how the access needs of those specifically can be addressed. However, when we treat ‘matrices of identity and marginalisation as separate entities [we] fail to fully understand how oppressions work in varying contexts…’ (Ettarh, 2014). Therefore, larger scale projects are needed to help create a wider picture, and account for the fact that marginalisation and oppression does not work in such black and white terms if real measurable differences are to be made.

**Conclusion on workforce mapping**

Workforce mapping, although not often written about as the subject of scholarly research, is carried out and reported in in many sectors across the UK. The purpose for this practice varies across sectors, although often harks back to Levitan and Gallo’s (1990) explanation of mapping workforces for economic purposes. Other reasoning comes down to maintaining employment records and training needs. It is really only in the library and information sector and comparable industries such as museums and heritage that seem to focus their workforce data collection efforts around diversity. This is perhaps indicative of the fact that these industries are some of the most heavily plagued by diversity issues although this is never explicitly stated as a reason behind the projects. Of all the projects reviewed, it seems that the museum sector has been the
most effective at reporting on the issue and recognising the issues they have had with previous datasets - acknowledging both a failure on their part to accurately and thoroughly monitor trends in diversity over time, despite recognising it has been a problem for more than 20 years! (Davies, Griffiths and Wilkinson, 2015). However, where the museums sector has taken the lead, the library and information sector have not been following too far behind and the current CILIP workforce mapping survey results offer a promising start for diversity issues in the profession to be considered and addressed.
Methodology

Approach
Initial ideas for this dissertation were formulated when the Executive Summary of the Workforce Mapping survey were released publicly in November 2015, causing some controversy within the library and information community particularly around the diversity of the profession. The researcher therefore wanted to focus critically on the topic of diversity within the sector in light of the results, examining the responses of library and information workers to the diversity statistics produced from the survey data, and their perceptions of diversity within the profession. Furthermore, the research takes an inductive approach - seeking to collate and analyse data in order to generate meaning and theories rather than testing a preconceived hypothesis, (Bryman, 2016).

Theoretical framework/approach
The project takes theoretical inspiration from social constructivism. This is outlined by Creswell (2007) as a ‘worldview’ which relates to the subjectivity of meaning; using this approach relies heavily on participants’ views of a situation. This specific theoretical approach is ontological in that it recognises the subjectivity of experience when making sense of the world around us, (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Creswell, 2007). After all, the project is concerned specifically with people’s responses to results of the workforce mapping project and perceptions of the sector.

Furthermore, Creswell (2007) recognises, that researchers are influenced by their individual ‘worldviews, paradigms or sets of beliefs’ and bring these to the research project in the form of ‘philosophical assumptions’. In this instance, the project was inspired by the personal reaction of the researcher and their professional contacts to
another research project. As a result, there are axiological assumptions at work in this project which recognise that research is value laden and that biases are present (Creswell, 2007). The specific biases present here come from the implication that the library and information profession is dominated by a culturally homogenous group who also happen to be some of the most privileged individuals in society. Furthermore, the biases come from the assumption that diversity is a positive thing, and that the power structures which reinforce cultural hegemony - and therefore limit the opportunities for marginalised individuals - ought to be challenged. (Gramsci, 1971). Therefore, although the project focuses heavily on the perceptions, views and experiences of those working in the library and information profession, the critical focus of the project is to an extent, borne from the researcher's own views and assumptions of the situation.

The specific interpretive stance of this project is inspired by critical theory, which seeks to challenge the accepted status quo in society and has an ‘explicit interest in the abolition of social injustice’ (Bronner, 1994). Furthermore, critical theory asks that researchers ‘acknowledge their own power’ (Creswell, 2007). Indeed, it is a fortunate position this researcher is in being able to carry out this project, having the ‘temporal, financial, and educational privilege’ that Hathcock notes is required for success in the library and information sector (2015). As such, the project takes what Creswell (2007) outlines as an ‘advocacy’ approach in that it hopes to give a voice to those marginalised within the library and information community by investigating and exposing perceived inequalities in the profession, with an overall aim of clarifying some for the causes for these issues and how they may be addressed.
Methodological approach: research design

Literature review

The first key stage in the research was to carry out a review of the literature in order to fully synthesise what scholarship already exists on the topic of diversity in librarianship. Bryman notes that conducting a literature review is a ‘crucial stage’ in the research process (2016). Indeed, for this project reviewing the existing literature was invaluable for highlighting the gaps in existing research which created the rationale behind conducting this study. The literature review in this project takes the form of a ‘narrative review’ (Bryman, 2016) in that it attempts to establish a narrative outlining the issues in the profession and the context within which this dissertation has been produced. Furthermore, the review provides a focus for the dissertation by emphasising the specific areas lacking in research which are to be addressed and is vital for synthesizing existing knowledge and supporting arguments that will be put forth during later chapters of this project.

Data collection

The second stage was to collect empirical data that would be used to inform my conclusions. The initial design was to conduct focus groups, however the actual data collection done was in the form of a survey and some short one to one interviews.

Focus groups

The initial research design had intended for focus groups to be carried out as the main method of data collection. Morgan writes of focus groups that the researcher has minimal control over the data collected (1988). Although he considers this a weakness, in the context of the theoretical approach of this dissertation, generating data based purely on the participants’ beliefs and perceptions is actually a strength. Moreover,
Bryman (2016) notes that focus groups can be especially useful for understanding ‘why’ people feel the way they do, which is a key objective of this project. Unfortunately, although focus groups were organised, they did not go ahead and will be discussed further in the limitations and practicalities section of this chapter.

**Survey**

A survey was put together using google forms to replicate the failed focus groups. The form used the same questions that were prepared to guide the focus groups, allowing for longer prose text answers which would hopefully mimic the sorts of responses given in the focus group context. This was useful for gathering people’s opinions and personal responses to the data and establishing a consensus opinion from participants but provided little insight into why participants felt that way specifically. Therefore, a methodological approach was applied here and further data collection designed to address the ‘missing data’ (Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2016).

**One to one interviews**

Participants from the initial data collection stages were invited back to take part in brief one to one interviews to discuss issues further. This was done in order to establish why members of the library and information community felt the way they did about the survey. In total, four short one-to-one interviews were conducted. In line with the social constructivist approach of the dissertation which wanted as much of the data collected as possible to reflect the individual views and experiences of the participants, the interviews conducted were almost entirely unstructured. Using only one question to form the basis of the discussion, interviewees were able to respond freely, (Bryman, 2016). Some techniques outlined by Bryman (2016) however were employed during the course of interviewing. One such technique used was prompting - all interviewees were given the same prompt regarding whether they feel the profession is especially
exclusive for example. Another technique used was probing to elicit further response, for example, if an answer felt undeveloped or it seemed that a respondent may be heading toward touching upon something that has been emerging as a theme from previous data, they may have been asked 'do you have any further comments to add' to give the opportunity for the interviewee to develop their responses. Finally, during the interview process, the researcher avoided asking leading questions but if people touched on something that was was relevant to themes noticed in previous data collection, they may also have been probed to discuss that specific thing further in a more direct way than asking for general further comment.

**Data analysis**

The third stage was to carry out data analysis. Data analysis occurred in two stages - the first was to analyse the quantitative workforce mapping survey data in conjunction with comparable datasets gathered in the past in order to identify trends in diversity in the sector. The second stage was to analyse the empirical data collected for this project, which focused on gathering librarians' responses to the survey and perceptions of the issues in the sector. A thematic analysis of this data was carried out. It used coding to identify themes by which findings could be grouped and used to inform conclusions.

The data analysis in this dissertation project followed an approach inspired by grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Following principles of grounded theory, the dissertation analysed collected data in order to construct a theory rather than collecting data to test a previously established hypothesis - taking an inductive rather than deductive approach. The key 'tool' (Bryman, 2016) of grounded theory used was coding. Using this method means analysis is carried out in tandem with the
collection of the data (Charmaz, 2000), the codes serving as ‘shorthand devices’ (Charmaz, 1983) for various concepts, theories and ideas which appear to have pertinence across the data collected and will potentially form the basis of theories developed from the research. As such, coding indicates a ‘constant state of potential revision and fluidity’ (Bryman, 2016) which, for this project, felt most appropriate considering the subjective nature of reality as experienced by individuals and how important to the project this was.

