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# Community Resilience and the Role of the Public Library

DAN GRACE AND BARBARA SEN

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## ABSTRACT

Communities face increasing threats from disasters precipitated by climate change, biodiversity loss, and energy and food insecurity. In the face of such threats, communities must adopt strategies that build resilience. The library has a role to play in such strategies. This study explores how, through an examination of day-to-day working practices, public libraries promote and inhibit community resilience. The methodology used combined autoethnography and situational analysis. A reflective journal was kept documenting experience across a period of four months. Situational analysis was used to elucidate the data content. Several areas of interest emerged: the existence of a split between the social worlds of the library worker and user, the role of technology in this split, the role of professionalism as discourse in rationalizing the use of certain technologies, the role of management in perpetuating this discourse, the place of outreach in bridging the gap between these social worlds, and the environment as an abiding concern. Each of these areas provides a potential site for new policies and practices and for further research regarding the role of the public library in building community resilience.

## INTRODUCTION

This article explores the role of the public library and issues of climate change, energy and food security, and biodiversity loss inspired by Slone's (2008) "After Oil," which examines how the public library will remain, and even increase in importance as society moves toward a post-oil society. One movement currently addressing these issues at a community level is the Transition Movement (Hopkins, 2008). This grassroots movement is engaged in developing "energy descent plans," mapping paths beyond societies' dependence on oil and working in villages, towns, and cities

through projects targeting returns for effort, such as food production and reducing energy requirements of households and businesses (Hopkins, 2008, 2010).

The concept of resilience is central to the Transition Movement in tackling these issues (Hopkins, 2008; Pinkerton & Hopkins, 2009). Norris, Stevens, Pffefferbaum, Wyche, and Pffefferbaum (2008, p. 127) define *resilience* as “a process linking a network of adaptive capacities (resources with dynamic attributes) to adaptation after a disturbance or adversity.” These adaptive capacities provide a strategy for disaster readiness (Norris et al., 2008). Resilience is therefore a strategic concern for any community wishing to meet the challenges posed by climate change, energy and food security, and biodiversity loss and potential related disasters. Examples of such scenarios might be the economic collapse of Greece or social disorder in British cities during 2011. If resilience is a useful concept for communities in these contexts, it is therefore a concern for public libraries, whose role is to serve the community.

This study seeks to understand how public libraries promote and inhibit community resilience through an examination of day-to-day working practices. Data were collected using an autoethnographic method in the form of a detailed reflective diary of experiences in the workplace that were subjected to data analysis using situational analysis. The analytical process identified elements that inhibit community resilience in the context of public libraries. This enabled the identification of factors that facilitate the promotion of community resilience leading to recommendations for action and policy in the workplace and further research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no literature directly concerned with public libraries promoting community resilience. This necessitates a study of broader areas: (1) community resilience and its connection to climate change, biodiversity loss, and energy and food security, and (2) the role of the public library with regard to sustainability, sustainability literacy, and ecoliteracy. Examining these broader areas enables us to explore the link between public libraries and community resilience, contextualizing this study.

The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) identified the need for societal adaptation to the effects of climate change, linking concerns over climate change with biodiversity loss and with energy and food security. Resilience, as a concept, has many definitions, but most “emphasize a capacity for successful adaptation in the face of disturbance, stress, or adversity” (Norris et al., 2008, p. 129). Obrist, Pfeiffer, and Henley (2010, p. 287) discuss “layers of resilience” at different levels across society from individual, through community, to national and supranational. Changes at one level have the potential to affect another, so changes to structures and institutions, such

as libraries, have the potential to change individuals' capacity to adapt.

### *Community Resilience*

The ability of societies to adapt to potentially disruptive change is at the heart of community resilience (Dubbeling, Campbell, Hoekstra & Veenhuizen, 2009; Hopkins, 2010; Innes & Booher, 2010; Maguire & Cartwright, 2008; Newman, Beatley, & Boyer, 2009; Norris et al., 2008; Tidball & Krasny, 2007). Norris et al. (2008, p. 130) delineate four sets of "adaptive capacities": economic development, social capital, information and communication, and community competence. Innes and Booher (2010, p. 206) emphasize the uncertainty in predicting the future and the need to shift "from debate of alternative solutions to working together with our diverse knowledges to craft adaptive strategies that can help us move in a desired direction." This process-orientated view is echoed in Hopkins's (2010) Transition Movement promoting community resilience through adaptive or transformational resilience, arguing that change offers potential to rethink assumptions and build new systems.

### *Adaptive Capacities*

Economic development encompasses fairness of risk, equity of resource distribution, and diversity of resources; the material basis for resilience; and the capacity for equal access for all, factors that "are subject to larger sociological and economic forces" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 136). Harvey (2011, p. 123) outlines these larger forces as "distinctive 'activity spheres' within the evolutionary trajectory of capitalism: technologies and organisational forms; social relations; institutional and administrative arrangements; production and labour processes; relations to nature; the reproduction of daily life and of the species; and 'mental conceptions of the world.'"

These spheres are interdependent, their relationship mediated by the circulation and accumulation of capital, serving to influence the fairness, equity, and diversity of resources at the level of the community. Economic resilience at a community level depends to a large extent "not only on the capacities of individual businesses but on the capacities of all the entities that depend on them and on which they depend" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 136). Ecolocalization, the idea that "economic decisions should focus not on profit maximisation and economic efficiency to the exclusion of all else, but on meeting needs as locally as possible," represents one attempt to address this challenge (North, 2010, p. 587).

The second adaptive capacity, social capital, again has several factors: the need for network structures and linkages, social support and community, bonds, roots, and commitments (Norris et al., 2008). The first factor emphasizes the need for networks over hierarchies as methods of organizing. Social support indicates the perceived or received support through social ties from different sources (Norris et al., 2008). This is the relation-

ship between individuals within a community and their capacity to receive pertinent information. Last, community bonds, roots, and commitments encompass “the relationship between individuals and their larger neighbourhoods and communities” and the degree to which such larger social forms allow meaningful participation and provide spaces for participative action (Norris et al., 2008, p. 139). This fits Bourdieu’s definition of *social capital* as a social relation within a system of exchange, extending to all goods, materials, and symbolic actions (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990).

The third adaptive capacity is information and communication: systems and infrastructure for informing the public, with trust being a key issue and with a preference for localized sources (Norris et al., 2008). The local nature of trusted information sources is key in creating the next element: “communal narratives that give the experience shared meaning and purpose” (Norris et al., 2008, p. 140). The creation of such narratives in the community and of a sense of place is essential in rendering visible human-scale patterns and loss that result from climate change, biodiversity loss, and energy and food insecurity (Adger, Barnett, Chaplin, & Ellemor, 2011).

