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Gary Wilkin

The Public Library as a Democratic Anchor within Wider Networks of Culture-led Regeneration?

GARY WILKIN

PHD

2018

**The Public Library as a Democratic
Anchor within Wider Networks of
Culture-led Regeneration?**

GARY WILKIN

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of Northumbria at
Newcastle
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Research undertaken in the
Faculty of Business and Law**

September 2018

Abstract

In this thesis, I examine the role of culture-led urban regeneration within a traditionally staid public institution, the public library. The theoretical framework charts the terminology associated with culture and its incorporation within urban regeneration frameworks including theories and concepts such as commodification and aestheticization. Recognizing Williams (1961) classic thesis on the existence of three versions of culture, I chart recent theories which examine culture that is more democratic and participatory. Work by Sacco (2011) is of relevance here, particularly his models of culture. I subsequently chart the literature around community participation and then incorporate Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space to serve as a theoretical frame for the subsequent research.

I empirically investigate the role that culture has played within the redevelopment of the City Library in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England through a case study analysis and involved a triangulation of methods to allow for a theoretically rich analysis. Firstly, a documentary analysis of public library documentation is carried out consisting of national, local and City Library documents, to contextualise the library within the institutional networks in which it operates. Secondly, interviews with library officials was undertaken to determine how activities and programmes offered, allowed spaces for democratic opportunity. I further expand this by geographically mapping all partners with whom the library works offering these activities. Finally, I conduct a rhythm analysis of the public library to determine the geographical relationships and networks of the City Library within the city.

I conclude by expanding on the implication of this for public libraries more generally as a cultural institution. I discuss the implications of the library as an anchor institution for city development. I also contrast existing literature by arguing that culture-led regeneration within public libraries can be diverse and transformative for users offering emancipation within a complex and fragmented urban space.

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Declaration

I declare that all the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for the research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Faculty Ethics Committee on 9th February 2016.

I declare that the Word Count on this Thesis is 79,243 words

Name: Gary Wilkin

Signature:

Date: September 2018

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introducing the thesis

The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of the public library from a cultural regeneration perspective as libraries over time have been repositioned within wider cultural networks through central and local government policy (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013). From a geographical perspective, libraries can be viewed as essentially public spaces whilst simultaneously being global, relational spaces with links to the wider world through strong literature as well as through connections with universities, government and public sector partners. Public libraries are essentially democratic spaces through open membership, offering spaces of pleasure and learning couched within a free space. Consequently, libraries are embedded into place but serve as a conduit to the wider world through their activities and connections found within the library itself.

Over recent years regeneration has qualitatively transformed many British cities as policy influences have enlisted increasingly diverse institutions and areas of the city, including the public library as part of broader culture-led regeneration strategies. There have also been recent calls for empirical research on public libraries that focus on the consequences and implications of culture-led regeneration on the library as an institution (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013). This thesis aims to address this point in particular, and the context described above places public libraries as an emergent cultural institution within urban regeneration. The need for empirical research to explore these issues is pertinent as libraries not only contend with changing policy and market forces but are also exposed to shifting funding arrangements due to reductions in public sector spending by the current Conservative government.

The next section will account for the relevance of the study before the emergence of culture-led regeneration within the empirical case study is examined. Finally, the research questions and the choice of methods are then discussed.

1.2 Relevance of the study

This study is relevant because not only does the public library have a history of engaging with community regeneration since the Labour government of 1997-2010 (Goulding 2006) but it has itself become enmeshed within wider regeneration networks often with a cultural undertone. There have been some cities where this has caused issues for the library. For example, the new Birmingham City Library typifies this issue because the library has engaged in a typical regeneration project as described in the literature by focussing on the library as a cultural icon but Birmingham has been left with a city library that cannot afford books (Millard 2015). Thus the Birmingham library serves a role as projecting an image of aesthetic splendour within the wider city to a wider audience but falls short when considering a library's most basic function - that as a book lending service. This serves as a warning that the modernist function of a library – that of being a democratic and a book lending institution - must be maintained to be relevant to the local community.

Regarding a contribution to knowledge, this study will illuminate how the public library can still serve the needs of local users through empowerment and upskilling by taking advantage of the opportunities culture-led regeneration presents to the library. In this way, the potential for the library to act as an anchor institution will be argued before the advantages of new working practices along the lines of partnership work as a way to connect with wider economic actors for the benefit of users are considered. This is important if the public library is to find itself implicated within culture-led regeneration which can offer benefits but sharp disadvantages associated with place-making and serving as a cultural icon.

From the outset I wish to be clear that this work is geographical in nature and not a political thesis. My interpretation and analysis of both key themes in the literature and my subsequent analysis is approached from a geographical perspective. I am aware that topics such as democracy can be approached from both a political science and a public sector approach.

However, I approach such themes very much from geographical influenced literature which in turn influences how I analyse the data and the conclusions I draw from such data.

1.3 Focus of study

The geographical focus of this research will be on the Newcastle City Library within Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Centre. Newcastle has been chosen as the case study for this research because within the context of the UK it has promoted culture-led regeneration strategies for a number of years. A particular focus of this cultural investment has been on the banks of the river Tyne and can be epitomised by two buildings in particular – the SAGE music venue and the BALTIC art gallery. Such facilities attract global names within the realms of music and art which very much orientates the audience of such facilities at a global level. The SAGE in particular regarding its musical productions which can be classified as more high global culture compared to Newcastle city library (discussed below) whose remit is to serve the city of Newcastle (as well as visitors to the city). Although both types of culture can be within close proximity to one another, relationally they take very different forms with the public library conforming to the needs of users within local communities, whereas the culture on offer on the banks of the river Tyne is more global and more “hyperspace” in nature (Eco 1986).

The city of Newcastle has also embarked on the redevelopment of its central library which has been transformed into a glass and steel building incorporating the latest architectural design elements. In light of the discussion above, it can be argued that the redevelopment repositions the City Library within wider regeneration strategies with a particular focus on economic growth. This can be seen in the context of an overall reduction in funding more generally for libraries in the city due to reduced funding streams from central government set within the context of an overall reduction in spending on public services since the Coalition government came to power in 2010. The spatial effects of this have been a centralisation of library services in the city with increased investment over the last decade

focussed on the City Library together with a closure of local libraries on the outskirts and local housing estates of the city.

Drawing from the discussion in section 1.2, a major emphasis of the empirical element of this research will be a focus on how the public library enacts cultural activities and the implications of this on democratic opportunity and accessibility. This presents a range of issues including whether those tasked with leading and developing such cultural regeneration strategies ensures the library remains relevant to the local community within a context of reductions in funding for libraries (Evjen 2015). Furthermore, are such diverse activities being acknowledged and recognised by library managers? To shed further light on this and to gain a deeper understanding of the issues at play, this will take the form of a review of the literature. This will focus on both spectacle based culture-led regeneration strategies as demonstrated on the Newcastle/Gateshead quayside which can be seen as representative of more globalised, hyperspace forms of culture compared to more nuanced forms of culture within libraries which are much more locally embedded. Through their engagement strategies it will be demonstrated that as a public service, libraries have a requirement to meet and address the needs of the local community. More recent arguments which position the library within wider circuits of investment based on cultural regeneration strategies will also be accounted for to see whether the public library, within cultural regeneration, offers more democratic spaces and alternatives which may help empowerment and upskilling of users.

The research aims to investigate whether community participation within culture-led regeneration is feasible. The main research aim is;

An examination of the use and effectiveness of public libraries in the context of wider democratic and economic possibilities and how to assess the potential for the public library to act as a deliberative democratic public space.

From this the research sets out to ask:

- 1) Does the City Library offer spaces for users to construct a “right to the city”?
- 2) Does the City Library offer spaces of participation for residents to have a voice in the future development of the city?
- 3) Does the City Library offer equal opportunities for access to all members of society in contributing towards active citizenship and democratic prospects?
- 4) Does the City Library, through its ownership and subsequent role in society become an anchor institution in the city offering a space for cultural participation that can lead to socially inclusive economic development?
- 5) Has the City Library become part of the performance of the wider city rhythm to become threatened by culture-led regeneration?

The literature review on participation within chapter 3 began by approaching the issues these questions raise by consideration of more traditional structural theories based on deliberative democracy influenced from a Harbermasian perspective. This focuses explicitly on democratic decision making and communication – the belief that all communicatively rational actors are able to share knowledge and experiences with one another to arrive at mutual understanding and set within the context of culture-led urban regeneration processes. While it can be argued that it is through policy documents which set the context for the operation of the public library and that such policy documents are structural in nature, a Harbermasian approach seemed inadequate for the study as a whole. Firstly, such an

approach neglects spatial interpretations of society. Secondly, such an interpretation focusses on expected as opposed to actual outcomes as well as a denial of experience of inhabitants (Elden 2007) which led me to believe that I would not fully be able to answer my research questions using this approach.

I then developed my argument with a philosophy focusing on Lefebvre's (1991) writings on the production of space. Lefebvre's (1991) thesis on the production of space not only, as its name suggests, involves a spatial interpretation of research at hand but also allows for embodiment and experience to become major elements of the subsequent analysis. Such a spatial interpretation allows all actors involved in the research to be open to empirical enquiry as well as allowing for non-human structures including buildings as well as the surrounding spaces to be included within the research. Such a view also gives weight to Lefebvre's (1991) work on spaces being actively produced by the users of a space.

Consequently, a Lefebvrian spatial interpretation demonstrates how spaces and institutions such as the City Library actively involve all users of such spaces, offering opportunities for resistance and change which other methodologies neglect.

In terms of the methods of research, three methods are used. These include an analysis of national, local and City Library policy documents were undertaken not only to set the context of the empirical research but highlights the desired uses and outcomes of the more powerful actors within the network hierarchy that creates the public library. Secondly, at a local level, interviews with library managers and council officials were carried out to account for those who must work with funders, councillors and other powerful actors whilst also meeting the needs and wishes of other local actors including local communities, businesses and education establishments. Based on the data from the interviews on local partnerships (discussed within the further research section in chapter 9), I then developed this into various geographical maps of connections highlighting how these actors are involved in the delivery of services to the library and their strength of connectivity with the library. These maps are analysed to show where future connections could be strengthened

highlighting how the City Library can be seen to be an anchor institution, and which can be developed over time to enact possible “rights to the city” (Lefebvre 1968) based on tangible connections and partnerships. Thirdly, I carried out a rhythm analysis which shows how the library as a space has been enacted within wider city rhythms and how the City Library itself may influence and introduce new rhythms. These rhythms are then interpreted as a performative appraisal, reinforcing the library as an active space within the wider city. Together these methods demonstrate the complex and variegated networks covering the economic, political and cultural networks the City Library itself creates and is involved with. The methods allow all aspects of the library to be considered as well as exploring new research avenues such as rhythm analysis to determine how issues around regeneration across the wider city influence the City Library and the people it serves. Finally, the methods demonstrate the usefulness of integrating and focusing on the importance of space as a methodological approach to the issues considered in this research. These methods are discussed further in the thesis and allow for the research questions to be fully researched.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The next chapter addresses the key literature on this topic regarding culture and public libraries before work on communities and democracy is addressed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 sets the empirical context of the thesis before chapter 5 deals with the methodological considerations of this research. Chapters 6 to 8 deal with the empirical research and subsequent analyses of the individual research methods described above. Chapter 9 serves as a conclusion highlighting the main points and implications of this thesis before areas for future research are addressed.