Coding was used in order to carry out a thematic analysis, specifically a ‘narrative analysis’ of the data which refers to ‘the search for and analysis of stories’ which people use to construct meaning in their lives (Bryman, 2016). As this dissertation was using a theoretical framework which places importance on the subjective experience of its participants, narrative analysis of responses gathered during data collection was deemed the most appropriate way of analysing data, especially appropriate given the inductive nature of the project; rooted in grounded theory. Thematic analysis, specifically, was used to draw together responses and help produce theories and generate understanding around the objectives of the project. Indeed, during initial coding with NVivo of the survey data collected, the researcher noticed the previously discussed ‘missing data’ which led to the secondary data collection. This then allowed for more detailed narratives to be constructed and coded in order to develop conclusions.

**Ethics**

The study was classified as being ‘low risk’, meaning there were limited ethical implications associated with the research. However, due to discussions happening around protected characteristics that are associated with diversity as a concept, for
example sexuality, ethnicity, disability and such, there was potential for participants to feel discomfort talking about sensitive issues. In order to address this, the researcher avoided two things which could have caused harm to participants. The first of these was related to exploitation of participants. Although the voices of marginalised individuals are key to making this project authentic in the issues it highlights, the researcher avoided directly targeting people from marginalised groups and forcing them to discuss their experiences when this may cause harm. The second thing avoided in this project was demanding or encouraging people to disclose personal information regarding protected characteristics. Informed consent was sought from all participants.

Limitations

Focus groups
Bryman (2016) notes that the median size of groups used for focus group research is rarely larger than ten participants with multiple groups taking place. This would not have been possible to do within the scale of this project so the researcher decided to aim for two focus groups of approximately ten participants each. This therefore determined the sample size of individuals when the focus groups failed and the survey was produced in its place.

Sample size
Only a small number of people were surveyed as the survey was intended to replicate the focus group in as many ways as possible. The aim was for somewhere between 20-30 responses, which was achieved, however this cannot be said to be representative of the library and information community as a whole. Furthermore, when secondary data collection was carried out, only those initially surveyed were invited back to participate in further research. Therefore, an even smaller number of people were interviewed due
to time constraints and availability of participants. The data collected from the interviews therefore is only representative of the views of an incredibly small sample of those working within the library and information sector and cannot be taken to be representative of the majority of the sector, which does impact on the validity of conclusions drawn from the research.

**Practicalities**

**Focus groups**

The researcher had to split her time across two locations due to personal circumstances and this proved problematic for hosting focus groups. Limited time in the location for the first planned focus group meant that whilst a venue and recording equipment could be secured, potential participants were sought at too late a date to be able to take part and the session had to be cancelled. The second session suffered from the opposite problem - several participants had been secured but the venue cancelled at the last minute and alternative arrangements could not be made.

**Interviews**

Time constraints for completing the research project meant that the interviews conducted had to be very short to allow enough time for accurate transcription and in depth analysis of the data collected.
Findings and discussion: CILIP’s workforce mapping survey

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the key findings from the workforce mapping survey, offering a more in depth analysis of the diversity figures than was presented in the initial workforce mapping survey executive summary. This has been done in order to fully elucidate the context in which the qualitative data collection for this project was carried out.

Workforce mapping diversity findings

Ethnicity of the workforce

Responses were grouped according to whether people identified as White, Black, Asian, Mixed or belonging to an ‘Other’ ethnic group in the original survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withheld</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8324</td>
<td>94.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

233
respondents chose not to provide this information and were labelled as ‘withheld’.
Unfortunately, this means that the percentages for ethnic categories are not an entirely
accurate representation of the entire group who participated in the survey. However, it
is a small enough percentage that we can feel confident that the data we do have is
representative of the wider workforce. The picture is stark: there is an incredibly high
white majority in the workforce, higher than the wider UK population which is estimated
at being 86% white. These findings mirror what prior scholarship on ethnicity in
librarianship has said - that librarianship is ‘paralysed by whiteness’, (Galvan, 2015).
IFLA guidelines specifically state that library staff ought to ‘reflect the cultural and
linguistic characteristic of the community to ensure cultural awareness [and] reflect the
community the library serves’ (2015), which it is clear we are not doing fully as a
profession.

Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6768</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withheld</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CILIP chose to release data on gender in a way which reinforces a binary view of
gender, rounding their statistics to reflect only the figures for those who identify as male and female despite having given an option to select ‘other’ on the original survey. This resulted in a slightly skewed perception both the genders in the workforce and of how they chose to collect data which will be discussed further in the next chapter as many participants in this project noted this in their responses to the executive summary. The majority of the workforce identify as female. A very small proportion of the workforce have a gender identification which fits into an ‘other’ category. It is fair to argue, however, that the missing data, represented by the 1.12% who chose to withhold their gender identification could well include individuals who do not feel comfortable disclosing an ‘other’ category of gender identification. Data available on the wider UK population has only gathered data on binary categories of gender, therefore it is difficult to make a comparison between the UK information workforce and the wider UK population. In future surveys, it would be more inclusive (and likely yield better data) if further gender options are offered, rather than ‘othering’ all those who do not conform to a binary understanding of gender. Options, for example for categories such as genderfluid, transgender or agender may have made individuals working in the sector who identify as so feel more comfortable disclosing that information than being reduced to the ‘other’ option, as the implied heteronormativity of doing so can contribute toward feelings of marginalisation, (Carotte, et al, 2016). It is also important not to conflate gender with biological sex assigned at birth as these can differ greatly in people, (Carotte, et al, 2016).
The workforce primarily identifies as heterosexual. Quite a significant 10.42% chose not to divulge information on their sexuality which clearly will impact how precise the rest of the figures are in terms of representing the sexual preferences of the workforce. However, the figures here are more or less representative of the UK population: according to a YouGov survey (2015) 89% of the UK population identify as heterosexual, 6% as homosexual, 2% as bisexual, 1% as other with only 3% withholding their sexual preference. This was omitted from the executive summary of findings published in November 2015 and as such created the perception from the workforce that the data simply had not been collected. It is arguable CILIP did themselves a disservice by omitting this as it paints a positive picture of LGBT* inclusivity in the profession, which certainly helps to ameliorate the rather bleak picture painted by the rest of the statistics. This inclusivity is generally corroborated by scholarship on the matter, especially that which works toward ‘queering the catalogue’
to ensure that LGBT* individuals are fairly represented in knowledge organisation, (Drabinski, 2013).

**Ability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able bodied</td>
<td>1327</td>
<td>15.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health condition</td>
<td>7007</td>
<td>79.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withheld</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the workforce identifies as being able bodied. The data collected did not give opportunity to differentiate between long term physical health issues or mental health issues, as such it seems that the 15.05 percent who do not report back as being able bodied is a conflation of those who suffer from physical conditions and mental health conditions. As with gender, it would be worthwhile to allow for more options to express ability issues in order to get a fuller picture of disability and illness in the profession. Although we are able to determine that the workforce is for the most part, able-bodied, there is no information available about the types of differently-abled individuals working in the profession. This again was picked up on by participants in this project and will be discussed further in the following chapter.
Conclusion

These findings demonstrate that there is a significant level of cultural homogeneity in the workforce which is considerably higher in most areas than the general UK population. The only area where the profession seems to mirror the population in terms of representation is in matters of sexuality. In all other areas, the statistics do not match up with those which can be found about the wider UK population. This is concerning as it raises questions about whether library services, especially public library services, can meet the needs of users adequately if they are not representative of the communities they serve. Qualitative data about librarians’ perceptions of these statistics was collected and will be presented in the next chapter to attempt to gain insight into why the figures have shown such a lack of diversity in the profession, and discuss the wider implications that the survey results has for the profession.
Findings and discussion: Librarians responses to the workforce mapping survey results

Introduction

This chapter will present the key findings from the dissertation project and discuss their implications. The data will be organised and presented thematically.

Library and information workers’ responses to the workforce mapping survey

Themes emerging

Diversity and representation

Many responses emphasised the importance of diversity for providing the best quality of service. Respondent 7 stated that ‘the profession would be doing a much better job if it was more diverse….’ and Respondent 12 echoed this, explaining that ‘a non-diverse workforce cannot serve diverse communities, it is imperative that we are representative’.