The final adaptive capacity is community competence, “the networked equivalent of human agency” (Norris et al., 2008, p. 141). The concept is constructed of (1) collective action and decision making, a capacity that is dependent on social capital and communication, specifically problem-solving skills and creativity, and (2) collective efficacy and empowerment, bridging the gap between social capital and community competence (Norris et al., 2008, pp. 141–142). This adaptive capacity emphasizes the linkages between all the capacities.

#### *Adaptive Capacities and Libraries*

Among the large body of work on community librarianship is a lack of literature specifically on community resilience and libraries. There are, however, articles that explore specific adaptive capacities and libraries, most significantly in the area of social capital and public libraries. Bundy (2003, pp. 10–11) emphasizes the role of the public library as a place and identifies as a major challenge for public libraries the task of establishing their work “as contributing to, and leading in, building communities and social capital.” This work is identified by Bourke (2005) as an essential step in increasing serendipitous occurrences and enabling public libraries to be credible members of their communities. Cox’s (2000) report finds that libraries increase equality in the community, which contributes to social capital. It goes on to recommend that libraries advocate and articulate this as their role within the community and that trust-building be seen as a core function of their work. Conversely, Johnson’s (2010, p. 154) survey found that “while it is not possible to show a causal relationship between library use and social capital . . . a relationship exists.” Varheim (2009, p. 377)

is more specific indicating a positive correlation between social capital and public libraries on the macro level but maintains that is hard to say what is actually happening on the ground. A study by the Urban Libraries Council (Manjarrez, Cigna, & Bajaj, 2007) makes the case for the public library in promoting economic development, with four key conclusions:

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

These conclusions seek to build the capacity of the public library in promoting market-based economic development.

#### *Sustainability and Libraries*

In their work on sustainable cities, Newman et al. (2009, p. 7) identify that “in resilience thinking the more sustainable a city the more it will be able to cope with reductions in the resources.” Here, resilience incorporates sustainability. Unlike resilience, *sustainability*, defined as “meeting the needs of the present without diminishing the opportunities of future generations,” has been connected with libraries (Marcum, 2009, p. 9). In her overview of the Green Library Movement, Anotelli (2008) details how libraries are contributing to a more sustainable society. Three main areas of potential action are outlined: buildings, resources, and programs. The first two areas may be regarded as promoting sustainability in a passive way rather than engaging directly through programs that encourage sustainability literacy and ecoliteracy (Tseng, 2008, p. 321; Benfield, 2011; Boyden & Weiner, 2000; Ephraim, 2003). Stibbe and Luna (2009, p. 10) define *sustainability literacy* as “the skills, attitudes, competencies, dispositions and values that are necessary for surviving and thriving in the declining conditions of the world in ways which slow down that decline as far as possible.” Ecoliteracy has a more scientific perspective, defined as the “cumulative knowledge base that describes local ecosystem components and their interactions” offering “solutions to local, national, and global environmental challenges by providing information on the use of locally available resources” (Pilgrim, Smith, & Pretty, 2007, p. 1742).

*Tools and technics.* Illich (1973, pp. 20–21) defines *tools* as follows: “I use the term ‘tool’ broadly enough to include not only simple hardware such as drills . . . and not just machines like cars or power stations; I also include among tools productive institutions such as factories that produce tangible commodities . . . and productive systems for intangible commodities such as those which produce ‘education,’ ‘health,’ ‘knowledge’ or ‘decisions.’”

The library fits within this description, producing both tangible and intangible commodities. Attempts to move toward sustainability, and therefore resilience, within the library would be representative of what Illich (1973, p. 21) classifies as “convivial,” tools “which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision.” This definition is compatible with moving toward a more resilient community and containing factors that are within adaptive capacities.

Mumford (1964) contributes to the field the concept of “technics” delineating between democratic technics and authoritarian technics. Democratic technics are the “small scale method of production, resting mainly on human skill and animal energy but always, even when employing machines, remaining under the active direction of the craftsman or the farmer” (Mumford, 1964, pp. 2–3). This is compatible with Illich’s (1973) idea of convivial tools in outlining a wider understanding of how actions, technology, and institutions can affect sustainability and, therefore, resilience. Democratic technics and convivial tools both rest on the premise that they can “be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user,” with the user defining the tool, not the other way around (Illich, 1973, p. 22). Mumford (1964, p. 6) also outlines authoritarian technics, a system whereby “under the pretext of saving labor . . . [it seeks] to transfer the attributes of life to the machine and the mechanical collective, allowing only so much of the organism to remain as may be controlled and manipulated.” This situation is incompatible with the basic processes of community resilience, dependent on the ideas of equality and autonomy.

Community resilience is concerned with the wider issue of the sustainability of society. There is a body of work that links some adaptive capacities (social capital and economic development) to the public library, calling for more detailed, qualitative research at the micro level. Some literature links sustainability to the role of public libraries; the approaches to promoting sustainability can be divided: passive (focusing on the infrastructure of the library itself) and active (that pursues specific sustainability outreach programs). Sustainability literacy and ecoliteracy form the conceptual framework for understanding the opportunities for libraries to actively promote sustainability and community resilience in the wider community. These represent a specific relationship between the library and its users, which can be understood as the working of a particular productive system—that is, tools or technics (Illich, 1973; Mumford, 1964). The promotion of sustainability, and therefore community resilience, relies specifically on the use of convivial tools and democratic technics, on the operation of the library as a convivial institution. In studying this topic, a methodology is required that allows the exploration of the people, tools, and relationships at the heart of the public library, allowing the detailed

examination of the point where the concepts outlined earlier meet the everyday discourse at the micro level. From this, it is possible to understand the extent to which day-to-day processes allow the flourishing of convivial relationships that aid the process of community resilience.

## METHODOLOGY

Two distinct discourses are central to this study—the public library and community resilience, and how they interact. The literature has provided an understanding of community resilience. The data collection and analysis provide an understanding of what is actually happening in the public library.

Work at the strategic level can be perceived by those not directly involved as having an abstract quality. Strategy is often represented as a narrative or myth within the organization (Rhodes & Pullen, 2009). Understanding strategy as a narrative or discourse requires us to understand the link between the macro- and microlevel utterances (Grant, Hardy, Oswick, & Putnam, 2004). Bansal (2003) highlights the importance of individual values to strategic action within organizations—how individual concerns can become strategic concerns. Individual narratives are the “sense-making devices” (Gabriel, 2004, p. 80) that contextualize facts. By focusing on individual experience, one can “illuminate the tacit and subaltern aspects of an organization, such as how actions that lead to negative or positive organizational outcomes, actually play out” (Parry & Boyle, 2009, p. 694). Studying the narrative aids the understanding of strategy as it is experienced and put into action (Carter & Little, 2007); this is the epistemological basis for the present study.