Chapter 2: Cultural Strategies within Contemporary Urban Regeneration

2.1: Contextualising culture-led urban regeneration

While the aim of this research is to evaluate and account for the rise of culture-led regeneration and its influence and impact on the public library, it is important to contextualise and account for this strand of regeneration which has become a popular policy tool in many countries. This chapter will outline the theories and arguments that have given way to the empirical focus of this research.

The organisation of this chapter is as follows. The next section defines and describes the emergence of cultural policy within regeneration strategies. In section 2.3, I demonstrate that cities have increasingly become aestheticized and developed within middle class consumption ideologies. I extend this theory into the empirical focus on the public library. It is important to point out that the public library is a space where cultural policies have taken root in contemporary urban cities.

The public library is contextualised in section 2.4 and the characteristics and the role of public libraries within society is outlined. This is then developed further in section 2.5 by arguing that many of the roles described in section 2.4 risk being compromised through commodification if public libraries are incorporated within wider cultural regeneration strategies. The issue of to whom the library and its services are aimed and whether it is open to all members of society is then posed. An alternative view of culture which focuses on active participation within institutions such as public libraries is then articulated and discussed. The chapter closes with a discussion of the key points associated with spaces of consumption, public libraries and cultural strategies and the implications for this research.

It is important here to outline the central points that will form the main argument of this chapter. Firstly, In order to contextualise the debate on culture, I wish to focus on Florida's thesis on the creative class in some detail as it has become one of the most influential

policies amongst urban elites and has impacted on urban development and regeneration policies across the developed world. It is also appropriate to describe how culture has developed in policy circles and I argue that towns and cities increasingly view and position culture within a wider model of consumption and aestheticization. Through culture-led strategies, areas of the city are increasingly made “legible” (understandable to the mass market) and are offered up for mass consumption of both tourists and investors. A paradox emerges in which strategies are devised which try to differentiate one locality from another by promoting authentic cultures, yet a unilateral view of culture is implemented which focuses on the same architects and developers which increasingly render cities as bland and homogenous (Ritzer 2004). In this sense, the particular social relations of cities are disregarded whereby strategies are premised on a singular global mass culture.

I develop this argument further by offering a perspective which argues that more and more areas of cities’ cultural and civic life are being incorporated into cultural strategies premised on middle class consumption. The main argument pursued is that public libraries are increasingly being incorporated into cultural strategies which could well have unintended consequences. Nonetheless, depending on how culture-led regeneration is incorporated into the library, there remains the possibility for emancipation and opportunity.

2.2 Emergence of culture in contemporary society

Culture is a term difficult to define and as this chapter will demonstrate, culture has increased its influence in many spheres of life over a period of many years (Williams 1981). Before I discuss William’s work on culture, I wish to clarify a few points. This discussion serves purely to establish a background and context for the rest of this chapter. While I do make reference to Williams in section 2.5, that particular discussion serves to reinforce the arguments I made regarding cultural participation, this discussion of Williams serves to highlight how culture-led regeneration has become incorporated within urban policy in recent years. There are of course connections between the arguments made both in sections

2.2 and 2.5 but I felt that two separate discussions of Williams reinforces the arguments made in this chapter.

Culture is defined following Williams' (1976) definition of there being multiple cultures which vary across time and space which can be very much plural (as opposed to unilateral) and localised in nature. Following Williams (1961), there are three types of culture. First there is the "ideal" culture based on absolute values set as a process of human perfection and is seen to be universal in its application to the human condition. The second form of culture known as "documentary" culture takes the form of intellectual or imaginative pieces and recorded in the form of books or canvas in which the conventions and norms of the time can subsequently be analysed. An example of such is the Romanticism period of art between 1800-1850 which focussed on emotion and individualism within paintings and later literature in response to the industrial revolution and rationalization within society. The third type of culture identified by Williams is the "social" category which describes a particular way of life which extends beyond paintings to institutions and behaviour. Crucially such a definition described one particular culture out of many and can be contrasted with earlier types which assumed a modernist unilateralism in which all society can be summarised by one particular movement with difference seemingly hidden from view.

Williams also recognised that commentators such as Herder in the Eighteenth Century had begun to critique the view of culture as a unilateral process and the idea of plural or multiple cultures was first realised; "[Herder] attacked the assumption of the universal histories of that "civilization" or "culture"... was what we would now call a unilinear process, leading to the high and dominant point of C18 European culture" (Williams 1976, p.89). Of course at that time, culture (as education) became very much part of a wider process of social change having its origins in the enlightenment period with the aim of achieving progress in society. The role of intellectuals and institutions was very much to educate the lower classes on how they should behave, to educate on "suitable" likes and dislikes in order to achieve, in their view a more intellectual, ordered society. The realisation of alternative cultures alongside the

dominant culture of the time is not only an early example of a critique of such modernism but it also gives way to defining culture in the plural of different cultures among different groups across the world. Crucially, for the purposes of this chapter, there was also recognition of “specific and variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation” (Williams 1976, p.89). Such variable cultures may often result in conflicting views of culture in which differing perspectives of culture emerge and are contested.

The literature on Williams and his contribution to culture is vast and is beyond the purposes of this thesis. Rather this brief discussion regarding William’s and his theories of culture serves as a reminder that culture is multiple and dynamic. William’s work serves to reinforce the argument that culture is not prescriptive and pure. It can be articulated for different purposes by different institutions and individuals at different times. This is important when understanding how culture has emerged within urban policy in recent decades as well as articulating the critiques of recent interpretations of culture-led regeneration policy by academics and activists alike.

2.2.1 The incorporation of culture within urban regeneration

Cultural strategies have also become incorporated within urban regeneration within the last twenty years with countries as diverse as Russia implementing cultural regeneration within their cities (see Trumbull 2014), with the development of the “Hepworth” art gallery in Wakefield and the Turner art gallery in Margate, Kent recent UK examples (Miles 2015). This will be further discussed in section 2.4. For the purposes of this section it is important to appreciate the development of cultural strategies and how it has increasingly become integrated within aestheticization and city development strategies rests on the argument that culture is very much premised on consumption based on middle class preferences with “alternative” cultures such as youth or localised culture being marginalised and hidden from view. Culture has also extended towards “flagship” development projects which seek to

recast the landscape into new spaces of consumption (Harding and Blokland 2014) as newer spaces of consumption rise out of previous areas of decline (Amin and Thrift 2000).

The further rise of consumption through culture can be evidenced by the incorporation of culture within wider regeneration schemes and frameworks. This has been reinforced by the government identifying culture as important in regeneration and marketing of places (DMCS 2004, Evans 2001, Kunzmann 2004). Moreover, this goes beyond purely just living and working and extends to consumption, retailing and increasingly stimulating experiences (Ritzer 1999, Schulke 1992). Metz (2002) argues that cities increasingly market themselves as fun cities while Jensen (2007) cites that the aim of cultural regeneration is to increase activity in order to attract capital, residents and tourists to cities. Such processes seek to reposition the locality within the cultural economy through effective marketing images (Loftman and Nevin 1995) within a wider context of “urban entrepreneurialism” (Harvey 1989) whereby local authorities find themselves operating within an increasingly business like environment where competition between cities for scarce resources shape the running of many urban areas within the UK.

It is clear that culture within such urban regeneration can take many forms. Table 1 shows examples of the various types of culture-led regeneration discussed above together with examples taken from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and wider region.

Table 1: Typology of culture-led regeneration

Type of Culture-led regeneration	Example
Re-use of existing building	BALTIC art gallery, Gateshead
Flagship (re)development project	Sage Music Centre, Gateshead
Reclamation of redundant land	Gateshead garden festival (1990)
Rebranding of area based on culture	Window on the World Festival, North Shields

Table 1 clearly demonstrates that Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the wider region have been subject to a plethora of cultural initiatives over many years incorporating many concepts

which has not only influenced the regeneration trajectory of the city but is evidence of a post-industrial city progressing to a regeneration model based on culture and consumption.

Many place based strands of culture have developed including that of attracting people to localities. This is symbolic of a shift from product to people; that places should focus less on attracting specific industries and more on marketing regions to people or talent (Florida 2003). The belief is that intellectual resources, such as knowledge and skills, are more important indicators of economic growth and prosperity. These classes of people are deemed to bring higher added value and productivity to localities (Brinkley 2006), which is a key component of Florida's (2002) creative class thesis. This concept will be explored further in the next section.

2.3 Culture, coffee shops and the creative class thesis

Florida's thesis on the creative class is an example of the way interpretations of culture has influenced urban development which has become one of the most common policies amongst urban elites working on urban development and regeneration policies across the developed world (Peck 2005). Florida argues that in the contemporary economy it is people who hold the key to a regions' success, not corporations. He believes that it is only those cities which adopt creative strategies to attract "bohemian" individuals that will become key growth cities in the future (Florida 2011). Such individuals are important because they are assumed to have high disposable incomes and in turn through word of mouth, are assumed to encourage other individuals, from the same demographic to a city which in turn generates demand for more coffee shops and other services to meet the needs of such groups (ibid). For Florida, the most diverse cities such as those offering alternative lifestyles and ones that offer cultural amenities will be the most economically successful cities as "new ideas are generated most efficiently in places where different cognitive styles are tolerated... [as] openness to diversity – provides an additional source of economic advantage" (Florida 2011,

p.232-233). These assertions are reinforced by measures Florida has developed such as his creativity index and gay and lesbian index for metropolitan regions in the United States.

In the case of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, recent academic research has highlighted the emergence of the creative class within areas of the city and its impact on those areas. Indeed Whiting and Hannam (2017) argue that such creative city policies become the unintended promoters of gentrification. Through research in the Ouseburn area of Newcastle (a cultural area of the city) the authors demonstrate how local authorities' attempts at branding a particular district as creative results in artists becoming aware of their instrumentality regarding wider urban growth leading to a loss of authenticity of place (Long 2009). Moreover, this can result in population pressures in the area, through gentrification, resulting in higher house prices and a qualitative change in the area as one interviewee respondent made clear;

“the studio I was in was obviously at very good rates... and because there was a scrapyard next door then I started using scrap metal... and now there's only one scrapyard left and all of the breakers' yards have shut because gentrification occurred” (interviewee quoted in Whiting and Hannam 2017, p328).

This shift within the landscape becomes evidence of both the commercialisation and regulation of former disused and dilapidated spaces (Whiting and Hannam 2018). Thus, the process of identifying creative spaces as Florida (2011) argues, is shown here to have unintended consequences that have real impacts on the artists and other “creatives” who occupy such areas. The freedoms associated with such spaces in areas at a previous time are thus subject to regulation which can often lead to higher prices and displacement. As local authorities increasingly brand areas such as Ouseburn creative, this aligns such areas with wider urban growth agendas and can pose risks to those living and working in such areas. This is often termed mass produced bohemia (Forkert 2013) whereby such desirable lifestyles are mass produced by local state actors rather than by the artists and creatives themselves. This can lead to the blurring between an artist who may reside in such spaces for their authenticity and marginalised characteristics and those who move to such areas

supposedly craving the same lifestyle choice but which are negotiated through consumer capitalism – the very facets of both society and the economy that “pioneers” to the area despise. Indeed such sanitised spaces which are realised through gentrification and regeneration, opens up channels for more conservative groupings which also change the ambience of an area and risk conflict (Whitling and Hannam 2017). This demonstrates that Florida’s creative class thesis has elements of division and exclusion within. In reality, such processes lead to enclaves of alternative lifestyles occupying the same area with the space managed and regulated by state actors for purely economic gain and consumption. This is something Florida and his proponents fail to take into account.

There is also evidence of more general regeneration with a creative twist that also adopts elements of Florida’s creative class thesis within Newcastle and the surrounding area.