Respondent 6 highlights the intersectional nature of diversity, explaining ‘diversity is very important. And is far deeper than only gender (which is not binary!) and race (e.g. also sexuality, neurodiversity, class).’ It is vital that this is understood in the context of workplaces because ‘discrimination, disadvantage and oppression do not take place in discrete categories’ (Holgate et al, 2012). Respondent 6 highlights a flaw in how CILIP chose to release diversity data in the workforce - particularly as data on, for example, sexuality and disability were collected alongside data on gender and ethnicity but not referred to in the executive summary, which was used to gather the responses of library
and information workers for this project. Furthermore, the respondent highlighting how CILIP only released data on gender which reflected a binary understanding of it adds weight to the previous suggestion that CILIP ought to broaden their gender options in future surveys. This particular respondent was not the only person to feel that this was an error, with Respondent 9 declaring it a ‘huge omission’.

**Race and ethnicity**

Like previous studies into diversity, ethnic diversity was a major point for discussion. People’s responses leant toward being either upset by the figures or completely unsurprised by them. Two of the strongest reactions of those surprised by the figures were as follows:

‘The lack of ethnic diversity is scandalous. I'm shocked that the level is so high.’ (Respondent 24)

‘I was surprised at the lack of ethnic diversity in the profession and think that was one particularly notable aspect. This is something which I think hinders the profession in terms of creativity.' (Respondent 1)

The latter of these two responses makes a good point stating that the lack of diversity is a hindrance to the profession, from which we can deduce that respondents generally feel that workforce diversity is a positive thing.

Of those responses which were unsurprised, the following were of note:
‘Low ethnic diversity is an issue that has been apparent for some time and is of concern’ (Respondent 12)

‘Much more needs to be done to promote the profession(s) to minority ethnic potential members - I was looking recently for material to promote LIS careers and found little and nothing that included images of non-white professionals’ (Respondent 13)

‘working in HE I’m acutely aware of the attainment gap for BAME students and that one of the issues is still visibility of staff in the institution that look like them’ (Respondent 13)

The comment from Respondent 12 reinforces that there has been very little advancements or improvements in terms of workforce diversity in recent years. The comments from Respondent 13 remind of the importance of representation for black and minority ethnic individuals (and indeed all individuals belonging to marginalised groups). It is recognised that for marginalised groups, actually seeing themselves represented visually is important (Wilson and Birdi, 2008). Representation of more diverse groups in professional media and publications is something that would be incredibly simple to alter and could be a change that would increase and improve the visibility of the profession to all people in a very simple way.

**Gender**

The findings of the survey showed that results pertaining to gender had a big impact on respondents. Respondent 18 feels that ‘the statistics regarding the gender pay gap, despite it being a female dominated profession are particularly worrying’ and Respondent 27 notes ‘it seems the national problem of underrepresentation of women in top jobs is alive and well in our sector.’ It is not surprising to see participants
responding negatively to these statistics, as to read that in a profession where women make up the majority of the workforce yet are still worse off in terms of opportunities to progress and wages is at best disconcerting but for the most part infuriating.

Respondent 4 referenced wider social issues that make the sector less accessible for women, explaining that ‘this is a highly competitive sector which expects you to do All The Things [sic] outside your working hours, and you cannot do that if you have young children for whom you are the expected principal carer...which in the patriarchy we live is women.’ This response alludes to the high expectation that members of the profession will commit to significant amounts of CPD in order to progress, suggesting it is a reason women are disadvantaged in the profession. Respondent 4 suggests that there is not enough flexibility in the profession to allow women with caring responsibilities to progress. It also raises questions regarding whether the profession offers men the opportunity to take parental leave beyond the statutory two weeks, which could help alleviate the pressures on women (UK Government, 2016); a brief search on the CILIP website provides little to no advice in this matter (CILIP, 2016). Of course, this issue is not unique to the library and information sector, with many professional women struggling to balance their responsibilities at home and at work in a society hostile toward flexible working (Nowak, Naude and Thomas, 2013; Page, 2013), however this respondents disdain is completely reasonable to expect where a profession dominated by women is failing to adequately address the needs of the women in its workforce.

**Socioeconomic issues**

Respondent 15 drew a link between the qualification and socioeconomic status, suggesting it to be a barrier to accessing the profession because the ‘prohibitive cost of higher education in a profession where a large proportion of the workforce is educated
to postgraduate level’ is an issue. Those who come from the least socioeconomically privileged groups are more likely to possess one or more ‘protected characteristic’ as outlined by the Equality Act (EHRC, 2016) and may find it harder to access the postgraduate education this profession requires to succeed. This is precisely the point Hathcock (2015) makes when critiquing the ‘financial privilege’ that hinders access to the profession; the qualification offers those who can afford it quicker progression in the profession.

**Criticism of CILIP**

Many respondents were quick to criticise CILIP in light of the survey results. Linking back to their previous discussion of childcare responsibilities, Respondent 4 also explained ‘[they] have NEVER seen a conference with a crèche and [they] have NEVER seen that acknowledged as a failing by CILIP.’ Indeed, in a profession which values continuing professional development through such initiatives as certification and chartership (CILIP, 2016) a key part of which is attending conferences and other professional events, it does seem that a lack of help with organising childcare is a failure to act in the best interests of their members or potential members. The onus for arranging childcare usually falls with mothers - which relates back to the previous response about gender in the profession which suggests that women are held back by the lack of support with caring responsibility.

Some criticism of CILIP was constructive, outlining how people felt CILIP ought to act. When asked what they wanted to see CILIP doing with the survey findings, respondents came back with such statements as:
‘I’d like to see CILIP using the findings for this survey to start asking questions about why the workforce is unrepresentative of society as a whole, why such inequalities exist in our workforce, and how CILIP can work to address this’ (Respondent 14)

‘I feel strongly that more could be done by CILIP to promote alternative pathways into the profession that do not require a prohibitively expensive professional qualification, or to increase funding opportunities for such qualifications.’ (Respondent 25)

One to one interviews

As mentioned previously, the initial data collection revealed a large gap in the data which needed to be addressed. In order to get closer to a more precise understanding of why there is a diversity issue in the UK information workforce, secondary data collection was required. The initial participants in the research project were invited back to take part in short one to one interviews which would directly ask participants why they felt there was a problem. Of the initial 26 people surveyed, four participants were available for brief interviews, the findings from which are again arranged thematically.

Themes emerging

Visibility in terms of the profession itself

Some of the respondents discussed what they felt was a visibility issue when it comes to librarianship. Recalling starting out in the career, Interviewee 1 explained that ‘I guess at least from my experience there wasn’t a whole lot of awareness I guess around exactly how you… become a librarian’, explaining that ‘now with technology and everything a lot of people kind of maybe do see it as old fashioned and maybe don’t see it anymore as a viable profession’. This viewpoint is interesting, and has been anecdotally discussed on library and information sector focused blogs, with some
people feeling that careers advisory services completely fail to give library and information work adequate exposure (Murphy, 2016).

**Visibility in terms of representation**

Interviewees also suggested that the underrepresentation of marginalised groups in the profession may be off-putting for those candidates from more diverse backgrounds. Interviewee 2 bluntly stated that ‘there is a certain ‘whiteness’ to the library profession, but I don’t know why that is, if I think about places I’ve worked in the past…there’s always one or two ethnic minorities but it’s always one or two’. In the interviewees anecdotal experience, those who are more diverse are rarely seen in senior management positions, and, essentially rarely seen full stop. It could be that the lack of role models for those who do not belong to the culturally homogenous white middle class puts people off entering the profession. This notion was reinforced by Interviewee 1 who explained that ‘the stereotype of what a librarian is…an old white lady telling everyone to ‘shh”, which is perhaps a reason that people do not consider librarianship. Interviewee 1 concludes that ‘it’s kind of it’s even maybe like an overlooked profession’.

As previously discussed, people respond best to seeing people like themselves represented, (Wilson and Birdi, 2008). The recurrence of this theme suggests that the lack of diversity represented by the profession contributes to the continuing lack of diversity.

**Formative experiences of libraries**

Interviewee 1 felt that people’s understanding of libraries is influenced by their experiences of using libraries as a child, stating that ‘maybe growing up...more involved in libraries and [taking] part in events or activities that libraries [host] and have…a good local library so they’re aware of what services it can provide’ could affect how likely you are to consider librarianship as a profession. Relating this to the issue with diversity,
Interviewee 1 explained that ‘really good libraries are in... better neighbourhoods and those neighbourhoods also do tend to not be as diverse...’ As a result, they concluded that ‘...also equals kind of lacking an awareness [of librarianship as a career option] within diverse groups....’