### *Analytical Autoethnography*

The study is located in first-person research in line with the primacy of narrative in understanding strategy. Analytic autoethnography provides the basis for this approach and consists of five key features (Anderson, 2006):

- Complete member researcher (CMR) status
- Analytic reflexivity
- Narrative visibility of the researcher’s self
- Dialogue with informants beyond the self
- Commitment to theoretical analysis

To explore how public libraries can contribute to developing community resilience, we need to understand the experience of the library worker. As Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang (2010, E1) state, “Research is an extension of researcher’s lives.” This methodology also provides a point of reference for others to reflect on their own experiences and how they relate to community resilience. Therefore, studying the narrative of day-to-day library work provides a valid method of understanding how the



public library can promote community resilience, a new area of research for libraries.

The data collection took place in my (D.G.) workplace, an arena in which I am fully immersed as a member (CMR). The data for analysis are my own reflective diary entries made for working days from April 1 to July 31, 2011, a four-month period, and totaling forty-five separate entries. My workplace is a major U.K. city-center public library. There are questions to be answered about what can be concluded from such data. Wall (2008, p. 45) makes pertinent observations regarding her research, using memory as data: "If a researcher had interviewed me about my experiences as an adoptive mother and had recorded and transcribed it, it would have legitimacy as data despite the fact that both the interview transcript and my autoethnographic text would be based on the same set of memories."

Anderson's (2006, p. 382) analytical reflexivity, "an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants," is vital here to ensure the validity of the data collected. The intention of this work is to open up an area of research in the library and information domain; therefore, in addition to what our data actually tell us about this particular situation, we expect the results to highlight questions and ideas for further research.

The data collection method was covert. While the data collected were primarily focused on myself, they did relate to interactions with colleagues, and therefore all individuals and the place of work have been anonymized. All data were included in the process of analysis, but sensitive passages from my notebooks have not been used here. Full ethical approval was gained from both my place of work and place of study.

The use of first person in this article is integral to the methodology—Anderson's (2006, p. 378) narrative visibility of the researcher's self. I, the researcher, and my reflections are the focus of research but not in a narcissistic sense, as my attention is turned both outward and inward, observing my workplace and exploring my reactions to it. All the data collected are from my own experience; there is no attempt to objectify that which could never have been objective by denying the presence of the researcher (Cresswell, 2007, p. 179). This deliberate absence of objectivity does not preclude an analytical approach (Anderson, 2006). As a methodology, it rises above simply narrating my story, engaging in cultural analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2008). The analytical methodology, situational analysis, plays a vital role in ensuring rigor in analysis.

#### *Situational Analysis*

The four-month period over which I kept my journal provided sufficient data to see emerging patterns and themes, while continued diarying beyond this point enabled me to ensure that I did not miss any vital incidents. The data were subjected to situational analysis, a methodology that

has evolved from grounded theory (Clarke, 2003, p. 561) and involves visual mapping techniques to elucidate the situation of inquiry, my experiences in the library in relation to community resilience. Clarke (2005, p. 182) acknowledges the appropriateness of marrying autoethnography and situational analysis, with situational analysis offering “the ability to deeply contextualize and situate personal narratives.” Situational analysis provides “tools for the researcher to use in visually opening up the field of inquiry—illustrating participants’ social worlds and their arenas of negotiation,” providing a rigorous tool for data analysis (Mills, Chapman, Bonner, & Francis, 2007, p. 78). Its capacity to unearth sites of silence is a strength that exposes those points where my gaze did not linger and forces me to reflect and reevaluate their importance. Memoing accompanies an iterative coding process and mapping of the data throughout the entire analysis. This process fosters a deeply reflexive approach to data analysis and ensures that insights are recorded and considered. It uncovers human, nonhuman, symbolic, and discursive elements and elucidates relationships in the data (Clarke, 2005).

I reviewed each of the adaptive capacities in relation to the various actors (human elements), actants (nonhuman and material elements), and discourses (symbolic/discursive elements) that had emerged from the coding process. Notes were made in relation to the central adaptive capacity and the role of any other elements in this relationship. Figure 1 locates these elements and the way they interact and overlap, providing a visual tool for understanding their relationships. In mapping boundaries and showing where they overlap and the degree to which they are porous (indicated by the dashed line surrounding each world), the focus was at the micro level, my workplace.

The epistemological basis for this research is found in the location of the site of concern at the micro level, in the day-to-day working practices of a library worker. This is based on strategic concerns being realized through the actions of workers and so best understood by studying those actions (Bansal, 2003; Rhodes & Pullen, 2009). This factor, combined with the relatively new nature of the topic, requires that the methodologies open up the field of enquiry. Analytic autoethnography provides the basis for this (Anderson, 2006). Memoing and engaging in academic discussions with my supervisor and mentor ensured a deep reflexivity with regard to my journal entries. Situational analysis opened the data (Clarke, 2005). The analytical work was informed by the literature and complemented by interpretative work, bringing meaning to the structures, relationships, and discourses exposed.

### *Limitations*

This study is exploratory due to the newness of the topic within the field. The use of autoethnography in combination with situational analysis is

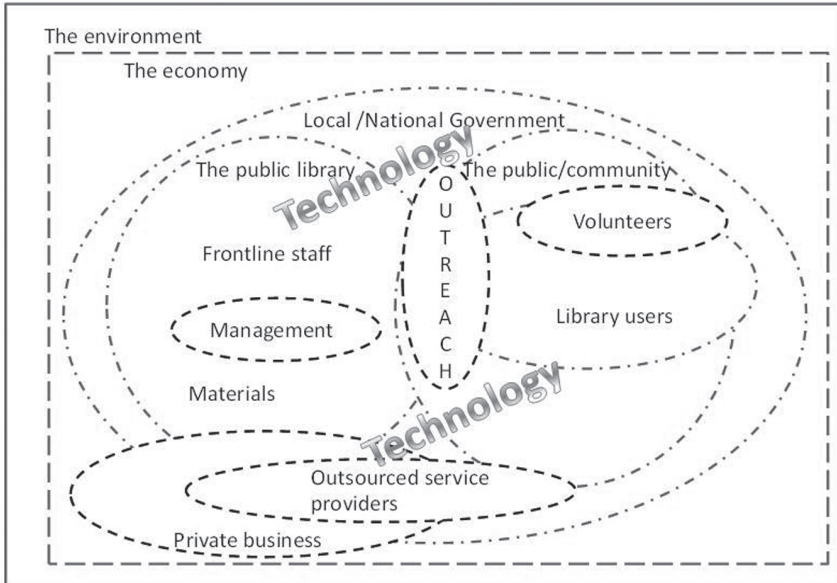


Figure 1. The social worlds/arenas of the library environment.

unusual, and in focusing on my view of events in my workplace, I leave myself open to charges of writing a memoir or autobiography. However, this ignores the “systematic and intentional approach to the socio-cultural understanding of self [that] sets autoethnography apart from other self-narrative writings” (Ngunjiri et al., 2010, E1). In Holt’s (2003, p. 19) words, “Autoethnographers may vary in their emphasis on graphy (i.e., the research process), ethnos (i.e. culture), or auto (i.e. self). Whatever the specific focus, authors use their own experiences in a culture reflexively to look more deeply at self-other interactions.”