Recent regeneration initiatives such as the SAGE development project and the opening of bars and cafes including the recent Eldon Square shopping centre extension in 2016 aim to entice such groups of people to visit and possibly relocate to such cities. Such services are intended to qualitatively change the economic and social makeup of the city to a demographic that can support a more traditional high-brow culture and the consumption opportunities such initiatives offer. The consequence being that in a city such as Newcastle, many local populations may not identify or be able to indulge in such cultural services so parts of the city become segregated for some residents as they do not have the economic and cultural capital to engage in some activities. Consequently, the regeneration strategies that are then advanced may go against the needs of more deprived local populations which have implications for who has access to the city and who has influence on the future trajectory of a city such as Newcastle.

While I have alluded to the consequences of Florida’s policy within the context of Newcastle (see above), it is not surprising that Florida’s thesis has been subject to wider academic critique. The following critiques of Florida’s thesis pave the way for exploring the role of culture in urban studies with a greater focus, especially at the local level. Firstly, on a

more general level, Florida's ability to generate statistics and indices across a whole country the size of the United States to support his argument is not only bewildering but masks the inequalities between and within these areas and the negative effects his policies would almost certainly have on those groups of people deemed non-creative (although Florida appears to argue that creative individuals can be found in all industries and all sectors of the economy) – a very broad claim to put forward.

Secondly, Florida's argument rests heavily on neo-liberal doctrines including increasing inter-urban competition between countries and regions which has itself led to the emergence of marketing consultants (like Florida himself) to advise nations and regions on policies to adapt to the modern age. Crucially, this has resulted in gentrification and an increasingly marginal role for local governments to play in the urban scene (Peck 2005).

Gentrification was first introduced by sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 in response to the social and economic changes to properties in central London at that time. Although a slippery concept regarding its definition and application, Smith helpfully defined gentrification as “the process by which working class residential neighbourhoods are rehabilitated by middle class homebuyers, landlords and professional developers” (Smith 1982, p.139). Although now a dated definition, Smith's account does address the overarching process involved in gentrification but just as cities have transformed over the years, so has the process of gentrification and the impact on the profile of urban areas. More recently, the consequences of urban regeneration initiated by central and local government itself has influenced the process of gentrification including Newcastle where a national policy titled Going for Growth led to “a particularly sharp form of displacement and exclusion affecting those who are seen as a threat to the attraction of a new, middle class population” (Cameron 2003, p.2372). Clearly, the impacts of regeneration, whilst unintended, can impact on the social and economic life of a city particularly cities initiating new rounds of investment.

For some, gentrification may positively contribute to economic growth by supporting demand for local services and increase the local tax base, by encouraging individuals with high disposable incomes who it is assumed will spend in local shops and services which in turn increases the takings and footfall of such local services as well as by attracting firms to relocate to an area with a highly skilled workforce. It can displace low income communities who have little input into their relocation and are often placed in isolated peripheral locations away from the city centre. Thirdly, Florida is quick to highlight the cities and regions that have in his view been successful in adopting creative class policies based on the “three Ts” – technology, talent and tolerance. Florida argues that cities with firms adopting new productive technologies have a large pool of highly qualified people and embrace alternative lifestyles such as LGBT communities and bohemian lifestyles will see their economies grow in the future. He has very little to say about the places which are not successful and which cannot attract such classes of people. There is substantial literature within the regional development arena which argues that a place’s future prospects are inevitably tied to its past development or “path dependence” (Dicken 2003). Indeed, the emergence of Silicon Valley which serves as headquarters for global technology and computing firms with major research and development facilities nearby has a lot to do with the policies of federal government and the role of the defence industry from the 1950’s – a context very few countries or regions would likely be able to replicate today. Moreover, for regions dependent on heavy industry (Florida names these places rust belts) may find refiguring their economy to a more bohemian creative economy (sunbelts) more challenging as their historical assemblage of local institutions and actors are geared towards previous or older industries which may take many years to adapt and change.

Finally, Florida attempts to counter potential criticism of the effects his policies might have in some areas;

“the current round of urban revitalization is giving rise to serious tensions between established neighborhood residents and newer, more affluent people moving in. In an increasing number of cities, the scales have tipped from revitalization to rampant

gentrification and displacement... gentrification in major urban centers continues to threaten the diversity and creativity that have driven these cities innovation and growth” (Florida 2003, p.289-290).

Yet, it seems surprising that Florida does not realise that the very policies he promotes in his books and through countless conventions and seminars actually encourage and perpetuate the very process of gentrification that he describes (Lees et al. 2008). It can be argued, therefore, the very process of implementing creative class policies results in a process which threatens the very conditions Florida argues is essential in attracting the creative class in the first place. Additionally, the style of his thesis appears as celebratory of the creative class involving their work, play and habits (Marcuse 2003) while Peck (2005) worries about the consequences of the market pressures unleashed by the creative class; “At various points, Florida concedes that the crowding of creatives into gentrifying neighbourhoods might generate inflationary housing-market pressures, that not only run the risk of eroding the diversity that the Class craves, but... could smother the fragile ecology of creativity itself” (Peck 2005, p.746) and argues that “the expected “returns” in the form of gentrification and tourist income, run the self-evident risk that such faux-funky attractions might lapse into their own kind of “generic”” (p.749). The risk is that through the constant search for authentic places and neighbourhoods such places may become generic as more places replicate “success” elsewhere (Ritzer 2004).

This is often exacerbated through policy intervention based on such creative class concepts. The creative class thesis also has implications for what can be termed peripheral locations as “these cities are clearly “trapped by their past”, suffering as they do from a form of “institutional sclerosis” that blinds them to the emergence of the new social and economic norms” (Florida 2002, p.302-303). The consequence is that such places are criticised for not being creative enough as Florida assumes that all cities the world over can be as hip as New York and as technologically dynamic as Silicon Valley, San Jose. Such claims are arguably irresponsible as “successful” cities are congratulated for their efforts even though places like “Silicon Valley” have a long history of state involvement over many years which may have

little to do with the urban elites of California in 2017. Such “naturalising” tendencies that cities can just “become” creative seemingly prevents critique (from Florida and his many proponents) of the unequal effects and interurban inequalities (Baris 2003) on the poor and the many “non-creative” occupations as well as the effects his thesis has on such groups of people and of the consequences for cities and spaces the non-creatives reside in.

Notwithstanding the popularity of Florida’s creative class thesis in policy circles, while cultural initiatives (with their origins within the creative class thesis) have gained traction over recent years, there has also been widespread criticism over its implementation in urban policy. Cities replicating the implementation of cultural venues and policies have resulted in places becoming increasingly similar and not distinctive leading to the term “clone city” (Glendinning and Page 1999) being attached to many cities. Furthermore, as more and more places engage in highly innovative and creative industries, this does not necessarily guarantee employment and economic growth success as every city cannot, and will not, have the same absorptive capacity (Boschma 2005). A region or city’s historical trajectory and political and institutional context, invariably renders some places more adaptive and innovative, enabling certain cities to evolve and adapt more than others.

It is important then, that a richer account of culture emerges, one that recognizes Williams’ (1976) important argument of there being multiple and sometimes contradictory conflicting roles culture plays in society and to account for the role these perspectives have played in urban policies in recent years. At this point, it is also important that the underlying assumptions and tendencies of how modern culture has developed are accounted for. For some, culture is a part of a wider process taking place within society –that of increasing aestheticization and commodification of urban spaces and of experiences themselves which have altered what and how cities are defined and marketed to tourists and visitors. The next section will take a closer look at these.

2.4: Aestheticization, consumption and culture

This section will account for the increasing role aestheticization has played in cities, transforming areas of cities into places of consumption (Dicks 2003), a foundation for the spread of culture within urban areas. The effect of such processes being that the development of cultural goods and attractions within the urban core become integral elements of urban regeneration strategies in major towns and cities. Such transformations are premised on dominant middle class values and consumption preferences (ibid). Other cultures, whether they are local or minority, tend to be marginal and are either hidden from view, banished to peripheries or co-opted into the urban centre. The increasing commodification of cities will also be examined while arguing that cities and their “cultures” are increasingly being fashioned into “legible” spaces where the city is on display whilst noting that some parts of city cultures are “sanitised” or removed from view and that difference and diversity is not tolerated if it contradicts the cultural aesthetic on display.

Aestheticization can be defined as the beautification [of a place or city] (Williams 1976). Increasingly, neo-liberal (and urban policy) anesthetization has extended its influence over the design of buildings, appropriate spaces for different groups of people to make a locality visually attractive and stimulating to investors, tourists and middle class professionals. Following Baudrillard (1983) it can be argued that places and cities in the postmodern world are increasingly becoming “aestheticized” through an intensification of the media and increasingly the promotion of signs and symbols “representing” a locality. One cannot venture through Times Square in New York City without noticing the latest Broadway Theatre Production being advertised before encountering the latest “must have” electronic product incorporated into the general eclectic stylistic hotchpotch (Featherstone 1991) of the urban fabric of post-modern cities.

Moreover, postmodern architectural styles where anything goes increasingly grace the skylines of many cities. Cities such as Dubai in the UAE are recent examples of how

skylines have taken the styles and heights of buildings to a new level. The race to have the tallest building or to have a building designed by the latest “star” architect increasingly becomes the object of city marketing strategies. The variety of architectural styles has increasingly become “humanised” whereby names for buildings sometimes eclipse their actual purpose. For example, the City of London has witnessed a qualitative shift in the number and variety of tall buildings erected since the new millennium. Buildings such as 122 Leadenhall Street designed by Richard Rogers has become well known in popular media as the “Cheesegrater”, similarly a rather unusual building designed by Raphael Vinoly at 20 Fenchurch Street has been termed the “Walkie Talkie” due to the form and shape of such buildings appearing similar to everyday objects. These playful terms become recognised as synonymous with everyday household objects and point towards a stylization of life through the “no place” constitutive of postmodern spaces (Chambers 1987) or as Hatherley argues, turning the London landscape into “an entire skyline of competing icons” (Hatherley 2010, p.xxii). Such terminology increasingly point to how cities are made to be “legible” to the wider public and to be accepted as part of the urban fabric of the city transforming in typical “boosterist” fashion “a mundane city into a cultural capital” (Hatherley 2010, p.xxii).

Urban boosterism is a way of city officials and business leaders projecting positive messages to businesses and residents elsewhere by emphasising art galleries, museums and parks in their city as a way of attracting further investment and migration of more affluent individuals. Often the amount of regeneration and redevelopment taking place is also emphasised (see Skot-Hansen et al 2013). The city is promoted as an open and welcoming city and very much shares its origins with Florida’s creative class thesis. Consequently areas of resistance or poorer neighbourhoods are air brushed from any promotional material that may be used and generic terms such as tolerant, welcoming and business friendly policies in particular are emphasized. Again such techniques often have implications for poorer residents as their concerns or opportunities may be neglected at the expense of newer

businesses or market sectors as anything which contradicts the message given out can be detrimental for the city in the eyes of investors (see Kavaratzis 2004).

Another way of increasing the popularity and awareness of such buildings is incorporating viewing platforms and roof top restaurants into the design of such buildings. These humanising tendencies help make these cities become urban magnets (Dicks 2003) and keep people in the city consuming. Of course the target market is the middle class who can afford to consume such commodities. Such processes carve up urban space so that large suburban and inner city housing estates evade the list of places to visit for the urban visitor and efforts are undertaken to either “regenerate” these areas or to hide them from view. The latter has occurred in the United States in recent years whereby cities such as Baltimore have adopted shuttle services (Peck 2005) so that visitors do not stray into the wrong areas preventing them from developing a negative view of the city.