Interviewee 4 brought up a broadly similar point, explaining that ‘if you’re from a culturally and economically disadvantaged background your exposure to libraries might be less in general and if there isn’t one in your school then it’s going to be even more less [sic]’ which again suggests that one reason why there could be a diversity issue in librarianship is related to your socioeconomic position (which affects your exposure to libraries) and how libraries and librarians are represented in our culture (which affects how you perceive libraries as institutions).

**Recruitment**

Interviewee 3 believes recruitment processes in librarianship are a contributing factor toward the lack of diversity in the profession. They explained that they felt ‘maybe it would be good if recruitment was sort of standardised...not obviously in every single position but more standardised... it wasn’t just tick boxy it allowed for creativity and diversity in that sense’. Precisely what the respondent means is unclear, although it would suggest that they feel that recruitment processes are too focused on meeting certain requirements, with excessively restrictive job descriptions and selection criteria causing a level of bias within those on the recruitment panel which candidates who may have taken a less traditional route into a profession are at a disadvantage. This is a form of discrimination known as unconscious bias (ECU, 2016), and can occur in workplaces where recruitment panels select candidates who are most like them, continuously reproducing the same organisational culture. The interviewee may be
inferring that this is an issue within librarianship, although the researcher can only speculate that this was the intended meaning behind the comments made regarding recruitment.

**Socioeconomic issues**

Interviewees highlighted two main socioeconomic factors which impact on the diversity of the profession - the qualification, and decreasing employment opportunities within the public libraries sector.

When discussing the library and information qualification, which is regarded as necessary to advance in the profession, Interviewee 3 stated that the ‘qualification is again another reason why it’s not as diverse because you know some people can’t afford to do it who might be proper capable of doing it so it excludes people in that sense’. This is a vital point - not everybody has the financial means to undertake the qualification, and financial assistance to undertake it is now next to non-existent. The Arts and Humanities Research Council stopped their Block Grant Partnership funding in 2013 (AHRC, 2015) and the majority of scholarships available to those wishing to undertake postgraduate study within library and information science are only very partial or specific to particular institutions for example those awarded by the Stationers’ Foundation (2016) which are only eligible to students undertaking the UCL MA in Library and Information Studies course. The main means of funding such study lately is to either self-fund or take out a loan, neither of which are especially viable options for those in disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, therefore requiring entrants to the profession to take such a course prices the less privileged out of the profession.
Furthermore, a second socioeconomic issue picked out by respondents is that of employment opportunities within public libraries, with Interviewee 4 stating that ‘there’s less jobs [due to] public libraries closing…with public libraries declining in numbers and in professionalism there will be less opportunities’. This particular response makes the point that public libraries are closer to communities than libraries in other sectors, and relates back to the issue of representation and formative experiences of libraries. As long as our public library service continues to experience de-professionalisation and declines in funding, people’s experiences, perceptions and understanding of library services will continue to do a disservice to the profession by reinforcing the assumption that librarians are predominantly middle class, white and able-bodied. This in turn creates a cycle whereby more diverse individuals are deterred from considering librarianship as a career, which in turn leads us to a workforce which is lacking in diversity as proven by the results of the workforce mapping survey.

CILIP

In this secondary set of data collected, CILIP were also criticised as not doing enough to address the issues with diversity, even being considered part of the problem to some extent. Interviewee 3 named CILIP directly, explaining that they ‘think CILIP especially without them offering any bursaries or anything to do the qualification… they’re cutting out people who would be truly capable…but just don’t have the means to do it’. This relates back to the socioeconomic barriers to entering the profession, however it also makes the excellent point that CILIP do not do enough to support us at arguably the most difficult stage in our career. If CILIP actively support the need for such a prohibitively expensive qualification through the accreditation of such courses, they ought to offer greater support to make such courses accessible to everyone wishing to undertake them. This was also referred to in the survey of librarians’ responses to the
workforce mapping results, with one respondent there strongly stating their feelings that 
that CILIP ought to have ‘a fucking brilliant sponsorship programme’ should they 
continue to insist upon the necessity of the qualification at all.

**Professional culture**

Some responses to interviews discussed the professional culture of librarianship and 
how this may cause issues with diversity in the sector. Interviewee 2, when asked why 
they felt the sector lacked diversity, mused the following: ‘I wonder whether it's got 
something to do with the fact it's perceived as a middle class profession’. This and 
many other responses suggest a huge barrier to improving diversity is the perception 
that people who do not belong to the specific culturally homogenous group that the 
workforce mapping survey suggests dominates the profession do not belong in the 
sector.

Furthermore, the idea that the professional culture is so ingrained toward this cultural 
homogeneity came up in the interview responses, with Interviewee 2 explaining that the 
lack of diversity in the profession ‘might have something to do with it's just how it always 
is - that happens in professions...changes are never consciously made so it just kind of 
continues.’ From this we can infer that because very little information on workforce 
diversity has been collected in the past and very little work about the cultural 
homogeneity of the profession has been produced that either people are not wholly 
aware of the problem with diversity (although the responses to the workforce mapping 
survey collected for this project suggest otherwise) or that people are unsure of how to 
change things. The well-intentioned but ultimately unsuccessful Encompass sc 
points toward the latter, with Remy (2011) noting that such schemes succeed at 
accelerating the career development of individual benefactors, but fail to make
workforces more representative as a whole. However, one thing that is clear from the interview responses is that the professional culture of librarianship is part of the issue when it comes to promoting diversity in the workforce.

Furthermore, Interviewee 3 discussed their view on the professional culture of librarianship, describing it as ‘everything is so corporate and because everything is so corporate it can’t really be as diverse as it should be because they’re all set on meeting targets and goals and stuff…so they think that the best way to do that is by hiring people who are qualified’. This again points to issues with recruitment and the qualification as being a key cause of keeping the workforce culturally homogenous. This particular respondent feels that what they view as the ‘corporate’ culture within librarianship hinders diversity. Their response suggests that they believe that rather than value varied skills and areas of expertise, those who are influential in the profession in terms of their ability to hire new recruits tend to pick safe candidates - for example those who have been privileged enough to undertake the qualification - rather than truly basing hiring decisions on merit alone. Interviewee 3 suggests that the profession is not a true meritocracy, and is less diverse for it.

Discussion

Responses showed that participants were overwhelmingly unsurprised at the diversity statistics which came to light from the survey results - more than half of respondents stated this explicitly. This mirrors much of what has been concluded in previous literature that librarianship has a diversity problem, (Honma, 2006; Galvan, 2015; Hathcock, 2015).
Analysing the responses and perceptions, three key stages of choosing and developing a career can be identified. In librarianship, barriers to diversifying the profession have been identified at all three of these stages, which explain the culture of exclusivity that can be incredibly difficult to break in this particular profession. The first of these shall be referred to as the formative stage - this referring to how a person's perceptions of something, in this case libraries and librarians, shapes their view of the career as an option for them. A great deal of data emerged on this theme. The second of these is what shall be referred to as the entry stage - trying to actually forge a career in a chosen field, here this is librarianship. Several barriers to entry were identified by participants in this project. The third and final stage shall be referred to as the latter stage and refers to how these issues are perpetuated by those already comfortably working within a sector.

**The formative stage**

Many of the responses point toward participants perceiving that the problem is caused quite extensively by wider perceptions of libraries and librarians in society. Some very interesting comparisons can be drawn from these findings with the 2005 report by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (henceforth referred to as the MLAC) into young people's perceptions of librarianship and related work. Interviewees for this dissertation project touched upon what they view as a relationship between socioeconomic status of individuals and how this may impact upon their formative experiences of libraries, which mirrors the findings from the 2005 MLAC report. Interview respondents in this project generally believed that those from more affluent backgrounds were likely to have a more positive perception of libraries and thus more likely to consider librarianship as a profession (or at least be aware of it) later in life. Similarly, participants in the MLAC (2005) project associated working in libraries or
similar sectors with higher socioeconomic status, believing that type of work is for ‘upper class, posh and rich’ people. Both projects reflect a broadly similar perception of librarians as being older, middle class, white women. Interviewees for this dissertation pinpointed this as a factor affecting the recruitment of diverse candidates, as perceptions of the sector held in society alienate individuals from more diverse backgrounds - one participant in the MLAC research even stated that work in the sector is ‘not an Asian thing’ (MLAC, 2005). The MLAC report eventually concluded that young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds found other careers more ‘visible’ than librarianship. One survey respondent had also concluded this, discussing how professional literature lacks images of non-white professionals, which also serves to decrease the visibility of the profession. This is something which points toward diversity problems being ingrained from before the point of entry into the career, a point previously argued by both Hathcock and Honma, (2015; 2006). Unless more can be done to alter people’s perceptions of libraries, this issue will perpetuate as minorities will continue to believe the career just is not for them.