In my study, while acknowledging “graphy” and “auto,” I am mostly concerned with “ethnos,” and therefore situational analysis, where the main aim is to provoke the researcher to analyze more deeply, providing a method of opening up the data and understanding the culture with which I interact on a daily basis. As a researcher I am not a *tabula rasa*, and situational analysis allows for my prior knowledge to work with the analysis, starting “from the assumption that we seek to represent all the major narrative discourses related to the situation in which we are interested” (Clarke, 2005, pp. 184–185). This process has enabled me to reflect on my actions and the culture in which I work, and I hope that it will provoke others to do the same. Clearly, the deeply reflective and individual approach of this research means that the results gathered are in no way

generalizable to all public library services; however, they provide a point of departure for greater understanding of this important topic.

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Key discourses emerged during data analysis. Each emergent aspect is identified, and how it affects the process of community resilience is discussed; that is, how it contributes toward the public library being/becoming a convivial institution, an institution that fosters convivial relationships through the use of convivial tools (Illich, 1973). Examples are given from the data, a situation observed from my perspective, before moving into a discussion of the wider implications of each scenario.

While the issues that emerged are directly related to the data, they are not always linked explicitly to single or multiple entries in my journal. They may, as with “professionalism,” represent silent assumptions—discourses that are not always made explicit but underlie the data in my notebook, producing an emerging picture of the social world with which we are concerned. This is the strength of combining the reflective approach and situational analysis. The silences are the hardest to represent with direct reference to the data.

Many issues of importance were drawn out by the analysis. It has been necessary to narrow and provide key discussion points. My selection of each of these points rests not on frequency but on reflected-on importance to understand what is happening on the ground and its significance for community resilience. This is an exploratory study of a relatively new area, and what might be considered a narrowing of focus can be better understood as theoretical sampling in action.

### *The Split between Two Worlds*

Information exchange is a staff meeting that occurs biweekly in the half hour before the library opens, providing a forum for staff to discuss any issues that they feel are pertinent and for supervisors and managers to bring wider organizational issues to the attention of frontline staff. At one meeting, a lengthy discussion took place around whether we should allow library users access to staff stationery. Points were raised for (our duty to provide a public service, we would seem petty to disallow use) and against (budget cuts, increasing numbers of items gone missing, “we are not a stationers”). To the casual observer, such discussion might seem insignificant, just a minor issue of this particular workplace that becomes inflated in importance by those who work there. Such dismissal misses a vital point. The discussion highlights the boundary between staff and library users. The subject of the meeting, stationery, is not the significant factor of the discussion—it is the relationship between the institution, embodied in the collective actions of the library workers, and the public that is central. The discussion emphasized the existence of the

boundary between the two worlds and how decisions made in one affect the other.

This split between these two worlds is a major point of discussion that emerged from my analysis. It is represented most clearly in the social worlds map in fig. 1, which illustrates the arena of the community. As is evident from this example, when this split appears in my journal entries, it is not always explicit. We can draw on Bourdieu's idea of field, "a structured system of social positions—occupied either by individuals or institutions—the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants," to provide a useful concept in understanding what is happening (Jenkins, 1992, p. 85). Rasmussen and Jochumsen (2003) locate the public library in the wider field of enlightenment within which there are concerns of the preservation and dissemination of information. Concomitant with this is the idea of the librarian's doxa, again from Bourdieu, that is the "social field's ideological foundation which is not open to debate and which is taken for granted by the field's central players" (Rasmussen & Jochumsen, 2003, p. 86). This determines our position as library workers in relation to library users. These are the power relations that structure the field internally, with relationships of domination, subordination, or equivalence according to the ability to access capital in its multiple forms (Jenkins, 1992, p. 85).

Although I have described it as a split between two worlds, it is not that simple. The categories used in fig. 1 are simplifications of more complex situations that contain subworlds. These simplifications are based not on reductionist agenda but emerge from the process of analysis as credible worlds; these worlds are the "big news" about the situation of concern (Clarke, 2005, p. 111). This then is the point where multiple individual actors and actants meet as social beings, where discourses are imposed or emerge and are contested. Two major arenas have emerged: the internal organization of the library and the interaction between the library and its users, and the manifestation of imbalanced power relations within that field.

In the library, the field is of central importance to promoting or inhibiting community resilience. For the library to be a convivial institution, a relationship of equivalence in respect to the ability to access capital is preferred over the struggle of domination and subordination (Illich, 1973). Indeed, the adaptive capacity, social capital, emphasizes the replacement of hierarchies with networks, and each adaptive capacity is concerned in some way with greater equality (Norris et al., 2008). Our focus should be on locating the source of this split, of this imbalance of power relationships, and on uncovering the ways to move from domination and subordination toward equivalence.

As the split manifests in multiple ways, in the action and words of individuals as they interact, in policy decisions and organizational processes, it is directed by the latent force manifested in the structure of things and the

manner in which this shapes interactions—that is, the field. An example of this is in the language used by myself and other frontline workers. The word “customer” represents a particular relationship that of producer to consumer, representing a wider factor in society, an aspect of the “field of power” that arranges the hierarchy of all other fields, of the satisfaction of a need (Illich, 2005; Jenkins, 1992, p. 86). In the field, we might consider the proliferation of information technologies and the way they mediate relationships both within and outside the library. Mumford’s (1964) democratic and authoritarian technics and Illich’s (1973) tools provide a means of distinguishing what effect technologies have and of understanding the overarching “field of power.”

*Technics, Tools, and “Fetish of Technology”*

Technology saturates every experience within the library. Reading through my reflective journal, most entries make reference to information technology: e-mail, RFID, and the People’s Network (the People’s Network is a project supported by successive U.K. governments, the aim of which was “the creation of ICT learning centers in all 4300 UK public libraries by the end of 2002” [Hand, 2005, p. 369]). Technology crosses the boundary of the split, mediating relationships both between and within the two major social worlds identified: the library and its users (see fig. 1).