Many cities construct a culture of fun and liveliness whereby diverse activities can occur simultaneously in a cultural mosaic, as Young celebrates below;

We spend a Sunday afternoon walking through Chinatown, or checking this week’s eccentrics in the park. We look for restaurants, stores, and clubs... We walk through sections of the city that we experience as having unique characters which are not ours, where people from diverse places mingle and then go home” (Young 1990, p.239).

Such expressions emphasise the diverse and “mosaic” nature of contemporary cities.

However, Young fails to recognize the way such everyday activities and encounters can be superficial, constructed and aestheticized for consumption. Dare we ask where the homeless who may spend time in the park are to be found? Where might we find the unemployed or the poor in accounts of such diversity? Moreover, cities are increasingly being viewed as cities of surveillance whereby the spaces described by Young are sanitised for those with the money to continue spending, ensuring that the homeless and the poor are kept out and excluded. These spaces are highly dependent on spending and capital investment and sit uncomfortably alongside spaces of decline and fragmented spaces of old industrial areas and

islands of gentrification and regeneration (Harvey 1989). Hence these cities become divided and segregated with legible spaces promoted and those “illegible” spaces hidden from the tourist gaze (Urry 2007). To return to the Times Square example above, such spaces become readable for important reasons. Their messages depicting the latest gadget are signs manipulated by the market to promote consumption, highlighting desires aimed at the creative, mobile and middle classes central to a consumer society. For Baudrillard this points to a new society whereby everyday life has become aestheticized;

It is reality itself today that is hyperrealist ... Today it is quotidian reality in its entirety – political, social, historical and economic – that from now on incorporates the stimulating dimension of hyperrealism. We live everywhere already in an “aesthetic” hallucination of reality” (1983, p.148).

Hence for Baudrillard, art, pictures and animation have become produced and reproduced which has penetrated all spheres of life in contemporary society, especially in urban areas. The consequence for culture-led regeneration from this perspective is that regeneration projects that emerge are targeted at the mass market with little or no awareness of local need.

2.4.1: Modern consumption spaces within the cultural city

A major element of the cultural city has been an orchestrated attempt to organise this consumption. Following Hannigan (1998), there has been a qualitative shift in the way town planners have approached the redevelopment of cities with the promotion of flagship development projects to give an “aesthetically appealing, festive approach... They had to compete successfully for the new breed of consumer who is hooked on fun” (Hannigan 1998, p. 89). The realisation of the role that a spectacular cultural display can have in encouraging and, more importantly in terms of consumption purposes, keeping visitors staying (and purchasing) for longer has not gone unnoticed by city leaders. The rise of 24-hour cities and the promotion of night time economies together with large venues and galleries have intensified consumption throughout the day and the year. The tendency for such consumption to agglomerate in certain spaces within cities can lead to economies of consumption (Glaeser 2011) whereby benefits of such co-location are shared as certain areas

of cities become destination enclaves for such consumption in their own right. Similar to theme parks (see Zukin 1991) and the experiences they create through fantasy lands and entertainment, cities have attempted to replicate such experiences through culture-led regeneration.

In light of this and following Dicks (2003), four ways of culture has become incorporated within urban regeneration which is put forward here. Firstly, the aesthetic, design centred principle is based on the visual referencing of certain times and places. The principle aim is of giving the visitor a feeling of being elsewhere in contrast to the modern everyday life. An example of such processes can be found at the York Castle Museum in York, England whereby visitors enter a recreated Victorian Street complete with carts and recreated shop fronts which attempt to take the consumer back to another time and indeed another culture whereby people bought bread and milk from the corner shop and lace and cloth to repair clothes – the focus being very much the local. The poverty and harsh working conditions are disguised from view as the main aim is to create a positive image of nostalgia as historic cities such as York use culture to reinvent and to highlight the history of the city in contrast to cities focussing on the contemporary and the future (Mordue 2005, 2007; Meethan 1996).

Secondly, cultural displays become a means of urban management whereby festivals are used as a tool for securing and “controlling” public spaces to project a unified image to allow and provide the conditions for capital investment and real estate projects. Sometimes, projects based purely on advantageous consumption can become visibly exclusionary.

Bicester Village, a shopping complex on the outskirts of Bicester in Oxfordshire, England is a recreation of a “typical” historical village which is occupied by high end retailers whereby security guards and metal gates actively exclude those deemed undesirable. To cater to such high end taste, complimentary services such as car washing are also offered. To further increase its prominence, coach tours from London often whisk international tourists from London to the Village as it is marketed as a must see on the tourist “circuit”. As the retailers are all globalised firms (Gucci, Chanel etc.), the experience on offer is made “legible” to an

international audience who are made to feel as if they are shopping in Paris, Milan or New York, hence the “there” (international cities and brands) are brought “here” (Bicester) in the present. Indeed it can be argued in a relational sense that Bicester Village is much more connected to London or Shanghai (Bicester Village attracts a lot of Chinese tourists) than a typical English village or even Bicester town centre which is located less than half a mile away from the shopping centre and is not on the agenda of the shoppers visiting Bicester Village.

Thirdly, institutions associated with high culture are embracing cultural display elements in their designs. Multiple uses such as shopping and leisure are incorporated into traditional establishments such as museums and art galleries which are situated in renowned venues designed by well-known architects.

Furthermore, culture within urban planning has witnessed a shift to establishing an authentic identity for towns and cities as well as the effects on the style and form of new developments. Notable examples include Covent Garden in central London where new developments have continued the traditional Italian piazza style architecture. This has extended as Julier (2000) explains from the visual consumption of buildings to the intimate details on the street such as benches, seating areas and signage.

The use of consumption, culture and signs as marketing strategies has also risen in prominence. The issue of who the city is being marketed towards (the local market or global business) is key. Bagguley et al. (1990) distinguished between consumerist postmodernism focusing on wealth creation for business through spectacular projects as opposed to vernacular postmodernism which aims to develop improvements for local communities through upgrading local facilities. This is not surprising as urban redevelopment and especially culture-led rejuvenation is targeted at promoting consumer spending opportunities and prestige aimed at further consumption and commodification. Such commodification and aesthetization has extended across many “spheres” and spaces of the city to include plazas

and shopping centres. Shopping centres attempt to recreate a cosmopolitan feel with many larger centres in particular (including Trafford Centre, Manchester and the Metro Centre, Gateshead) recreating exotic or distant spaces such as Mediterranean environments (e.g. the Mediterranean village in the Metro Centre) whereby the retail outlets themselves are housed in Spanish villa style designs complete with “outdoor” seating spaces and palm trees along a tiled floor bringing the “exotic” to the rather cold and damp British city centre or suburb helping to “create a space that will induce visitors to feel that they have actually entered the foreign country featured” (Hendry 2000, p.20). Theme parks within such shopping centres help “keep the whole family entertained” (ibid) within its own fantasy land of rides and attractions which reposition the shopping centre as an attraction in itself even a holiday destination in its own right (Ritzer and Liska 1997). Yet again the whole centre is based on middle class consumption, signs and symbols. Each “themed” area is self-contained to help create authenticity while the theme park is only accessible to those able or willing to pay to enter.

The signs and symbols in shopping centres are equally important. This is where ideas of consumption become central to negotiating the shopping space and experience. Toilet facilities centred on motorway service stations with advertising boards offering the latest “must have deals” encourage and promote consumption even while having to carry out a necessary biological activity. Signs back into the shopping centre are adorned with slogans such as “after a little break now back to the action” to prime shoppers to consume once more. Slogans on the shop windows emphasise happiness and contentment by consuming from such outlets. In fact, all such consumption is premised on “retail therapy” – a postmodern condition whereby the only way to feel good about oneself is if one dabbles in shopping for the new “must have” outfit or fragrance to give a boost and to feel good about oneself. For Featherstone (1991, p.72-73), such ““dream-worlds” in big cities” have a long history whereby department stores of the past were “temples in which goods were worshipped as fetishes”. In fact;

“The urban landscape has become aestheticized and enchanted through the architecture, billboards, shop displays, advertisements, packages, street signs and through the embodied person who move through these spaces; the individuals who wear, to varying degrees, fashionable clothing, hair styles, make-up, or who move, or hold their bodies, in particular stylized ways.” (Featherstone 1991, p.77).

Such arguments are reinforced by earlier work of Walter Benjamin (1982) regarding the “flâneur” that of temporal or fleeting consumption (both in time and space). These days individuals, through increasing travel and communication can engage in localised consumption (such as in the grand streets of Paris) and then travel onto other localities. A result of such fleeting consumption across time and space is that the consumer becomes disengaged with the locality they are consuming in as the social relations and actors which have allowed such a locality to be viewed as a place of consumption are masked and disregarded by the consumer as he/she continues their travels onto the next destination for further consumption and stimulating experiences. Indeed it is clear that for cities to become legible, readable and aestheticized, all elements of a city should reinforce and promote a mass culture - a culture of consumption. In this light cities which can “draw the crowds” and encourage 24 hour consumption are the ones ideally suited to new rounds of private investment.

Yet, as many regeneration programmes have emphasised retail consumption as a way to reinvigorate city spaces (e.g. Trinity shopping centre, Leeds), the danger is that for poorer groups who may feel forced to consume in such a way, personal finance issues may arise which may well perpetuate the poverty of such groups while addressing the needs of middle class consumption.

Following Dicks (2003), while many cities have adopted such “culturalization” and aestheticization strategies in recent years some more noticeable issues have become pressing. For Griffiths (1998) cities have become increasingly bland. While proponents of cultural projects emphasise the importance of distinctiveness and uniqueness in such projects

(Landry 2000), too many end up replicating each other. Thus while Hay-on-Wye in Herefordshire has fashioned the development of its town on its burgeoning book culture since the early 1960's, many European towns have attempted to replicate such a policy which was very much organically driven by local businessmen in Hay which may be difficult to replicate in another context. Some areas, on the other hand, adopt themes for their regeneration such as maritime or historic but whose differentiation is limited by relying on a limited number of architects, designers and developers (Dicks 2003). For Holcomb (1993) such "blandsapes" are representative of a constant replication of thematic variations arguably to make cities legible to globalised consumers and the modern day flâneur that yearns for activities and spaces of familiarity. Therefore, a tourist visiting a city can shop in local retail outlets, can watch a production in the local theatre and can learn the history of a locality in the local museum. A city lacking such appeals can be viewed negatively when attracting investment or visitors. For Ritzer (2003), the increasingly standardised form of services and attractions epitomised by the "McDonaldization" of society results in the urban form to becoming more standardised and homogenised. A paradox emerges in that cities continue to position themselves along ever more differentiated paradigms (from gastro culture through to green spaces) when capital and visitors increasingly strive for readable, legible spaces. Anything too overcomplicated or confusing is rejected while the search for more stimulating and enchanting experiences goes on resulting in de-differentiation.

Of course, city officials have a major dilemma when working towards such flagship projects of cultural consumption in that it is generally the poorest who endure the greatest dislocation to make such projects a reality. Removal or relocation of inner city inhabitants results in ghettoizing local, more marginalised, communities. A major consideration in contemporary cities is the issue of balancing local communities identit(ies) in the face of large flagship projects with a particular target audience (middle class, highly mobile) in mind (Tallon 2010). Such projects run the risk of increasing aesthetization – beautification and gentrifying principles over how such spaces and quarters will be used by residents in the

existing social setting (Mercer 1999). The inclusion of such developments in contemporary cities almost humanises and personifies the space as welcoming and homely. In this light the illusion works – the aesthetic project is simply a façade for a form of capitalism, similar to that which Benjamin (1982) discovered in the arcades of Paris, that relies on a dominant corporate culture based on middle class consumption that adjusts cities to the needs of the market. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, regeneration has concentrated on the quayside focussing on cultural institutions such as a music venue (the SAGE) and an art gallery (the Baltic Art Centre) which appeals to a middle class cultural aesthetic. This is interspersed with cafes and bars which are not only similar to towns and cities across the country but serves to qualitatively alter the local economy and offer of the city focusing on consumption within a post-industrial context.