The entry stage

Further to this, the professional qualification and recruitment process were both mentioned as being factors in affecting how the homogeneity of the library and information workforce is perpetuated. Some participants believe that as long as the qualification remains a necessity without adequate funding assistance for less privileged candidates, then there will be little change to the profession in terms of diversity, as those who are not in a privileged enough position to undertake the qualification will either be deterred from pursuing the career or remain static in paraprofessional posts. This was also where CILIP came under fire, as many respondents feel CILIP are not doing enough to support those at the earliest stages of
the career. Furthermore, respondents who discussed recruitment issues also touched upon the recruitment process itself as being problematic, with what they view as restrictive selection criteria disadvantaging capable candidates from more diverse backgrounds in favour of those who have taken a more traditional route into librarianship.

Further to this, the many different routes into the profession help to forge barriers at the entry stage by creating a hierarchy of ideal routes into library and information work. Traditionally, graduate traineeships have offered individuals a fast-track into librarianship, and are perceived by many as the ideal way to start a librarianship career, therefore sitting at the top of this hierarchy. UCL even state that to attain a place on their postgraduate course ‘a graduate traineeship is best’ (UCL, 2016) whereas most other institutions ask for only 6 to 12 months of relevant work experience, but these posts are becoming fewer and far between and often are awarded to individuals who already have library experience despite being advertised as entry-level positions. Survey Respondent 4 suggested that the sector would benefit from getting ‘rid of graduate traineeships and [having] all career progression based on merit alone.’ Other routes include apprenticeships in libraries, designed for those who do not have a bachelors’ degree (UK Government, 2016) but these often mean doing the equivalent work of a regular library assistant for a fraction of the pay, or working in a paraprofessional role for a longer period until the opportunity for progression presents itself, and do not necessarily equip you with the experience required for a postgraduate course. There are no easy answers to this issue, but participants did touch upon the fact that entering the career is incredibly difficult - and complicated further by this hierarchy of routes into the profession. This corroborates Interviewee 3’s suggestion that librarianship is not meritocratic.
The latter stage

This stage refers to how barriers to entering the profession are reinforced by those who have been working in the sector for a long time. Indeed, several issues beyond the early stages of the career were discussed by participants in this project. The professional culture of librarianship was particularly critiqued as contributing toward the lack of diversity. There was a view amongst some participants that those who have worked within the sector for a long time or who have managed to climb particularly high in the sector are responsible for reproducing the cultural homogeneity of the profession through unconscious bias when it comes to recruiting new staff and simply through being apathetic toward change. This stage points toward a relationship between visibility of the career, representation, recruitment and professional culture. Various participants noted that they were aware that their own workplaces were not hugely representative of wider society when it came to the makeup of their workforces but that there did not seem to be any willingness to change things; the attitude that’s ‘it’s just how it always is’ (Interviewee 2).

In the latter stage, we are complicit in perpetuating the lack of diversity as long as we are not actively challenging it, which not a single respondent claimed to be doing. Althusser’s theories of state apparatuses (1970) explain how society is constructed through the gaze of the dominant culture - in the western world the dominant culture being affluent, white, able-bodied middle classes. These state apparatuses define what is normal for a society based on what is normal for the dominant culture. Therefore, if you belong to this culture you are the norm. As such, it is easy to overlook a lack of representation unless it is yourself you do not see represented. Therefore, one can see why in a profession dominated by a culturally homogenous group, we would overlook the importance of representing more diverse groups as being unrepresented is
something we have simply never had to encounter, just as many of us have and will never have to encounter racism, ableism, sexism or classism. However, having the problem presented in such clarity as the workforce mapping survey has offered means that ignorance is no longer an option and, as the participants in this project stated almost unanimously, more must be done to address the issue.

**Conclusion**

The findings show that there are myriad reasons and barriers at all stages of the profession which work in tandem to create a professional culture, which can be difficult to integrate into if you come from traditionally marginalised communities. There are no easy explanations or solutions to these issues as many are connected to significantly larger systems of oppression ingrained within society. However, the UK information workforce appears to be critical of itself and keen to work towards change. The next chapter shall draw all these results together in order to draw some conclusions and make recommendations both for further study and to CILIP regarding how they can use the data collected for the workforce mapping survey to create positive change moving forward.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Summary of findings

Workforce mapping

The key findings show the profession is generally made up of a culturally homogenous group of white, able bodied and middle class individuals. The profession is more homogenous than the general UK population and is significantly lacking in diversity across all areas.

Survey

The main finding from the initial survey, which gathered library and information workers' reactions and responses to the workforce mapping survey’s executive summary, is that current members of the UK information workforce feel that there is a significant issue with diversity in the library and information field. It was generally agreed that this is very problematic, as despite our professional values and ethics being so strongly rooted in a commitment to equality and diversity, the cultural homogeneity of the workforce does not suggest we are practicing these values fully. There is also a concern we are not effectively representing the communities we serve by remaining so homogenous as a workforce. The findings suggest the workforce is keen for this to change, but is not totally sure of what can be done. That being said, they feel strongly that CILIP cannot ignore the findings of this survey and are glad the survey has been carried out. The workforce surveyed generally believe it is positive that this survey has been done and hope that the results will be widely disseminated to library and information professionals. Furthermore, there was a general consensus that the workforce surveyed hope CILIP will use these results as a springboard to advocate for change.
and better access to the profession for more diverse candidates at all levels.
Addressing specific matters arising from the workforce mapping survey, respondents here felt particularly strongly that more needs to be done to support women in the profession - be this through more flexible working opportunities in senior roles, better childcare arrangements or investigation into why the wage gap is so prevalent in a sector dominated by women. Furthermore, people felt strongly that more needs to be done to address the low ethnic diversity of the profession in order to ensure the profession is more representative of the communities it serves. Lastly, many of the respondents were key to note that diversity is about more than just gender and ethnicity and are keen to see greater advocacy and representation for LGBT*, non-binary, neurodivergent and working class professionals in future data collection initiatives.

**Interviews**

The findings from interviews showed that respondents are not wholly sure why there is a lack of diversity in the library and information sector but do point to a number of issues which could contribute to the problem. Some respondents pointed to the visibility and perceptions of libraries and librarianship as being a factor. On this theme, one respondent suggested that people feel like the profession has always been a certain way therefore people are apathetic toward changing it. Another suggested that there is not a great deal of general awareness of how people get into library work, and it is usually only within the higher education environment people become aware of librarianship as a career option - this in itself is a privileged environment and as such means a less diverse pool of people are exposed to the idea of library work as a potential career. Similarly, respondents suggested that exposure to libraries during childhood may impact upon your perception of libraries and therefore how likely you are to consider librarianship as a career, and that perhaps those who are from a less
privileged background may not have had access to libraries the same way that more privileged people do, for example through experiences of school libraries which are better resourced in more advantaged schools. Interviewees also pointed to the professional culture of librarianship being an issue, with one respondent saying people are apathetic toward change and another claiming things are too ‘corporate’ and explaining that they felt the issue was part of a larger societal issue created by capitalism. Some respondents pointed to socioeconomic position as a factor, feeling that those who are most marginalised by society often also have low socioeconomic means and as such are priced out of the profession by the need for the postgraduate qualification. Most respondents ventured an answer but concluded that they were not sure precisely why there is a problem.

**Aims and Objectives**

**Aim**

The overall aim of this dissertation is stated as being ‘to examine diversity and librarians’ perceptions of diversity in the UK library and information workforce in light of the CILIP workforce mapping survey results’. The project has achieved this through offering a brief analysis of the qualitative workforce mapping data. Furthermore, this aim has been achieved through two means of qualitative data collection - a survey collecting library and information workers’ responses to the executive summary of workforce mapping results and interviews gathering librarians’ perceptions of why there may be issues with diversity in the sector. These two sets of data were then analysed thematically to fully establish how library and information workers perceive diversity in the sector, thus meeting the overall aim of the project.
Objectives

To investigate the findings of the CILIP workforce mapping survey in relation to diversity within the LIS field.