*E-mail.* E-mail is increasingly the method through which decisions are made and we are informed of service developments. Arguably this is due to the fragmented workforce; not everyone can attend meetings due to work patterns. The concern is the extent to which technology, e-mail, influences the level of trust in information communicated. Such trust is bound up with the localization of information sources (Norris et al., 2008). It might be said to rest on convivial relationships, consisting of an “autonomous and creative intercourse among persons” (Illich, 1973, p. 11). This is a democratic relationship, part of a process “most active in small communities and groups, whose members meet face to face, interact freely as equals, and are known to each other as persons” (Mumford, 1967, p. 236).

Trust in information and communication is linked with unmediated relationships, precisely the types of relationships that e-mail discourages. This flows from the observation that in the Internet age, “our body has been replaced as the principle site of power by our profile”; we are subject to a dislocation of place and a subsequent crisis of trust (Buchanan, 2009, p. 144). This is the intrusion of a larger “field of power” into the field of the public library, what I identify as the “techno-fix,” or the belief that technology is a solution to any problem. Harvey (2011, p. 129) takes this further, positing a “fetish of technology”—“once technology became a business in its own right . . . then a social need sometimes had to be created to use up the new technology rather than the other way around.” As we attempt

to uncover the consequences for building community resilience, we can observe that there is a qualitative difference between ways of communicating and that certain ways are imposed by a logic that is outside the immediate field of the public library.

The deployment of authoritarian technics has implications for other adaptive capacities. Keeping within the organization, we can see that social capital, the link between individual workers and the organization—the library—will be mediated to a large extent by information technology. An essential factor of these technologies is that they require specialized skills to operate and maintain; they are not convivial tools (Illich, 1973, p. 22). E-mail does not exist as a simple interface. It requires specific skills to operate; it is balanced on an inverted pyramid of technology that increases in complexity and in the need for specialization and certification the further you get from the day-to-day experience of it.

*RFID.* Turning my gaze to the meeting of the two social worlds on either side of the split, I find the counter. Until very recently, this was the primary meeting point of the public and the library worker. Covered by the accoutrements of the library (computer, pens, books, paper), the counter is at the very center of the meeting of the two social worlds. This changed recently when RFID was introduced. Although not directly affecting my section, the reference library, I experience its effects indirectly through the stories of library users and fellow workers and directly through my use of the library. As I pass through the main lending library, I overhear comments: some angry, some confused, some intrigued, some pleased. One particular conversation with a regular library user stands out in my journal. She asked me if we, the reference section, would be getting the machines. I replied that I doubted it, as we had no particular need for them. She said she was glad, “I don’t just come in to borrow books you know. I come in to talk to people, to have a chat.”

This example highlights the centrality of the library as a place where information and communication occur. In meeting face-to-face there is a relationship between the users and the library workers. This informal communication sits alongside the more formal communication types present in the library (Budd, 2001). It is the unmediated informal communication that builds trust that is vital to information and communication, pushing the library toward becoming a convivial institution (Illich, 1973). To the extent that RFID machines remove the possibility of informal communication with library staff, they remove degrees of trust in the information provided and push the library user in the direction of more formal communication. RFID reinforces the points made previously that it requires specialist intervention when the machines go wrong, specific skills to work the machines, and rests at the pinnacle of the same inverted pyramid as e-mail.

Why introduce new technologies if they are detrimental to the relationship between the library and its users? Contained within that question is



an assumption that those responsible for their introduction can see the effects as detrimental; that is, are they viewing it not with community resilience in mind or as a strategic objective, but with some other logic, the logic of a wider “field of power”? It is to Castells (1996, pp. 412–423) that we must turn for an explanation of from where the logic of this “field of power” emerges, to the conflict between the space of flows, the “material organization of time-sharing social practices that work through flows” that form the “dominant spatial logic of our society,” and the space of places, where “form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity.” Our idea of the resilient community prioritizes the local and the autonomous in creating convivial relationships, putting forward an argument for the prominence of the space of places over the space of flows in order to build a community that might withstand the challenges of the twenty-first century. However, the space of flows refers to the space where dominant, managerial elites organize and from which they exert dominance (Castells, 1996, p. 415).

RFID in the library is another example of authoritarian technics (Mumford, 1967). As a technology, it reorganizes the space of the library in accordance with the logic of the wider “field of power” that determines the narrower field of the public library. That “field of power” can be identified as the space of flows, and “the structural domination of its logic essentially alters the meaning and dynamic of places” (Castells, 1996, p. 248). The implementation of RFID is an obvious step that libraries, as collective actors, must take when framed by the logic of the space of flows or else be faced with the threat of disengagement (Bauman, 2003, p. 15). Where people once came to have a chat, they now interact with machines, breaking down communication between the two halves of the split between our social worlds (the library and the community), encouraging nonconvivial relationships, and potentially damaging the capacity for community resilience.

*The People’s Network.* My duties involve working in the computer room of the library. Twenty-eight personal computers (PCs) linked to the People’s Network in high demand from users with varying computing skills make for a challenging, occasionally frustrating, place to work. Many of my journal entries focus on my and my colleagues’ experiences in this room. We have been told that we should not offer support to PC users. In reality, this direction is not followed.

The PCs are oversubscribed. By lunchtime most days, we are turning users away or asking them to book a later slot. From the perspective of the library, it might be argued that the People’s Network provides “the technical means of postmodernizing libraries for economic survival . . . as a way of securing both the cultural and economic position of the library as a public funded agency” (Hand, 2005, p. 372). We can see here the same process that was identified with RFID machines, the field of the public library being defined by the logic of the space of flows. The rationale for



the People's Network seems to be imposed from outside, indirectly from the space of flows, as national governments realize the need to reinvent and legitimize themselves as representative public institutions in the light of globalized flows of power (Hand, 2005).

However, this ignores the potential of the Internet to facilitate new forms of socialized mass communication (Castells, 2007). There resides within the Internet the capacity for counterpower, of "building networks of meaning in opposition to networks of instrumentality" (Castells, 2007, p. 250). In terms of community competence, access to the Internet can be empowering. This must be balanced against the conviviality of the Internet as a tool. Convivial tools require that they can be used "as often or as seldom as desired" (Illich, 1973, p. 22). The extent that I and my colleagues help individuals apply for jobs online, this often being the only way to apply, demonstrates that Internet use is not voluntary but mandatory.