Some authors such as Castells (1994) argue that such homogenisation claims overlook the tendency (and difference) of European countries in particular to adopt left of centre policies compared to the more neo-liberal market based model of the United States. While the importance of historical-political differences may be warranted, such arguments emphasise the increasingly complex globalised-localised meshing of cultural tendencies to reach a similar objective – that make cities increasingly readable and aestheticized, to increase consumption and experiences within cities and to make cities attractive to businesses and visitors on the one hand, while trying to create and highlight local identities and differences on the other. This is in agreement with Dicks (2003) who says that cultural redevelopment projects can have the ironic tendency of displacing existing “grounded” street cultures in a space which purifies city life so that consumers are protected from any form of difference. Urban policy may appear to promote and highlight difference and diversity as a major selling point as ways to attract consumers and encourage economic growth, yet in many cases such aesthetic and cultural projects in reality appear to disregard such difference and diversity.

Indeed, the objective of many urban strategies is that of increasing difference, promoted by the creative class thesis (Florida 2011). Yet as has been explained, policy makers appear to emphasise a locality's distinctiveness or particularity when in fact such developments often result in repetition across cities (Glendinning and Page 1999). One way to overcome this crisis of particularity and local authenticity would be to view urban areas as a work in progress (in a relational sense) and that all regeneration and development is one step of a wider (perpetuating) process of reconfiguration of the urban landscape.

One consequence of this increasing rise and maturity of culture, consumption and the associated effect on space and time is that the concept has expanded and diversified into further sections of urban life. This process has increasingly incorporated the civic sphere including even quite traditionally staid institutions, such as public libraries (Pateman and Williment 2013), into their boosterist ambits. The next section will focus on how a public service – the public library, has been incorporated into wider regeneration strategies based on culture and consumption.

2.5: Aestheticization, consumption and culture in civic life: public libraries

While the relationship between urban regeneration and public libraries will be explored, it is important to highlight how public libraries have been incorporated within the literature to serve as a foundational link between such institutions and cities.

While it is important to note that for many years, the public library has been viewed by members of the public as a unique public good/service in that libraries are seen to be open to all members of society, rich or poor, in practise this is not always the case, as minority groups and the poor tend not to use the library (Goulding 2006). The literature on public libraries is diverse and can be classified into three main topics; public libraries and their contribution to social capital, the role of public libraries as meeting places, as well as libraries within regeneration strategies particularly culture-led regeneration. This section will demonstrate that while many commentators may view libraries as irrelevant in the modern

world, particularly due to the “information age” whereby books, and by association libraries, are seen to be a relic of earlier times is disputed. Indeed, research shows that libraries are diversifying from books to alternative media and can overcome elements of social exclusion by offering spaces for interaction for people from a variety of backgrounds (Leckie and Hopkins 2002). Thereby linking them to the postmodern city in ways not previously possible in the modern city.

The discussion then focuses on the role of libraries increasingly becoming integrated within culture as spaces of creative potential and artistic engagement as well as regeneration. More recent accounts are discussed which move the debate away from culture as commodification to culture as spaces of emancipation through new interpretation of culture (Sacco 2011). However before these avenues can be explored, the contention that libraries are essentially public spaces within a sea of increasing privatised space (Davis 2012) must be interrogated first.

2.5.1. Libraries as Public Spaces

Some studies have demonstrated that libraries have the ability to promote cohesion and social capital (see Hillenbrand 2005) which are important roles public libraries play in society. Unique within public services is that the library is open to everyone regardless of age, gender or religion. It is argued that by viewing public libraries as public spaces, they are “conducive to interpersonal relationships and solidarity, encouraging a sense of belonging and community and, by providing public space for people to share interests, experiences, views and outlook” (Goulding 2006, p. 246). Viewed this way, libraries can offer an alternative public space in contrast to other areas which may have “lost” their civic qualities through recent public sector cuts which have reduced the services that many libraries offer (Evjen 2015). This has been reinforced by research in Canada which has shown that libraries are “home” to a range of individuals engaged in a variety of activities within the same space (Leckie and Hopkins 2002). In their research, Leckie and Hopkins conducted a “seat sweep”

(where the numbers of people in a room or building are counted and their activities recorded) of the library spaces of Vancouver and Toronto and discovered that many people visit the library for a number of reasons including seeking company with other people. Indeed following Putnam (1995), the mixing of people of various backgrounds is representative of extending social capital. Social capital involves connections between people which are amassed over time. Through activities that take place within a group of people, social capital can increase and become stronger (see Putnam 1995). The following quotation highlights the role of social capital in libraries;

“Social capital is accumulated as a by-product of those interactions which contribute to a community or group sensing that their access to an institution, such as a library enhances their *functioning within the wider society*. In turn, those spaces which provide social capital possibilities *contribute to the cohesive social fabric*, even though they may not be recorded or recognised. (emphasis added, Cox 1995, p.7)

Activities that promote social capital and involve public interaction or socialising that does not involve market relations within libraries highlight the library as a public space. These qualities have benefits for the wider society as it does for the people involved because it allows for skill enhancement as well as opportunities to increase social networks in ways not determined by the market. This is important as compared to the literature above on consumption, the library in this respect offers a conduit compared with other areas of the city where access is increasingly determined by a person's ability to pay.

Libraries can also contribute to “community development” acting as a space where individuals can unite. For Goulding (2006) this is shaped around key ideas relating to the library as a place that can make people understand and be a part of their locality. An idea grounded in people's lives, a focus on the social and where they live to help form a common local identity. In this light the library becomes a unique space that can help individuals understand what is valuable about where they live, helping foster communal and social ties that the market could never offer. Crucially, it is through the library offering a neutral, communal space that allows individuals the support to engage in community involvement and capacity building in a “non-consumerist” environment. This is important as this can

allow the library to become an authentic public space in contrast with other city institutions such as art galleries or a music venue which offers a more globalised interpretation of culture and structure access based on one's ability to pay. A key strategy of the library in this regard is to engage in partnership with other public services. Importantly for libraries, in order to attract funding there needs to be evidence of effective partnership working to ensure the library remains "relevant";

"Any partnership you take on, you need to show the benefit for the library's public users. You're not just doing it because it suits the other partner... You have to be very careful about what you do. There has to be a purpose and there has to be a deliverable for the library public before we can do it" (Anon, quoted in Goulding 2006, p.241).

While partnership working requires a lot of time to ensure benefit to the library, such arrangements ensure new and improved services can be introduced which help the library in its mission of encouraging life-long learning as well as being a useful and relevant community resource (ibid). Viewed as a community resource, libraries can offer interaction between communities allowing people to become more integrated. By undertaking activities in a public space with people from the community doing the same task can promote tolerance, diversity and social cohesion (Salmon 2002).

Previous studies have demonstrated that public libraries act as meeting spaces in modern society (Aabo et al 2010). The new or modern public library connections with employers and other businesses which can not only help skill enhancement but can offer access to additional services whether it be health issues or benefit advice demonstrating the multiple roles the library can play in society.

Indeed McClure as far back as 1987 proposed eight roles played by public libraries;

1. *Community activity centres* – help in integration of multiple communities;
2. *Community information centres* – offer information of local authority services and related help and advice;

3. *Formal education support centres* – offering homework clubs;
4. *Independent learning centres* – help overcome illiteracy in communities through literacy classes;
5. *Popular materials libraries* – special loan conditions for in demand books;
6. *Preschool learning* – storytelling events and parent activities;
7. *Reference libraries* – reference services;
8. *Research centres* – specialist collections for particular topics for researchers.

The variety of spaces for such activities inevitably involves a range of individuals from various backgrounds increasing the potential for trust and interaction to take place.

Following Lofland (1998) libraries can be viewed as the public realm between strangers adopting a parochial realm where the dominating relation is communal as well as the private realm whereby individuals conduct tasks or activities in relation to personal goals. This provides evidence of the public library as not only a public space but a democratic space within the city. To extend the idea of space further, Oldenburg's (1991) concept of third space is important here which is the alternative between home and work and are important spaces for encouraging civic engagement. Third spaces are neutral spaces and serve as a leveller within society offering a platform for rich and poor to be together and to debate on equal terms. Such spaces are deemed essential in fostering social capital and building up a community (Aabo et al. 2010).

Such activities clearly focus on the individual and may well be typical of the aim of regenerated communities (see Dudley 2012), aiding communities to become inclusive of more active and knowledgeable citizens with a variety of skills and experiences. While I discuss the role of communities in much greater detail in chapter 3, this slight digression is important for the arguments regarding the library as a public space and its role within the communities that libraries serve. Regenerated communities is a term I have defined as a

community which has access to a range of resources and services to aid their inclusion into society whether that be through skill development or job creation or even awareness of and input into the future trajectory of a city through attending community consultation events on regeneration projects in the area. From a regeneration perspective, however, within traditional culture-led regeneration policies and the focus on commodification, issues arise such as whether traditional roles described above are still the focus of the library and whether such spaces and offerings aimed at the local community co-exist alongside more “cultural” activities such as coffee shops and tourist information centres. Is it possible for the two divergent activities (and users) to co-exist alongside one another or does culture-led regeneration ensure the future of the library or does it fundamentally change the offering and role of the library? These issues become more important as libraries are incorporated into wider regeneration frameworks premised on culture and issues this thesis will explore.

Moreover, increasing state retrenchment of public services more generally has concerned some library commentators such as Pateman and Williment (2013) who have argued that services have been closed or re-located in an effort to save money and councils have had to justify expenditure on public libraries through paradigms of “value for money” especially as book prices are assumed to have fallen in price over time (Kerslake and Kinnell 1998). Indeed accounts from North America have also highlighted how some institutions are pushing for libraries to adopt “entrepreneurial” strategies to attract external funding (see Buschmann 2004). This impasse is important as public libraries for many are seen to be the most open and accessible public service, yet one which is hard to quantify in terms of its wider benefits beyond crude economic and quantitative statistics. Put another way, in a world where social capital is seen to be decreasing (Putnam 1995) and a wider disengagement between communities and politicians grows as well as the existence of a (diminishing) public sphere for debate and negotiation, the library as a political (social capital, political debate) and social (engagement, self-learning) “good” is imperative.

2.5.2 Public Libraries within political and cultural discourse

A political strand has developed around how public libraries can be effective agents to promote social inclusion and to “regenerate” communities. Public libraries have very much viewed themselves as ideal partners to tackle many of the issues identified by national government, namely that of social exclusion (Goulding 2006). Unfortunately, the Conservative Lib-Dem coalition government of 2010-2015 closed down many of the agencies and associations that promoted libraries in the political sphere such as the Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) council. Therefore, while the stance of the coalition government will be outlined, the majority of policy on libraries was developed under the New Labour administration (1997-2010). Nonetheless, some important undertones from the coalition government will be noted which has had profound effects on the library service across the UK. The most important consequence of the coalition government on libraries was the to place libraries under the Arts Council England (ACE) for funding which arguably repositions the library as a “cultural” facility - with a focus on creative writing workshops and art displays - in the eyes of the government as the then Minister for Culture Media and Sport Mr Vaizey expressed; “The move unites cultural policy with library policy for the first time” (Vaizey 2012, p.2). Additionally, the move to create collaborations with artists and arts organisations (ibid) further augments the library within cultural policy and by extension culture-led regeneration frameworks. It is also pertinent to analyse the Arts Council England’s (ACE) stance on libraries. ACE states the need for effective consultation with communities to better deliver public services (Locality, 2013), yet there is an underlying strand on the need for libraries to be enterprising;

“services need to be *financially* sustainable in the longer term. Both library authorities and communities will need to be *enterprising* and open to *diversification of income streams* if these libraries are to thrive into the future” (emphasis added, Locality, 2013, p.9).