This objective has been met in full - the research design as outlined in the methodology chapter of this dissertation was purposely designed in order to frame looking at the workforce mapping survey results within the context of the diversity of the profession.

To investigate responses from information professionals to the mapping the workforce survey

This objective was met in full - the primary means of collecting data for this project was to survey librarians. They were asked to look at the executive summary of results from the workforce mapping survey, then record their personal responses to the data in a survey.

To investigate and consider LIS workers' perceptions of diversity in the sector

This objective was partially met by the survey responses; however secondary data collection was required to meet this objective. Therefore, this objective was met to some extent but fuller data could have been gathered. Librarians who participated in the initial survey were invited back to participate in short interviews which collected more detailed information on how current UK library and information workers perceive diversity in the sector.

To identify factors affecting the recruitment of diverse candidates in the profession

This object was met in the sense that the project was able to determine what some members of the profession view as potentially being reasons why the profession may not have a very diverse breadth of people working within it. Within the context of the theoretical framework underpinning the dissertation therefore, which recognises the
subjective nature of reality and people’s experiences, the objective has been met. Arguably, however, more could be done toward meeting this objective fully as only anecdotal evidence of factors is present. In order for this objective to be met more fully, further research would be required which aims to gather more empirical evidence to support the conclusions drawn in this project about why diverse candidates are not being recruited into the profession.

To make recommendations to CILIP about how they may address diversity issues drawing upon how current LIS workers perceive diversity in the profession This objective will be met fully later in this chapter.

Conclusion

The initial survey carried out by CILIP has provided us with concrete evidence that the sector has a serious diversity problem that we simply cannot remain ignorant of. Moreover, investigating librarians’ responses to the results of the survey has shown that members of the profession do not want to remain ignorant of this and are keen to see change happen. Their responses and contributions have been invaluable for understanding better why the sector faces a crisis of diversity and what we can realistically do to improve opportunities for all to succeed within the sector. Below will follow a number of recommendations which have been informed and inspired by much of comments given by participants in the project.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further study

This study was limited by the size of its sample and the fact that its primary data collection method - focus groups - fell through and needed to be altered mid-project. Replicating this study with a larger group of library and information professionals and
successful focus groups may help produce a greater yield of findings, more reliable results and potentially data which could be used to draw some more concrete conclusions as to why there is a such a large issue with diversity in the sector.

This project aimed to look at diversity in a holistic sense, but it would be worth addressing specific areas individually. Many participants in this research seemed drawn to gender issues, with people reacting particularly strongly to the fact that women in the profession earn significantly less than men despite there being considerably more women working in the sector. It would be interesting to address the glass ceiling in librarianship to offer more concrete recommendations on how to improve working conditions for women in the sector. Similarly, it would be interesting to look in more detail at the role of positive action in the sector, perhaps investigating why the Encompass scheme was unsuccessful and investigating ways the sector can be made more accessible to black and ethnic minority individuals.

**Recommendations for CILIP**

First and foremost, it is important that CILIP realise the gravity of the workforce mapping survey results as the picture painted of the sector is shocking and the findings of this project demonstrate that the library and information workforce agree that this is the case and are keen for change to happen.

It is recommended that CILIP undertake their own investigation into the causes of diversity issues in the profession, in order to best establish how they can address the issue in future to truly meet the aims outlined in their Equal Opportunities and Diversity Statement (2015), as well as the aims behind the workforce mapping project itself which
were to use the results to develop ‘relevant and robust policies’ and to advocate for members of the profession, (CILIP, 2015).

It is recommended that CILIP prioritise advocating for the women who make up the majority of the profession as this issue was the one which struck a chord most with participants in this research project. CILIP could, for example, help sponsor childcare costs or conference places for women with caring responsibilities so that they are not excluded from accessing CPD if they want to.

It is recommended that CILIP review their position on the need for a professional qualification and professional registration as long as the costs of these remain a barrier to accessing the profession. It is recommended that either they encourage employers to stop emphasising the necessity of such prohibitively expensive qualifications or offer means-tested financial assistance so that capable individuals without the financial means to access professional qualifications or registration are able to advance in the career at the same rate of those who are more financially privileged. Alternatively, it is recommended they do more to advocate for alternative routes into the profession to again address the barriers to entry faced by those who do not have the financial privilege to undertake professional qualifications or registration.

**Recommendations for Employers**

More needs to be done to address workplace issues, especially addressing the glass ceiling which limits the women who make up the majority of the workforce. The project raises many questions regarding the way women are treated in the professional workplace. For example, are women in lower paid roles deterred from seeking promotions because of a lack of flexible working opportunities for those with caring
responsibilities? Could there be more job-shares or part time positions at managerial levels? One respondent noted that they have never seen crèches at professional conferences. This too is a barrier to career development - it is recommended therefore that more is done to allow women with caring responsibilities to engage in professional activities, for example childcare provision at professional events or bursaries to help with childcare costs for mothers attending conferences and events.

It is recommended that employers try to remain aware of the possibility of the unconscious bias phenomenon when participating in interview panels in order to ensure that workplaces are not in a state of continuous replication of current and previous members of the workforce and ensure that a diverse and representative workforce can be created.

It is recommended that employers review their position on which roles truly need a professional qualification. It is important to consider the effects of hiring overqualified people for library assistant roles - the effects of this are twofold: qualified professionals suffer from stagnating career development as they become stuck in positions which do not give them experience to match their qualification, and those who would wish to commence a career in librarianship have increasingly fewer entry-level positions available to them which makes the profession less accessible.

**Recommendations for the profession**

It is recommended that members of the profession consider establishing a union specifically for the library and information sector. Many of the issues arising from this project are not entirely the fault of CILIP. It is clear that CILIP could and should do more to advocate for the professionals that it represents, however CILIP themselves are not a
union and it seems that a great deal of the representation and support that the sector feel CILIP are failing to provide would be more traditionally offered by unions in other sectors. Therefore, it would be worth investigating the feasibility of establishing a union for library and information workers in order to truly address the issues that impact the profession and work toward making the profession a more welcome and inclusive environment for minority groups to work and advance within.
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Appendices

List of appendices

1. Executive summary of results from Workforce Mapping survey

2. Interview transcripts

3. Ethics Application

4. Ethics approval letter

5. Access to dissertation form

6. Confirmation of address form

Note – further research data has been omitted from appendices due to the size of the documents containing it. This has been stored on the university research data drive.
A study of the UK information workforce

Mapping the Library, Archives, Records, Information Management and Knowledge Management and related professions

Executive Summary

Introduction:
This report presents the findings of a study to map the Library, Archives, Records, Information Management, and Knowledge Management professions in the UK. It was commissioned in 2014 by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) (ARA) and completed in 2015.

Key findings:
Estimated 86,376 people in the workforce: The survey estimates the size of the workforce at 86,376. Libraries employ the highest proportion of workers (59.4%). The two largest workforce sectors are higher education (21.6%) and public libraries (12.6%).

Significant gender pay gap: Men in the sector earn more than women. Of those working more than 22 hours a week and earning £30,000 or more annually, 47% are men but only 37.3% women.

Women dominate the workforce: The overall gender split of the workforce is 78.1% female, 21.9% male. The gender split of the UK workforce as a whole is 50.1% female, 49.9% male.

Women under-represented in senior management: Male workers more likely to occupy management roles than their female peers. The 10.2% of men in senior management roles is almost double that of female workers (5.9%).

Highly-qualified workforce: The workforce is academically well-qualified: 61.4% have a postgraduate qualification. The highest qualification of most of the UK general population is A-level or equivalent.

High-earners are more likely to hold professional qualifications than low-earners: 64.8% of the workforce earning £40,000 or more hold a professional qualification.

An ageing workforce: The highest proportion of the workforce falls in the 45 to 55 age band. 55.3% are over 45 years of age; the equivalent figure for the UK as a whole is 41.1%.

Low ethnic diversity: 96.7% of the workforce identify as ‘white’ compared to 87.5% identifying as ‘white’ in UK Labour Force Survey statistics.
A significant, perhaps unparalleled, study:

This study is important for a number of reasons. It may be the first national workforce mapping study of the Library, Archives, Records, Information Management, and Knowledge Management domains ever conducted in any country. This is also the first workforce mapping study produced for any of the individual domains since the 2011 closure of Lifelong Learning UK. The last (remotely relevant) research was the 2012 Library, archive, records and information management services workforce survey (produced by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, 2012).