Another consideration is the way in which increasing use of the Internet affects the relationship between the library user and the library worker. There is a disjunction between what we are expected to do by management and the fulfillment of our public duty. We are reminded of the librarian's doxa, that is the field's ideological underpinnings that are taken for granted by central players (Rasmussen & Jochumsen, 2003). While the structure of the field of the public library is defined to an increasing degree by the logic of the space of flows, it may come into conflict with the way things are, always have been, and ought to be, the librarian's doxa.

#### *Energy and Resource Use*

Before summarizing on technics, tools, and the "fetish of technology," it is necessary to highlight one of the silences in this discourse: energy and resource use. Its silence is perhaps not total; there are stickers on some light switches in the library asking one to consider the environment and turn lights off when not needed. However, none of these things are discussed explicitly.

Every tool we use relies on energy to some degree. Energy security is an issue, insomuch as the tools we rely on to manage our day-to-day lives rely on the current energy infrastructure. Lerch (2010) states that we have "designed our communities for oil . . . with the assumption that the petroleum fuels which make the whole system work will be available and affordable for the foreseeable future." The public library is not exempt. We must consider Illich's (1974) contention that "high quanta of energy degrade social relations just as inevitably as they destroy the physical milieu." This is linked with ideas of conviviality.

The technologies discussed are dependent on the oil-based infrastructure of modern civilization and the nonconvivial relationship to energy

sources implicit in that system. The precarious nature of this system, extending as it does well beyond the library into every facet of our lives, is the potential source of destabilization that requires resilience in our community. Whipple (2010, p. 6) warns that the peaking of oil supplies means “it is unlikely that there will ever be an economic recovery in the conventional sense; the economic downturn is likely to continue in one form or another for many years, perhaps overlapping the economic calamities wrought by global warming.” If we heed such dire predictions, then the imperative of addressing the concerns raised come sharply into focus.

For the library to contribute positively to community resilience, it needs to be a convivial institution that uses democratic technics, tools that can be easily used, by anybody. The tools that emerged from my analysis, e-mail, RFID, and the People’s Network, do not fit that description as they require special skills to use and they are mandatory to function in modern society. The library is not pushing some sinister agenda in deploying these technologies; it is responding to the demands of an ulterior logic, one that is shaping the field of the public library and the arena of the community, Castells’s (1996) space of flows.

Yet Castells (2007) makes the point that the counterpower in mass self-communication creates the possibility for individuals and groups to organize against this logic, to potentially use these tools to generate autonomy in the space of places. The ability for a community to exhibit resilience is “subject to larger sociological and economic forces” (Norris et al., 2008, p. 136). The public library is just one area in a wider struggle, just as technology is just one sphere of activity.

### *Professionalism*

The period over which I kept my journal saw drastic cuts in library budgets. The reference library had to make serious decisions over which subscriptions to continue. All staff were asked their opinions, and discussions focused on use, need, and cost. Eventually, a much depleted list was finalized. This example demonstrates the power of the library workers to select the materials that are available to the public, part of our professional duty.

Throughout my studies, professionalism has featured heavily, and subsequently it has embedded itself in my thoughts and approach to work. I realized, as I reflected on my journal entries, that the idea of professionalism underwrote much of my actions in the workplace. Yet in the initial coding of the data, professionalism was not apparent. It was only on reflection and during memoing that I began to draw lines linking descriptors such as “marketing” and “provision of quality information” to the wider discourse of professionalism.

My reflections highlighted both positive and negative experiences. On one occasion, I was asked by a library user to provide contact information on psychics and mediums. On a personal level, I felt deeply uncomfortable

with this. I told the library user that I could not find the information—a lie. This was a value judgment. It felt like a deeply unprofessional act. In Bourdieu's terms, my habitus, "the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that generally stay with us across contexts" and circumscribe the range of responses I can have in a given situation, came into conflict with the librarian's doxa, the field's ideological underpinnings—the idea of professionalism (Webb, Shirato, & Danaher, 2002). Personal values conflicting with professional values; there is no simple answer to resolving this conflict.

Professionalism is a key part of the librarian's doxa, the ideological underpinnings of the field of the public library. The Conway (2008, p. 5) report on Professional Standards of Service states that the word "professional" has "become devalued . . . and is now used imprecisely to describe an approach or outlook, quality and, of course, paid as opposed to voluntary status," contrasting it with an earlier ideal of "pursuing a higher calling linked to duty, service and obligation." Integral to the report's understanding of professionalism is the satisfaction of information needs, both individual and community (Conway, 2008). This language of needs is another key element of the librarian's doxa. It is of vital importance in understanding the relationships that exist within the field of the public library. Illich (2005, pp.16–17) discusses "needs," which he argues are not defined by general consent, a democratic process, but increasingly by professionals, organized bodies of specialists, who create, adjudicate, and implement needs as commodities according to the logic of their own power. This logic is not neutral but is a logic that comes from outside and above, from the space of flows.

Professionalism underpins the field of the public library but is subject to logic from outside, from a wider "field of power," Castells's (1996) space of flows. This attitude forges relationships, based on the commodification of wants as needs, limiting the autonomy of the library user, accentuating the split between the two social worlds and reducing the capacity of the library to act as a convivial institution and promoter of community resilience (Illich, 2005). The data in my notebooks illustrate this directly in the example where library workers determined the resources available to library users based on their own understanding of user needs. Yet, as the example of the user requesting information shows, habitus can come into conflict with doxa. The conflict in the example is not a positive one, in that it perpetuates the same relationship against which it rebels; I still determine the capacity for the individual to find the information they need.

### *Outreach*

Each month, staff members take a library stall to a meeting and advice space for asylum seekers and refugees. The stall has information about the library service, and we take books covering basic English as well as

dual-language children's titles to demonstrate the stock available. We sign people up for library membership and discuss their problems and needs. It gives library staff a chance to meet with other groups and organizations who serve this demographic, allowing us to plan joint initiatives, such as library introduction packs for volunteer befrienders and book groups for those learning English. Contact with other groups can raise difficulties in terms of expectation of what the library can do. There seems to be a different ethos at work; many of these groups are volunteer led with individuals giving large amounts of time for free, whereas for library workers, time involvement is limited and during working time. In the light of budget cuts and the fact that most individuals there seem to be library members now, we are considering reducing our presence at this advice group. This can be seen as a sign of success; library membership seems to have reached a saturation point. However, there is also a worry that we might miss people who need our service and that we lose one of the key strengths of this program—that it takes the library outside the library. We are meeting the people in their own space. Outreach, as a code and concept, figured heavily throughout the data analysis.