This quotation essentially implies that there is no conflict between an efficient or enterprising library and one which promotes democracy through its activities. In reality it is

likely that financial sustainability will take precedence over democratic imperatives as the government has positioned library policy by emphasising libraries' entrepreneurial qualities and it is also likely that democratic opportunities will vary between libraries across the country.

It is questionable how libraries can become financially sustainable since library fees are considerably lower than other public services unless they adopt entrepreneurial strategies. This could involve locating multiple services (paid and unpaid) together. Indeed, this is what ACE proposes: "Space shared with community based services (such as council, health, business support, and learning organisations...[will allow for] cutting costs" (ACE 2013, P.6). Many libraries such as the new library being constructed in South Shields, South Tyneside are locating restaurants as well as offering exhibition spaces and cafés which "will put South Tyneside on the map as a vibrant culture and leisure destination 365 days a year" (South Tyneside Council 2015, p.1). This poses issues regarding the democratic opportunities within the library. Is such juxtaposition democratically good for the library or does it compromise the traditional purpose of the library if the library is to become an element of the "right to the city" (see Harvey 2011). While the literature on this issue is lacking, Buschmann argues that such a movement disregards a "shallow mimicking of the market" (Buschman 2013, p.8). Nonetheless, this thesis will explore this issue in more detail within the case study.

The right to the city was first proposed by Lefebvre and has been advanced by theorists such as Harvey who defines the term as:

"The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights." (Harvey 2008, p.23)

Crucially, such a process involves the inclusion of communities in actively having some form of power to shape the process of urbanization in response to the capitalistic nature of

urban rejuvenation. This is more pertinent as often such rejuvenation leads to displacement of poorer groups and their activities and spaces within the city. Proponents such as Harvey (2008) of the right to the city argue that residents must influence urban decision-making to take into account of the societal and communal needs of cities instead of a financial appraisal by the capitalist class.

The policy direction of ACE clearly places market principles within the operation of the library which may limit the ability of it to become a right to the city for many of its users as issues associated with cost become major factors within the running of the library and the services it offers. These issues are compounded by the reduction in public expenditure on libraries which have had a major impact on libraries since they are still funded by local government. One outcome has been to transfer libraries to community control with local authority support. Community controlled libraries are where the running of the library is transferred to a community group whereby paid staff numbers are reduced and community volunteers take their place. Whilst they may have the support of one or two librarians, the local authority has no responsibility for that particular library and provides little or no financial support. Yet with more funding restraints due in the coming years with the election of the Conservative government in May 2015, the ability for councils to support libraries in the future is in doubt. A recent example is Birmingham which has built a new £188 million library but has no funds to pay for new books. This does not bode well for the future according to Millard (2015).

Publications in the early New Labour (1997-2010) administration such as *Libraries for All* (2003) highlighted how public libraries offer services such as ICT access and classes to excluded groups. The Library and Information Commission (2000) went further and stated that public libraries were the essence of inclusion which epitomized the concept in their values and activities; and by their presence in local communities. Yet for Muddiman et al. (2000), libraries had often been inclusive in only a limited sense adopting “weak, voluntary and “take it or leave it” approaches to social inclusion” (p. viii). This has been confirmed by

studies which have revealed that forty percent of the UK population do not use libraries and many “excluded groups” such as the disabled and ethnic minorities encounter additional issues such as inaccessible buildings and language barriers (Goulding 2006). Attempts have been made to overcome social exclusion and be “accessible” to all but a realisation that all communities including the library “community” are divergent with different needs and requirements. Goulding’s study into the role of public libraries in the Twenty First Century found very diverging views amongst the librarians themselves on this issue. The following statements illustrate this point well;

“There needs to be a much stronger dialogue with local communities about what local library services could be. The key driver should be the Community Strategy and to make that work we have got to get better... at engaging with local people about what they really want” (interview participant in Goulding 2006, p.212).

“Some of us argue that we need to focus and target and base [sic] it on needs but that doesn’t sit comfortably with a lot of white middle class librarians who think that is somehow unfair... They think they have got to treat everybody exactly the same even though when people walk through the door they are not the same because of their life experiences for a start, their education and their background. (interview participant in Goulding 2006, p.215).

These sentiments highlight the heterogeneous nature of the library community and points towards a naïve assumption that because libraries are theoretically open to all, they are by definition relevant to all in their locality; hence exclusion is still a problematic issue to overcome. A major implication that libraries should deal with is that in order to promote a well-educated active and civil minded community, libraries should also stay relevant to existing users. It is clear that libraries offer a unique public service that can contribute to a plethora of both communal and individual goals to benefit society. However, there remains a large minority of individuals who do not use the library. As the library repositions itself to engage with these communities in a society which is very different both socially and economically than fifty years ago, the ability to offer both societal and intellectual enrichment to all individuals in the same space appears to be of paramount importance in the second decade of the twenty first century. The main question is whether the library can be all

things to all people, an issue common to all public services and a one that will be addressed in this research.

2.5.3 Public Libraries within urban regeneration frameworks

The literature on the role of public libraries within regeneration strategies is quite sparse, but very much aligns public libraries with culture-led strategies aimed at seeking local advantage in the face of increased competition between, and branding of, urban centres on a global scale (see Rasmussen et al. 2010; Skot-Hansen et al. 2013). In this literature, a number of key themes can be identified that impact on the way many public libraries are being refigured, and these are: cultural iconicity, place making, differentiated urban identity making, and community rejuvenation.

Cultural icons within urban rejuvenation has become a prominent feature of recent years personified by Frank Gehry's "New Guggenheim" from 1997 leading to architect Charles Jencks to claim that "politicians all over the world now demand the "wow-effect" in new buildings" (2006, p.8). Cultural icons are buildings which boast innovative architecture, representing the city to a global audience within a cultural niche. The British Museum in London is an example of such a building. Sklair (2006) argues that the effect of cultural icons is part of wider attempts at "urban boosterism". For Sklair;

"Urban boosterism is the most common rationale for deliberately created iconic architecture... Those driving urban boosterism deliberately attempt to draw tourists, convention and mega-event attendees with money to spend and the images they project are directed to this end" (2006, p.38).

Many libraries around the world have engaged in such iconic strategies for their library projects. The Seattle Public Library (see Figure 1) which opened in 2004 is one such example as well as Peckham library in South London (see Figure 2) which rather innovatively incorporates a public space due to an overhang in the design. These libraries are constructed using innovative materials and as in Peckham's case are implemented within

wider regeneration projects. Such designs diverge immensely from traditional “Carnegie” style library architecture which was built by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie between 1883 and 1929 across the world. Carnegie libraries adopted traditional architecture of the time and focussed on instilling morals within the lower classes to be more akin to the middle class reinforcing the library as a space of education and knowledge albeit along a very specific and exclusionary trajectory (Goulding 2006). Nonetheless, Carnegie libraries attempted to address the ills and needs of society whereas the library as a cultural icon clearly focusses more on needs of the city and less on needs of the library users.



Figure 1: Seattle Public Library

Source:

http://www.jamesewingphotography.com/data/photos/821_1seattle_public_library_oma_re_m_koolhaas_james_ewing.jpg



Figure 2: Peckham Library, London.

Source:

<http://image.guardian.co.uk/sysimages/Books/Pix/pictures/2007/02/12/pecklib460279.jpg>

A second trend is that of place-making. For Skot-Hansen et al. (2013), cultural institutions over recent years have been repositioned as integral elements of regeneration policies often used to initiate wider development in a city quarter which have the potential to become important identity makers for the locality. Yet to be competitive or “unique” institutions must offer something different. This has often resulted in libraries offering newer services (discussed above) to “entice” new audiences into the library. Multiple services such as tourist information hubs aim to attract visitors into the library as well as offering digital services to those who may require it. These buildings then become the first building visited by tourist and visitors and can create a positive first impression. Examples include Salt Lake City in the United States of America where visitor number in the Northern part of the city had declined. In this case the library was developed as a “cultural anchor” (Skot Hansen et al. 2013).

Cultural anchors are a strand of anchor institutions which have developed predominantly in North American cities (Anchor Institution Task Force 2015). Anchor Institutions are defined as the “civic, cultural, social and intellectual institutions which contribute to the cultural, social and economic vitality of cities” (Morris et al. 2010, p.1). In this light, cultural anchors are anchor institutions which are predominantly cultural in nature. A local example is the Sage on Gateshead quayside which has become a significant institution for the city and wider region. Among the characteristics of anchor institutions in the United States, having a large state or presence in a community as well as being centres of culture and learning with substantial human resources are two important elements (Netter Centre for Community Partnerships, 2008). Such institutions do not have a democratic mandate and do not primarily include regeneration as their aim. Their scale and rootedness (i.e. a spatially fixed capital project) to the community lead many anchors to play an active role in local development leading to what Morris et al. (2010) has termed “sticky capital”. Sticky capital is where the institutions themselves become embedded in an area and are less likely to move to another locality based on variations such as lower wages or tax deductions. In this light, they can be viewed as long term assets, having an influence over a wider geographical area and may be used as a way of attracting talent (i.e. musical performance venues may attract popular musicians or a library may attract popular authors) as well as associated private sector investment in the centre of cities.

Of course, cultural anchors may bring disadvantages associated with being dominant in a locality which may make the region or locality vulnerable if the cultural anchor reduces staff numbers. Secondly, they may “crowd-out” other businesses and may constrain efforts to diversify the local economy (Morris et al, 2010). Finally, many anchors are reliant on funding streams with links to state or local governance. In times of austerity, such funding streams may disappear which may affect the long-term success of such cultural anchors (Anchor Institution Task Force 2015).

For such efforts to be beneficial requires collaboration with urban elites as well as nearby institutions and residents, although many anchors often view such partners as “customers” with examples in America showing how universities engage in redeveloping their campuses with retail outlets to attract both students and local residents (ICIC, 2011). Cultural anchors, when viewed this way, become an effective framework for regeneration strategies focussed on declining or redundant urban cores (Anchor Institution Task Force 2015) and may adopt co-location policies whereby services share a physical space with the aim of achieving economic efficiencies whilst increasing footfall, to help increase the success of such regeneration initiatives.

Some libraries, in recognition of declining city centre use in the UK have sought to position themselves within areas that still attract visitors – within shopping centres. Nevertheless the promotion of “co-location” of public services is seen as a way to overcome exclusion and isolation (Goulding 2006). The development of retail outlets and eateries can help establish a new cultural quarter in the city centre whereby the majority of services in a locality are cultural in nature. Of course, such initiatives again have elements of Richard Florida’s Creative Class thesis (2002) with the aim of attracting individuals with money to spend by tailoring the city and its “experiences” to a globally mobile, cultured, modern day flâneur (Benjamin 1982). These initiatives have been implemented in towns and cities across the world. The danger is that far from constructing a “unique” global identity, the library and associated developments become a mere “clone city” (Glendinning and Page 1999).