The findings of this report are drawn from a data set of 10,628 survey responses, a statistically significant proportion of the estimated 86,376 workforce and perhaps an unprecedented survey sample. This makes the findings even more robust than those used in the national UK Labour Force Survey and gives CILIP and ARA (and the wider sector) a strong evidence-base for their future advocacy work.

Other notable findings:

Workforce size and distribution across domains and sectors: The mean number of employees in a single organisation is 30 in England, 35 in Scotland, and 50 in both Wales and Northern Ireland.

Workforce diversity: Over two thirds of the workforce are married or cohabit with a partner (71.6%). This is higher than the UK population as a whole (57.5%\(^i\)). Most workers are either Christian (46%) or have no religion (49.6%), similar to the wider UK population (48% and 42% respectively\(^ii\)).

The highest proportion of the workforce with dependent children are in Information Management (23.2%) and Libraries (21.6%). Workers are more likely to combine work with caring than members of the general population: this ranges from 12.2% in the Archives domain to 15.9% in Knowledge Management. The headline UK figure is 11%\(^iv\).

Qualifications and professional memberships: 57.2% of the workforce have professional qualifications. Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (MCLIP) is the most common (26.6%). Most of the workforce hold professional memberships (53.6%), but this is more prevalent amongst older, senior, and more established workers (54.5% of this category are over 45 years of age). The ‘top’ four professional membership bodies are ARA, CILIP, the Gurteen Knowledge Community, and the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS).
Health and well-being: 15.9% of the workforce suffers from long-term health issues (the equivalent figure for the UK population as a whole is 18%*), and over a third say that their illness affects their work. However, the responses suggest that health issues do not seem to affect career progression negatively.

Career status: A large proportion of the workforce holds front-line posts (38.8%). Those working in Information Management and Knowledge Management have greater responsibilities for staff and budgetary management than those in the other three domains.

Pay: The workforce might – in one sense – be regarded as generally well-paid. Over 50% earn more than £25,001 per annum, compared to UK national figures that show average gross pay at £26,500. However, high proportions of workers who are very well-qualified, and/or have long service, are relatively low paid. For example, 23.6% of those who have worked in the Libraries domain for over 20 years, and work more than 22 hours per week, earn less than £20,000 per annum (along with 92.2% of the population at large).

The highest proportion of workers who work 22 hours a week or more, and earn over £30,000 annually, are in Information Management, Knowledge Management, and Records. The lowest proportion of workers who work 22 hours a week or more and earn over £30,000 per annum
are in Libraries and Archives. There is no apparent association between pay and care-giving, nor between pay and long-term health issues. Those in commerce and business, higher education, national libraries and law are amongst the best paid workers.

**Working hours:** Most (84.3%) members of the workforce work more than 22 hours a week, with part-time working more common amongst females. This contrasts with an equivalent figure of 58.4% for the UK working population as a whole. There is an association between working hours and care giving in the workforce. Care giving is more common for those working fewer hours.

**Contracts:** Most members of the workforce (86.9%) hold permanent paid posts, although permanent contracts are less common amongst part-time workers. The equivalent figure for the UK working population as a whole is 93.8%. In general, there is no association between contract type and care giving, nor is there any association between contract type and long-term health issues.

**Regions:** In broad terms, the regional distribution of the workforce reflects that of the UK working population in general, as reported in the Labour Force Survey. For example, most (78.4%) of the workforce is located in England (the figure for the working population as a whole is 84%), and most members of the workforce in England are located in London (22.6%) and the South East (19.4%) (the regions with the highest figures for the population as a whole, at 13.5% in both cases). The distribution of the workforce across the five domains is similar in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. A higher proportion of senior roles are found in England (8%) than in Northern Ireland (3%), Scotland (7.3%) and Wales (7.5%). In London there is a greater spread of the workforce across sectors than elsewhere.

**Conclusions:**
This report establishes a long-needed data baseline. It is our intention to repeat this study on a regular basis so that trends may be identified, and that associated work on similar themes could be carried out by sub-groups within the domains.

ARA and CILIP will now consider how they will address the issues arising from this report, for example through targeted programmes and partnership working. However, if government is serious about the UK becoming a knowledge economy, it should match this effort and pay more attention to the trends, gaps and challenges facing the sector; in effective partnership with the main professional bodies (ARA and CILIP).

**For more information:**
www.archives.org.uk/workforce
www.cilip.org.uk/workforce

References
i 9,103 usable survey returns from a total response rate of 10,628
ii http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_356002.pdf
iii http://www.natcen.ac.uk/media/893167/religious-affiliation-british-social-attitudes.pdf
Transcript - Interview 1

Me: Thank you for agreeing to take part in some secondary data collection. So, um, the initial report from CILIP indicated that the profession is culturally homogenous, and the initial data collection carried out which you participated in revealed that the majority of the respondents felt that this was negative, erm that there was a lack of diversity, but it didn’t really give much about why there’s a lack of diversity? Um so I was just wondering if you could maybe give your thoughts on why the profession lacks diversity. Erm you maybe might want to consider whether you feel the profession is particularly like exclusive of marginalised groups or whether you think there are other factors which influence it, yeah i’d just be really interested to hear what you have to say about that.

Interviewee: Um I think, I guess at least from my experience there wasn’t a whole lot of awareness I guess around exactly how you you maybe become like a uh librarian I guess, or the process of doing that like there isn’t - i wasn't - aware when i started that you had to uh have like the um masters and everything um and i feel like also, you know, the stereotype of what a librarian is you know like an old white lady telling everyone to ‘shh’ and so I feel like it’s kind of it's even maybe like an overlooked profession? Especially now where um technology and everything a lot of people kind of maybe do see it as old fashioned and maybe don't see it anymore as a viable profession unless they maybe growing up are more involved in libraries um and take part in events or activities that libraries…um…and have maybe have a good local library so they're aware of um maybe what services it can provide and so i feel like those types of really good libraries are in um maybe better neighbourhoods and stuff and those neighbourhoods also do tend to not be as diverse so um that also equals kind of lacking an awareness within diverse groups….

Me: so are you saying peoples formative experiences of using libraries might influence how they view the profession?

I: yeah

Me: and therefore whether or not they’d be likely to go into it...

I: yeah

Me: that's really interesting. Thank you, no yeah that's great um do you have any other comments you want to add or can we conclude things here?

I: yeah we can conclude things here

Me: Thank you
Transcript - Interview 2

Me: So CILIP’s initial report indicated that the profession is ‘culturally homogenous’ and the initial data collection I carried out for this research project revealed that the majority of respondents felt that this lack of diversity on the whole was negative, but erm, nobody gave much if an explanation as to why there’s a lack of diversity? Er so I was just wondering what are your thoughts on why the profession lacks diversity, erm and, I don't know maybe you want to consider whether the profession is especially exclusive of marginalised groups or whether you think there are other factors that influence it but yeah just you know, go for it let me know what you think

Interviewee: Ok so quite a few things there...

Me: mm

I: Firstly i'll begin by saying I do think that the profession has a certain whiteness, sorry “whiteness”... So yes, there is a certain ‘whiteness’ to the library profession, but I don't know why that is, if I think about places I've worked in the past, erm, the­there's always one or two ethnic minorities but it's always one or two, so I wonder whether it's got something to do with the fact it's perceived as a middle class profession, also you hear things like...quite often you hear things like ‘their parents were also librarians’ so that might be a factor because maybe obviously migrants are less likely to have the librarianship qualification that could be a reason. Also it might have something to do with it's just how it always is - that happens in professions; things don't change, step changes are never erm consciously made so it just kind of continues... erm... this is an aside, when they were interviewing for my old job, they interviewed a black library assistant and she was a great candidate, she was obviously a great candidate, she didn't get the job, I don't know why, I can’t really cast aspersions as to why, but there wasn't that willingness to maybe change erm h-how it usually is

Me: ok

I: is that ok?

Me: yeah so you feel maybe more like maybe just this kind of historic [sic]

I: yeah i think there's a maybe a bit of historic [sic] but i mean that that might not just be libraries that might be across a lot of professions

Me: professional jobs where it's sort of professional in that sense you need...