Outreach work is a conscious effort to bridge the split between the social worlds of the public library and the community. It is a visible example of the porous nature of the borders between social worlds (Clarke, 2005). It demonstrates that this porousness is determined by an effort of will, and by an understanding of class, as "sets of agents who occupy similar positions," moving beyond the usual limits, beyond the social world of the library (Bourdieu, quoted in Wilkes, 1990, p. 114). In meeting face-to-face, discussing the issues faced by groups such as asylum seekers and refugees, we encourage convivial relationships that run counter to the prevailing logic, that of the space of flows, that dominates the field of the public library. This has a positive effect on the adaptive capacities on which the process of community resilience is built, social capital clearly benefiting from linkages between both individuals and organizations.

In coming into contact with individuals whose social standing is as precarious as refugees and asylum seekers, I am forced to reconsider my own assumptions and values. For example, the inability to communicate effectively in English is encountered as one thing in the physical space of the library, a problem or an obstacle, and another in the space of outreach meetings, a point of sharing and reciprocal learning. In identifying myself with this wider class, moving beyond the borders of the social world of the public library, I begin to call into question some of the assumptions of my work, the doxa that underpins the ideological assumptions of the field. My actions, as a product of the reciprocal and dialectical relationship between my habitus and objective conditions, change as I encounter new objective conditions that call for a change in perspective, a shift in understanding of my class (Jenkins, 1992). Such change comes about when the "narratives,

values and explanations of a habitus no longer make sense” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 41). Consequently, I must find or construct a new narrative, one that can make sense of this wider perception.

#### *Volunteering and Vernacular Work*

There is a difference of approach between the salaried library staff and those who volunteer. In comparing the two, it is useful to draw on Illich (1981, p. 13) and his distinction between the shadow economy and vernacular work, between “forced labour or industrial serfdom in the service of commodity-intensive economies” and “subsistence-orientated work lying outside the industrial system.” Illich (1981) equates the vernacular with the shift toward a convivial society. We can see in the volunteerism an aspect of the shadow economy in that it meets basic needs of individuals through unpaid work, it complements wage labor. However, to characterize such volunteering as “forced labour” would be wrong (Illich, 1981, p. 13). There is something in the nature of the actions that places this in the category of vernacular work, at least to the extent that it improves livelihoods in ways that escape definition by concepts developed in formal economics (Illich, 1981). Vernacular work, which exists outside the sphere of commodity exchange, has a part to play in building convivial relationships (Illich, 1981). The logic of the space of flows perpetuates itself within the library through internal mechanisms such as management structures and actions, undermining efforts to realize a convivial institution.

To change the actions of the public library in total requires a change in the collective habitus to an understanding of those of us who work in the library as one class with the community that we serve, to eliminate to the greatest extent possible the split between the two social worlds. We have seen how this narrative is undermined by the intrusion of the logic of the space of flows into the space of places, disabling the capacity of the public library to act as a convivial institution and separating the social world of the public library from that of the community who use it via technology and tools, and the ideology of professionalism (Castells, 1996; Illich, 1973, 2005).

#### *Management*

For many frontline staff members, it is not only the public who are perceived as separate and outside our social world. The library itself is divided between us and management. This separation is clearly visible in the social-worlds map (see fig. 1). *Management* is a term that can be applied to anyone not engaged with frontline activities. In my journal, one particular event stands out. It involved a member of management attempting to overcome the concerns of frontline staff regarding RFID by assuring them that library users would be fine and that there was nothing to worry about. This missed the point that the member of staff was making: that RFID presaged an entirely different relationship with library users, one that the member of staff was not comfortable with.

This example demonstrates not only the way in which the social orthodoxy of the library is perpetuated through the articulation of a body of knowledge but also how it is resisted. There is no conspiracy here. The actions of management in this situation are logical and seemingly motivated by a desire to calm fears over the introduction of a new technology. However, the objective reality, in conjunction with their own habitus, which determines their actions, is that of the field of the public library, which ultimately derives its logic from the space of flows, which pitches such technology as both desirable and inevitable (Harvey, 2011). From the management position, to oppose such advances is unthinkable, falling outside the doxa that underpins the field. It is the managers' ability to articulate the necessity of such advances that endows them with the capital necessary to be managers and wield power in the workplace. Capital is for Bourdieu "a basis of domination," and this example begins to open up the structure of the means of domination (Harker et al., 1990).

There is a division then in class between frontline workers and management to the extent to which they identify as groups with separate interests. My journal appears to confirm that, at least from the perspective of frontline workers, there is some reality to this division. Castells (1996, p. 416) observes that "the real social domination stems from the fact that cultural codes are embedded in the social structure in such a way that the possession of these codes opens the access to the power structure without the elite needing to conspire to bar access to its networks." It is in following these "cultural codes," in attempting to accumulate capital, that management, regardless of their intentions, become agents of a logic, that of the space of flows, that sets them at odds with the realization of the public library as a convivial institution and therefore against the process of community resilience.

### *The Environment*

The environment is a silent actant. It contains within it all other social worlds and arenas (see fig. 1). It is the site of the potentially disastrous effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, and loss of energy and food security. It appears directly in my journal entries in various ways. It encompasses all of my reflections, providing the bedrock and backdrop on which the day-to-day concerns of my workplace are played out. We are entirely dependent on its continuing good nature, the certainties of predictable climate patterns, cheap energy, room to expand, and biomass to consume, in order for us to be able to continue to live as we do now. Yet none of these things are certain (Hopkins, 2008).

Realizing the precarious nature of societies' continuing functioning is to inherently question the logic of the space of flows. We are bound by the natural world and any logic that does not recognize that, that rejects the primacy of place, is of debatable utility in ensuring community resil-

ience. However, the space of places, where “form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity,” is not a static thing (Castells, 1996, p. 423). In Smith’s (2001, p. 54) words, “far from reflecting a static ontology of ‘being’ or ‘community’, localities are dynamic constructions ‘in the making.’” So the extent to which the logic of the space of flows is allowed expression in our localities through institutions such as the public library defines the extent to which its logic might determine the fluid, as opposed to static, ontology of our localities. It is this understanding of community resilience as a dynamic process that is central to realizing the need to get beneath the decisions in the library to determine the logic by which they are directed.

The discussion has drawn on analysis of the data and the literature to understand the key concepts, narratives, tools, and discourses surrounding the public library and its relationship to community resilience. Through the use of selected theoretical lenses, it has been possible to understand my experience in a wider frame of reference, to explore the ethnos, the culture, of my workplace and the extent to which the public library operates as a convivial institution.