Furthermore, recent research into politicians and their attitudes towards libraries have demonstrated that they are not fully aware of the current needs of libraries and viewed libraries as essential to city development and image-making by orientating the city through culture and knowledge (Evjen 2015).

2.6 From culture to participation: Sacco's models of culture

Recent research has sought to reposition the role of culture within wider society, the libraries and the role of the public libraries (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013). This moves the debate away from culture as commodification and experiments with alternative readings of culture. In recalling the earlier debate on Williams (1961) and his differing types of culture, the arguments put forward by Sacco (2011) (below) attempt to develop William's theory by arguing that culture can also be more emancipatory and participative. A culture that is more nuanced, one which recognises local history or tradition, and potentially transformative which focusses on co-production and upskilling rather than the traditional economic currency associated with large art galleries or music venues is explored. Whilst this research does not attempt to directly link Williams and Sacco, nonetheless, it is important to show how Williams's interpretation of there being multiple cultures is an important starting point in order to contextualise Sacco's own work on culture.

Williams identified three types of culture based on absolute values, documentation of human thought and experience and finally a social interpretation which is unique to different societies (Storey 1998). Sacco (2011) has also attempted to define culture into three categories but whereas Williams focuses on culture within wider society, Sacco focusses more on the effects of culture primarily within the economy and attempts to make social connections as his model develops. While Sacco's model does not directly match William's categories, there are similarities such as both share an awareness of culture as being multiple, diverse and dynamic. Furthermore, it can be argued that Sacco's model develops out of William's social definition or third definition of culture – that of being unique to a particular group or society. This connection is important as Williams states; "The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture. Such analysis... will also include analysis of elements in the way of life that to followers... are not culture at all; the organization of production (Williams 1961, quoted in Storey 1998, p.48). As will be shown,

Sacco's model offers research avenues into how culture can be transformational by allowing communities to explore their local culture and to develop their own interpretations through active cultural production.

Sacco develops our understanding by advancing a theory of culture that relies on users actively developing their own cultural documentation and outputs which actively enhances the skills of the users in a way that has the potential to meet both the needs of the market and the wishes of local users. Such an approach can potentially offer an alternative reading of culture, one which focuses on local history and culture, as well as improving the lives of participants, while recognizing that different interpretations of culture as described can be valued both economically and socially, which may well have additional advantages and "spill overs" for the wider economy.

For Sacco, Culture 1.0, his first category, involves limited audiences and little impact onto other communities or the economy. Culture 2.0 is much more relevant to the economy and involves a new relationship "between cultural production and the generation of economic value that is dominated by the expansion of cultural and creative industries" (Sacco 2011, p.3). This can be seen through the "extensive use of art and culture in urban regeneration, city-branding through iconic cultural institutions" (Jochumsen et al. 2015). It can be argued that the redevelopment of a library within urban regeneration initiatives falls under culture 2.0 principles which are characteristic of many regeneration strategies in the first decade of the 21st century.

Culture 3.0 advances the theory of culture by arguing that "the explosion of the pool of producers, so that it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between cultural producers and users" (Sacco 2011, p.3) as the traditional view of cultural creators and audiences has clearly changed over recent years. This has occurred because many people have engaged in the production of culture whether it is groups producing new music or artists within temporary urban spaces. This move is not new as many academics have charted the rise of

the “prosumer” (see Ritzer et al. 2012 for an overview). “Prosumption” is where the lines between production and consumption are blurred so that an individual can both produce something as well as consume it simultaneously. One of the main consequences of this is that culture has moved away from being purely a leisure based activity to being a major part of the economy. Crucially, this can be a major factor in endogenous economic growth (growth initiated by local partners or resources within a city or region) entailed through active cultural participation. Following Sacco (2011), a number of advantages can be identified including increased innovation extending into the wider economy so that individuals can become empowered as well as to challenge prejudices that they may encounter in their everyday lives. Furthermore, welfare of users and local communities can be increased as it is thought that cultural production can have positive effects on life expectancy and overall wellbeing (ibid). A third advantage is associated with sustainability as socially responsible behaviours can be extended to users’ other spheres of life. Fourthly, social cohesion is seen to be positive through Culture 3.0 as different types of cultural projects can prevent juvenile crime and through participation, users can enter into wider communication strategies with strangers instead of hostility. Other benefits are associated with new entrepreneurial models based on cultural production, lifelong learning, soft power through the wider political process connecting with themes associated with the “right to the city” (Harvey 2011) as well as enhancing local identity through exploring shared meaning through culture (Sacco 2011).

Linked to this, there is evidence emerging of libraries becoming performative as well as creation spaces whereby library users are inspired to create and produce various kinds of products or cultural artefacts (Jochumsen et al. 2015). This has impacts in three areas. Firstly this addresses some recent issues such as bridging the participation gap and help boost civic engagement (ibid), thereby increasing democratic potential. Secondly, the offer of facilities such as writing skills or musical production may help facilitate the production of art in a digital era and may contribute to economic development initiated from the bottom-up.

Thirdly, participation in such workshops may help forge local identity and may well help develop alternative sub-cultures based on empowerment.

From this perspective it is also interesting to consider whether libraries are implicated in the transition from Culture 2.0 to Culture 3.0 and how this transition has played out within the public library. Have these transformations resulted in a new public library space to emerge? Moreover, it is also pertinent to explore whether this stage of culture can be more transformational for local communities as Culture 2.0 has been critiqued for treating audiences merely as passive consumers (Jochumsen et al. 2015) but which has become firmly entrenched in recent urban regeneration strategies. This will be explored in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne case study.

While these trends have gained traction over recent years, the question who benefits from the regeneration of public libraries along cultural lines needs addressing. There are numerous examples of libraries as urban place-makers, not least Birmingham's new library which lays claim to be the largest library in the UK. Yet when one looks at the design of the library one cannot help but feel that the role of the public library has increasingly re-orientating itself very much as an economic icon to attract inward investors as well as visitors. Agreeing with Sklair, the focus should be towards that of;

““architecture and power” that investigates how buildings and spaces, especially monumental buildings and spaces, express power relations and how the ordinary citizen and/or believer can read off political... values from these icons” (Sklair 2006, p.39).

This reading highlights the multiple (and overlapping) roles the library plays in the twenty first century. While justifying the place, funding and “legitimacy” of the library as a public good, the public library in some situations has been repositioned as a global economic and cultural tool attracting visitors and businesses to a locality while simultaneously offering services and establishing an identity to local communities. The issue of accountability arises. Can the library play the role of urban place maker while helping local communities identify their own identities simultaneously? How do public libraries view communities or users

when redevelopment takes place that repositions the library as a cultural institution? Have libraries shaped and designed the new activities within these new libraries that include users actively producing cultural content? These are pressing issues and themes facing the library in the second decade of the Twenty First Century and will be explored in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne case study.

If through the empirical enquiry, evidence emerges of opportunities for users to influence the running of the library then there is the potential for a more nuanced appreciation of culture that contrasts with a commodified version of culture described earlier in this chapter. This transition to culture 3.0 may herald the beginning of a renewed appreciation of culture that can target some of the ills of society such as social exclusion, disempowerment and low skills. It could also mean that public libraries are leading the transition between culture 2.0 and 3.0 (from urban boosterism and purely city development to active participation to help take disadvantages within society). This could be the case as public funds for vast cultural regeneration projects are at an end. Indeed culture 3.0 may serve as a middle ground between the market and community needs as the skills learned through active cultural participation might then contribute to economic growth at a later stage. This could also herald the beginning of a much wider movement of repositioning the library as a “Right to the City” within the context of a reduction of public spaces in city centres (Minton 2012) as library users benefit from the library services to boost their own cultural capital and question decision making, prejudices as well as upskilling. What is apparent is a clear transition between different forms of culture in society which clearly has implications for libraries and local communities.

2.7. Discussion: Cultural Strategies within Contemporary Urban Regeneration

I started this chapter by charting the rise of existing culture-led regeneration policy within urban regeneration which has increasingly become incorporated within wider commodification of the city centre through concepts such as consumption and

aestheticization (Featherstone 2007). This interpretation of culture dismisses issues and conflicts around more globalised culture which is argued to be “legible” and understandable to a wider audience as opposed to more localised cultures. This began by accounting for the rise of culture within urban theory and urban regeneration in particular. The chapter began by critiquing the most popular form of (cultural) urban policy – the creative class thesis by Richard Florida. His thesis disregards any negative effects of creative class promotion as well as contending that such policy is very much orientated firmly within neo-liberal policy discourse. The link between culture and the rise of consumption has also been explained and it has been argued that the development strategies of many cities increasingly seek to commodify and market culture as well as “authentic” neighbourhoods for a wider audience based on consumption. A focus on such policy measures does little to alleviate social exclusion.

While the purposes of this chapter have not been to describe the benefits and disadvantages of culture-led regeneration as a policy, but rather to argue how cultural policy has emerged within regeneration discourse, and how it has been incorporated further within the everyday life of the city with particular reference towards the civic life of urban areas. Keeping this in mind, the chapter then progressed onto a discussion of the public library. The public library (as a public service) is unique in that it is viewed positively by the majority of the public and can help build social capital to help foster local communities (Goulding 2006). Some may counter with a more “traditional” argument that if public libraries become incorporated within cultural regeneration policy, then the position as well as the services libraries offer to the general public may be compromised and could result in further exclusion of local communities. In this discussion I have argued that culture-led regeneration can be transformational whilst promoting democratic values within the library which does not end in a zero sum gain. Indeed the modernist value of the library can still take place inside while the post-modern aesthetic develops outside.

To this end, I have advanced an alternative interpretation of culture-led regeneration which takes William's (1961) theory of there being three basic types of culture as a starting point and incorporates work by Sacco (2011) on three types of culture. The third type or Culture 3.0 is of most interest in this research and I have shown how this interpretation of culture allows for spaces of participation for users themselves which has many potential benefits including upskilling and building trust among individuals (Sacco 2011) to enable them to play an active role in society. This more nuanced form of culture allows for a more positive account of culture to emerge. One that can be attuned to the needs of end users whilst also serving the needs of the market in the form of upskilling so that library users can then develop the skills learnt to enter the labour market. This helps to reposition the library as a cultural institution within the city as well as reinforcing the library as an important actor for wider city economic development. This makes research in this area valuable because any benefits associated with this approach would impact those who rely on public services such as the library the most - the poor and disadvantaged groups in society.

As the theories described in this chapter involve participation and the role of communities within urban regeneration, it is to those issues on which I now focus. While I have developed the context of my research in this chapter, I now move on to further develop the concept influencing my empirical research in the next chapter which is "participation", before explaining the background of my empirical research location in the "Background and Context" chapter.

Chapter 3: Participation Strategies within Urban Regeneration Frameworks

3.1: Contextualising participation in urban regeneration

Now that culture-led regeneration has been analysed and contextualised, it is important that existing literature on participation within urban regeneration and urban policy more generally is explored.

While this research does not focus exclusively on community, the implications of a library working with some form of community that is heterogeneous, power ridden and diverse warrants closer attention to contextualise the implications of such an approach. Indeed it can be argued that because the library's purpose is to work with communities and has in previous years moulded itself within regeneration that promotes strong and resilient communities (Goulding 2006, Dudley 2012), a consideration of such literature is important. Though this literature for some maybe dated, some of these texts have influenced the community debate as to how we view a community and so it is essential that these debates are discussed. For the purposes of this research, I then link these debates to the literature on deliberative democracy before arguing for a more spatially considered theoretical approach which I find in the writings of Lefebvre (1991) on the production of space to steer this review into areas that are directly relevant to this research and have a bearing on how important issues in this thesis will be approached.