I: yeah, professional yeah, so erm, yeah anything else

Me: I feel like you’ve focused a lot on ethnic diversity but like with diversity in sort of a general sense is one thing that came out as well as the whiteness it's a very homogenous group in the sense of very middle class and very
I: I hinted on that a little bit

Me: yeah

I: it's definitely, definitely very middle class, i mean there's no doubt its very middle class, erm i dont know, i dont know why that is i mean like obviously working class people read but working class people might not think of it as a career option

Me: yeah so there's a visibility element

I: yeah there is, that's fair the other thing that was in the survey was the men and female divide as a man who is starting out you don't see a lot of men

Me: no

I: really, quite often if you go to a big university library team you just see middle aged women

Me: but what's visible tends to be people lower down in the chain so because the survey reported that men were more kind of

I: managerial

Me: yea so you might not see that you just see [Interviewee: no you don't see that] what's represented on the front-line

I: you don't see that yeah and that might have something to do with it

Me: have you found that off putting? As a man? Or is it not something that bothers you

I: No.

Me: Fair enough well unless you have any further comments we can conclude. Thank you so much for your participation that's been really helpful.
Transcript - Interview 3

Me: So like I said my initial research was really good at actually getting the opinion that people think there is an issue with diversity but not really much about why people think there’s an issue so i’d just love it if you could give me some thoughts on why you think there might be an issue with diversity in the profession

Interviewee: um….oh… [me: take as long as you need it's fine]...why there might be an issue with diversity. I think...oh i;m trying not to sound really skeptical but I think it's because of like really like capitalism [laughs] no like I guess erm people in leadership high up ceos and stuff who like don't understand, who understand that they need to be diverse but don't understand what it looks like or how to achieve diversity I guess. Um...i think it's all mainly from leadership and yeah I don't know…. [me: I quite like capitalism as an answer] well just like I don't know how to enhance that answer but that is what I mean that everything is so corporate and because everything is so corporate it can't really be as diverse as it should be because they're all set on meeting targets and goals and stuff...erm..so they think that the best way to do that is by hiring people who are you know qualified [me: ok] and don't necessarily have other skills and stuff

Me: ok so you think there's not necessarily diversity's not necessarily a priority [I: yeah] when it comes to hiring in the profession [I: yeah] ok that's interesting

I: yeah.....what was the question again why do I think diversity [me: like why is there an issue] ok just let me...

Me: what factors may affect it, like I don't know whether you think like maybe librarians uh as profession whether we're especially exclusive of uh marginalised groups or whether...

I: I think it definitely is exclusive especially like in terms of male and female but then I don't know that's difficult because I don't know if that's just interest... might just be a lot more women interested you know in librarianship but I do think, I wouldn't necessarily I don't know I do think recruitment has got a lot to do with it I think maybe it would be good if recruitment was sort of standardised [me: mhmm] not obviously in every single position but more standardised to allow for you know it wasn't just tick boxy it allowed for [me: yeah] creativity and diversity in that sense [me: yeah cause...] people have got different views

Me: ...with the qualification it's a big tick box isn't it [I: yeah exactly] and if you don't have that that's straight away off putting and yeah...

I: and with the qualification it's that is again another reason why it’s not as diverse because you now some people can’t afford to do it who might be proper capable of doing it um so it excludes people in that sense with that as well offering... I think CILIP especially without them offering any bursaries or anything to do the um qualification so they exclude they umm they’re excluding…they're shooting themselves in their own foot really because they're cutting out people who would be truly capable really but just don't have the means to do it but i think that's an issue with education in general
Me: ok well if you don't have anything else to add then that's great thank you so much
I: no that's everything
Me: brilliant alright thank you very much
Transcript - Interview 4

Me: So basically the um initial data collection I did was about that workforce mapping survey as you remember [Interviewee: yeah...] um and basically a lot of the responses and stuff uh were uh very useful to establish that people working in the library profession think that there is a problem with diversity but um nobody necessarily really got to grips with or like really said why they thought there might be an issue so i was just wondering if you could maybe give me some of your thoughts on why you think there could be a problem

Interviewee: could we start from the premise again

Me: yeah so you now do you remember like the original uh the original thing that you filled in [I: yeah] um and er and it you know you had to look at all those like statistics and stuff...yeah you remember doing that? well basically to be honest just having worked in libraries and being aware of the results of that survey um do you have any thoughts on why there might be problems with diversity in the profession?

I: um i don't ... i don't... ...um i don't have many thoughts on that. What have other people said?

Me: some of the things that came up were kind of socioeconomic issues so like people sort of talked about doing the masters can be quite exclusive because not everybody has the financial means ...

I: I suppose you could say that but then that's the same everywhere, although that doesn't discount it as a factor ... there's that uhh..... Yeah you've got to do the masters, there's less jobs - you can have that - public libraries closing, public libraries are closer to communities than academic libraries, so with public libraries declining in numbers and in professionalism there will be less opportunities - there you go that's a good point - there you go um uhh.....maybe the....uhh...i've got another one.... Also declines in school libraries maybe like

Me: yeah well for state schools it's not statutory for them to have them as far as i'm aware

I: yep so if you come from...if you're from a culturally and economically disadvantaged background your exposure to libraries might be less in general and if there isn't one in your school then it's going to be even more less..i think that's two pretty solid reasons

Me: yeah that's great if you don't have anything to add
Purpose of the research
This research is being carried out in response to the results of the workforce mapping survey carried out by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and will investigate diversity in the library and information profession in order to establish ways that diversity issues in the profession may be tackled in the future.

Who will be participating?
Individuals studying for a Library and Information related qualification, or individuals who work in the sector will be invited to participate.

What will you be asked to do?
The research will be conducted in the form of focus groups. The group should last no longer than 30 minutes to 1 hour. The focus group will involve providing participants with the executive briefing from the survey then using this firstly to gather responses to the survey results and secondly to inform discussion around diversity in librarianship. These focus groups will be recorded.

Participants may be asked to complete a survey in advance of the focus group.

Data collected will be used to inform analysis and recommendations to CILIP regarding how they can address diversity issues in librarianship going forward.

What are the potential risks of participating?
There are very limited risks involved with participating in this research. However, it is worth noting that the executive briefing makes reference to certain protected characteristics, which may be discussed in focus groups. Although every effort will be made to ensure discussions are respectful and pose minimal risk of harm to participants please be aware that the research focuses around diversity issues and as such may lead to discussions which could cause discomfort for potential participants. The research will not require participants to disclose personal information about themselves unless they are entirely comfortable doing so.

What data will we collect?
Recorded responses to the results of the workforce mapping survey. These are required to create a fuller picture of how professionals in the library and information sector view diversity in the profession and how diversity may be addressed in future.

What will we do with the data?
The results will be used to inform the final dissertation submitted on 1st September. Due to the nature of this research, other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research
questions. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that the data collected about you is untraceable back to you before allowing others to use it. Raw data collected will be deleted after the dissertation has been completed.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. All data will be anonymised. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee that other participants at focus groups will not discuss their participation, although we ask that you keep your involvement confidential for the sake of protecting both your own anonymity, and that of the other participants.

**What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results will be used to inform the final dissertation submitted on 1st September, which may be made publicly available.

- I confirm that I have read and understand the description of the research project, and that I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.
- I understand that if I withdraw I can request for the data I have already provided to be deleted, however this might not be possible if the data has already been anonymised or findings published.
- I understand that I may decline to answer any particular question or questions, or to do any of the activities.
- I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, that my name or identity will not be linked to any research materials, and that I will not be identified or identifiable in any report or reports that result from the research, unless I have agreed otherwise.
- I give permission for all the research team members to have access to my responses.
- I give permission for the research team to re-use my data for future research as specified above.
- I agree to take part in the research project as described above.

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Date

**Note:** If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, please contact Dr Jo Bates, Research Ethics Coordinator, Information School, The University of Sheffield ([ischool_ethics@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:ischool_ethics@sheffield.ac.uk)), or the University Registrar and Secretary.
Sarah Arkle  
Registration number: 150112639  
Information School  
Programme: MA Librarianship

Dear Sarah

**PROJECT TITLE:** Investigating responses to CILIPs Workforce Mapping Survey  
**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 008986

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 25/05/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 008986 (dated 24/05/2016).
- Participant information sheet 1018525 version 1 (20/05/2016).
- Participant consent form 1018527 version 2 (24/05/2016).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Matt Jones  
Ethics Administrator  
Information School
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Name: Sarah Arkle
Department: Information School
Signed: S. J. Arkle Date: 30.08.16

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