## CONCLUSIONS

Any conclusions drawn from this study are, by necessity and design, partial, provocative, and the basis for further investigation and discussion. None of these factors detract from the validity of the study undertaken as exploratory work, mapping the territory for those who follow, so they might explore in more detail each of the areas drawn out from the data. I set out to find out how public libraries promote, or inhibit, community resilience. In doing so, my aim was to understand this through an examination of day-to-day working practices, which would then provide guidance for policy and practices that promote community resilience and for further research.

### *Community Resilience and Sustainability*

Community resilience is a process comprising of interrelated adaptive capacities. As no literature exists that relates public libraries directly to community resilience, the concept of sustainability was introduced providing the link to both resilience and libraries. The concepts of convivial tools and democratic technics both refer to methods of employing technology in an accessible way and support understanding of the relationships between the library and its users as productive systems. Autoethnography combined with situational analysis provided the means to elucidate the content of personal reflections on work-based experiences captured over four months. Integral to the journaling was the visibility of the researcher’s self, tempered with the reflexive awareness of the relationship between myself and that which I studied.



*The Space of Flows versus the Space of Places*

The analysis identified key discourses, actors, and actants and the manner in which they inhibit or promote community resilience in the workplace. The specific identity of these factors was framed by a wider understanding of their relationships to two competing logics: the space of flows and the space of places. The extent to which a particular logic is dominant corresponds to the degree of use of convivial tools, pushing the library toward becoming a convivial institution. Conviviality corresponds directly to community resilience, as each has at its heart the key values of autonomy and equality, and so the library's ability to act as a convivial institution bears direct relevance to its capacity to promote community resilience. The concepts of class, field, habitus, and doxa provided the theoretical framework for understanding how the various discourses, actors, and actants relate to one another and the wider field of power represented as the space of flows. Key factors emerged from the data as inhibitors and promoters of community resilience.

*Inhibiting Factors*

The split between the two social worlds of the library and its users was identified as an inhibitor, representing an imbalance in power relations that must be distanced from subordination and dominance toward equivalence if the library is to be a convivial institution.

We also examined the role of tools, technics, and the "fetish of technology" in perpetuating this split, including the function of specific technologies (e-mail, RFID, and the People's Network), in the light of the concepts of conviviality and of democratic and authoritarian technics. Energy and resource use were identified as a silent actant in this discourse, underpinning technology which embodies the logic of the space of flows, the wider "field of power." Such technology acts as authoritarian technics that deny conviviality in that they do not meet the criteria specified. However, there was also the capacity for counterpower, using the tool against the logic from which it emerges.

The insertion of these technologies into the public library found its rationale in the logic of the library professional contained within the discourse of professionalism, forming an aspect of the librarian's doxa that underpins the field, and is subject to the logic of the space of flows. This professionalism was based on the commodification of wants as needs, creating a particular relationship between library worker and user, accentuating the split identified and working against community resilience. At the same time, an individual's habitus may come into conflict with the doxa, giving potential for conviviality.

This discourse of professionalism was embodied in management as a separate class within the library, which experienced the insertion of technologies as inevitable due to the doxa that derives its logic from the space



of flows. Their success as managers was dependent on their ability to articulate this logic and smooth the introduction of tools and technologies that accentuate the split between the library worker and the library user.

#### *Promoting Factors*

We identified opportunity for the public library to promote community resilience. Outreach work represents an extension of the conflict between habitus and doxa that emerges and presages a potential move toward conviviality as a conscious attempt to bridge the split between the two social worlds, a modification of habitus that occurs when encountering new objective conditions (in this case asylum seekers and refugees), representing the logic of the space of places, that results in a redefinition of class as the library worker identifies with the library user. The idea of vernacular work provided criteria for choosing volunteer organizations to partner with the library in outreach work. However, to change the public library in total would require a shift in collective habitus, to negate the logic of the space of flows.

The environment is the largest silent actant in this arena, and neither promotes nor inhibits community resilience, as it is the space in which the struggle between the logics of the space of flows and space of places takes place. However, our conception of it has a definite bearing on the library's capacity to act as a convivial institution. The environment represents the permanence of the space of places against the space of flows, and the capacity to understand this enables us to move toward community resilience.

This study has begun to expose the obstacles and ways in which we already engage in building community resilience, and the recommendations will consider what we might do to move the library toward becoming a convivial institution.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Action and Policy in the Workplace*

Library strategy is embedded within the wider local authority strategy, which in turn takes a lead from central government and so on until we reach the ultimate sphere of power, the space of flows. The first question is, To what extent is it possible to eliminate those factors inhibitive to promoting community resilience in this context?

In relation to policy within the workplace, there must be a balancing act. If we accept that community resilience is to be central to library strategy, the discussion and decision-making processes that surround the adoption of certain tools must be open and democratic and subject to rigorous examination. This calls into question the structure of hierarchical management that acts to impose the adoption of tools as inevitable. New models of organizing the workplace in line with the idea of a convivial institution and the ethos of community resilience, as represented through

the values of adaptive capacities such as equality and autonomy, must be considered. These are long-term concerns and as such do not provide realistic prescriptions for immediate action in the workplace.

Turning to outreach that already acts to promote community resilience; we can provide suggestions for such action. Policies that allow all workers to engage in outreach at some point would facilitate a shift of perspective in regard to class. To achieve this would require a greater emphasis on outreach work in general, which becomes problematic against the background of budget cutbacks. Putting this to one side, it would be desirable to frame all such future outreach in terms of community resilience, using adaptive capacities as criteria to set the purpose. Engagement with community groups, such as the Transition Movement, can potentially provide an outside impetus in the transformation of the library.

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

#### *Further Research*

Having identified areas of concern, it is desirable now to move beyond the autoethnographic approach and incorporate other voices into the narrative, both to test the validity of our conclusions and to expand understanding of the issues. However, the value of reflexive practice for the researcher should not be lost in any adoption of alternative methods. It should also be remembered that the methodology adopted here can act as a model for others wishing to pursue research on this subject in their own workplaces.

Recommendations for adopting new organizational models in the workplace are key for further research. Other ways of organizing workplaces abound (e.g., mutuals, or workers' cooperatives) in collaboration with the community, and the appropriateness of each to the public library warrants detailed study. It may be feasible to conduct studies of similar workplaces or other libraries where innovative models are in place. One particular methodology that might prove useful is action research to investigate attempts to move the public library toward becoming a convivial institution. There is also potential for wider theoretical understanding using actor-network theory, which has strong links to situational analysis.

#### FINAL REMARKS

Community resilience and its relationship with the public library are complex. It is of vital importance in ensuring the relevance of the library in changing times. This study has outlined in one workplace how the public

library promotes or inhibits community resilience. The topic warrants further detailed real-world research. We cannot be sure what the future will bring.

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