I begin by outlining a theory of participation that draws on classical regeneration and political theories which provides a foundation for comprehending and advancing more effective participation within regeneration policy. Participation has been selected over theories such as co-production because co-production, for example, mostly works outside of established governance frameworks (Watson 2014) which would make such a concept difficult to implement within existing or amended governance structures. It is also difficult to envisage professionals and public services such as libraries adopting strategies along the lines of co-production in light of this.

Throughout this chapter I track both the theoretical background of participation and advance existing theory on participation within urban regeneration to establish a framework for analysing the effectiveness of such a practise within the empirical lens of cultural regeneration. Aware of the often contested term community, I define and describe participation by contextualising it through a form of micro deliberative democracy. After defining the limitations of such an approach I advocate the awareness of space by articulating writings by Lefebvre on space. I argue that by viewing space as being constantly in process, alternative imaginaries are possible incorporating both the powerful and excluded members of society.

The purpose of section 3.2 is to present the theoretical background of the term “community”. I argue that an awareness of the importance of revaluing the multiple forms of communities that are not only place based but recognising that communities can be local as well global or mobile. The focus should therefore be on common situations and experiences that define communities of people rather than focussing on tight defined boundaries. Section 3.3 demonstrates how participation has developed within urban policy arguing that the “centralised” nature of decision making and governance restricts participation, especially at the local level, highlighting the lack of trust and legitimacy in its current form.

This issue of legitimacy is taken up further in section 3.4 by arguing that micro deliberative democracy offers a space through which meaningful deliberation can take place at a local level. I argue that while there are benefits with Habermasian democracy, it neglects spatially rich interpretations of society. Instead I articulate Lefebvre (1991) and his writings on space as a more suitable theory to adopt within this research. I argue that Lefebvre’s writing on space as being socially produced and accounting for space as it is used rather than it is planned as important concepts relevant to this thesis. Section 3.5 will close this section by way of a discussion of the major points made in this chapter as well as considering how they will impact on the remainder of this study.

3.2: Community: a contested term or a utopian ideal?

While the term “community” has been used extensively in both academic and policy discourses, a definition has been hard to pin down. Nevertheless scholars have defined and interpreted community in various guises. At a basic level, Johnston defines community as “a social network of interacting individuals, usually concentrated in a defined area” (1994, p80) focussing on a much localised, spatially fixed, place based interpretation. A more helpful definition is which views community as:

“historicity (interpersonal bonds fashioned in a shared history and culture), identity (a case of community manifest in loyalty, piety, and a distinctive identity), mutuality (relations of interdependence and reciprocity), plurality (persons engaging in intermediate associations or group attachments), autonomy (the flourishing of unique and responsible persons), participation (in different roles and aspects of society) and integration (via political, legal and cultural institutions) (Williams 1973, quoted in Smith 1999, p.21)

An interesting element of this community literature is how community is viewed in very much a positive light in spite of its ambiguity:

[Community] can be (sic) warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships... What is important is that unlike all other terms of social organization... it never seems to be used unfavourably and never to be given any opposing or distinguishing term” (Williams 1973, quoted in Schofield 2002; p.664).

This is reinforced by Sayer and Storper, who refer to the ““honorific status of “community” in popular ideology as a warm and secure alternative to the anomie of modern society” (1997, p.8). This can also refer to *Gesellschaft* based on an imaginary base or structure (Gregory et al. 2009) and can be seen as the promotion of ones’ individual self-interest compared with *Gemeinschaft* which has its base as connections with one’s family ties and intimate relations (ibid). *Gemeinschaft* is often translated as community in which individuals take into consideration the needs of the group overall as opposed to individual interest. Yet this neglects the exclusionary aspect of communities even from a historical perspective. A lot of the community literature from a philosophical perspective, laments the loss (or decline) of communities in light of modern economic and technological shifts in the world

(see Putnam 1995). What this neglects is the potential for communities to be oppressive along religious or gender lines such as that of many historical “communities”. Other accounts position community as an apparatus between the state and the market characterised by voluntarism (Schofield 2002). This very much politicises and incorporates the term community further within the realms of economic neo-liberalism and political legitimacy while simultaneously cementing its use in policy discourse.

Community can also be viewed at various scales, from the global incorporating international protest movements right down to local more “territorialised” communities such as neighbourhoods or kinship. This distinction can nevertheless be blurred; Dwyer, in research on young British Muslims’ identity in Britain demonstrated “the ways in which young people may define themselves within a worldwide imagined community of Muslims” (1999, p.56) showing that localised Muslim communities define themselves in a wider more global community as opposed to “an imagined British community” (p.58). This example points to the possibility of there being multiple communities experienced by people. Urban populations in particular occupy multiple identities that are often diverse and wide ranging which in different places can lead to confusion and split associations (England 2011).

However, one should also be cautious of exclusion within communities. Young, in her critique of community, contends that:

“Community is an understandable dream... but politically problematic, I argue, because those motivated by it will tend to suppress differences among themselves or implicitly to exclude from their political groups persons with whom they do not identify” (1990, p300).

Thus one’s “communal identity” can paint over differences between members’ exacerbated differences and those both within and those excluded from such communities. Such tactics can deny difference between subjects and at its worst lead to racist tendencies (see Young 1990). Yet for communities to gain traction, it is arguable for them to identify “themselves” from “others”. The outcome of this becomes very much spatialized.

3.2.1 Communities and public spaces

In extending the theory of exclusion into the realms of public space, fear of “others” can lead to exclusion from certain spaces. This can often lead to “battles” for control over space whereby community constitutes ownership of space, leading to a situation where standards over behaviour and actions are determined by those who control particular spaces. In such processes, differences between competing communities and interests within such geographic spaces are obscured by the portrayal of deviants as outsiders in relation to “the community” (Fischer and Poland 1998). In this example, a certain behaviour or characteristic is viewed as antithetical in relation to “others” and is emphasised often focussing on certain groups of people. Thus, the idea of community is extended to that of “purified communities” whereby society and space is compartmentalised in society into that of pure and “defiled” (Sibley 1995). For Hubbard such imaginaries thrive on stereotypical associations of repulsion (2004). For Sibley;

“Feelings of insecurity about territory, status and power where material rewards are unevenly distributed and continually shifting over space encourage boundary erection and the rejection of threatening difference” (1995, p.69).

In urban regeneration, gated communities are popular examples of this whereby those with wealth and power are able to demarcate themselves within their own spatial enclave. Thus by defining such boundaries as private space, the fragilities and uncertainties as well as “fear” of others is identified and controlled. Therefore, landowners are able to firstly define private space from public space as well as what can be termed linear space. Linear space can be thought of as being less diverse and heavily controlled whereby interaction and difference is negated by restricting the activities (i.e. protests) and the types of people encountered and whereby the “potential” for public interaction is removed (i.e. a gated apartment block or household) compared with plural space such as public spaces whereby the land is privately owned (i.e. shopping centre owners or REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts)) but where interaction is possible and outcomes are dynamic and uncertain. Plural space can also be thought of as more open where chance interactions can take place and

users of such space have more freedom to carry out multiple and diverse activities such as busking in one area and shopping in another area. This could also be through protests or boycotts. Thus the delimiting of space through such methods emphasises the view that “spatial distance facilitates social distance” (England 2011, p.98).

By extending and including the participation of communities or other interest groups into the controlling of public space, this performs the contradictory task of bringing into the fold some of those who were previously marginalised predominantly along economic lines while further excluding (existing) marginalized groups (Fischer and Poland 1998). In this example, the community is incorporated into decision making such as that of policing public space to provide “legitimacy” for actions and policies while shifting the gaze away from the processes themselves of determining the parameters of participation and who determines the guidelines of such participation. This is the reality of the purification of public space (Sibley 1995) whereby public space has become inhabited and “claimed” by social and alleged hegemonic forces instigating claims of “righteousness” alleging that public space is the display site and measure of the moral standards of collectivism (Kelling and Coles 1996). In exercising management through social control mediated through a paradigm of risk, public safety and control of public sphere, has given way to “safe neighbourhoods” or “citizen empowerment” as a mechanism to achieve social control. This may have profound effects on health and welfare as well as the potential for discriminatory tendencies (Fischer and Poland 1998) within communities.

Linked to communities and public space is that of territoriality which is constituted by a localised spatially fixed interpretation of community and is a useful mechanism to explore the internal relationships of communities. Territory can be defined as “a unit of contiguous space that is used, organized and managed by a social group” (Gregory et al. 2009, p.746). Territoriality in this view assumes a bounded place with predominantly local linkages as opposed to more relational space which focuses more on the power structures and practices of engagement. This also accounts for spatial distance recognising that relations

within and outside the locality are important. Crucially, relational space focuses more on the content of the relations and not “the spatial form of the relations through which space is constituted” (Massey 2005, p.101). Of course power is important as different places “will stand in contrasting relations with the global. They are differentially located within the power-geometrics (ibid, p. 101). In contrast, the emergence of territoriality has developed as a result of the increasing fragmentation of the state in recent years (England 2011).

Following Pacione (1983) territoriality develops through “personal attachments to the neighbourhood, friendships, participation in neighbourhood, residential commitment, use of neighbourhood facilities and resident satisfaction” (quoted in Valentine 2011, p.12-13). For Valentine, territorial communities only emerge or are put into action if a defined neighbourhood is under threat. It is perhaps useful to imagine such communities as reactive communities who mobilise themselves by identifying threats to existing ways of life as opposed to proactive communities which may articulate needs and desires of the existing communities through a narrative of how localities should develop.

A common example of such territorial communities in practice can be explained through local opposition to a new development in a locality whereby local people organise themselves against such proposals through articulating negative connotations such as protesting over a change of activities on offer in the library. In this respect, community formation is very much socially constructed and can develop in different forms and modes (England 2011). Viewed this way such communities may be well versed in identifying risk or threats but less able to distinguish positive attributes which may add to the locality and local populations.

Yet one should also acknowledge the potential of increasingly mobile communities.

Zygmunt Bauman’s concept of tourists and vagabonds (1997) is a relevant example of how communities may well cross borders both nationally and regionally and that these ties can be much stronger (and more relevant) than more local, spatially bound interpretations of community due to an internationalisation of activities such as holidays, conferences and

migration (Urry 2007). For Bauman such “tourists” engage in constant consumption of higher end goods and experiences. For “good consumers it is not the satisfaction of the needs one is tormented by, but the torments of desires never yet sensed” (Bauman 1997, p.82). Such desires often results in travelling the globe to fulfil such desires and will often be sitting next to other “consumers” travelling for the exact same purposes. It is, however, the vagabond who is affected by such movements. For vagabonds often do not travel by choice as “some of us enjoy the new freedom of movement sans papiers. Some others are not allowed to stay put for that reason” (Bauman 1997, p.86).

More recent interpretations can be seen with the development of the idea of a precariat (Standing 2011). For Standing, the precariat can increasingly become anybody such as someone who loses their job, falls ill or more generally through neo-liberal policies which has removed a job for life, increased competition for employment through globalisation which witnessed the “economy [become] “disembedded” from society as financiers and neo-liberal economists sought to create a global market economy based on competitiveness and individualism” (Standing 2011, p.43). As the economy has become more globalised and commodified inequality has risen which has seen migrants (and refugees) in particular travel vast distances negotiating barriers deliberately put up to prevent their movement. Compare this with the welcome offered to the global elite and businesses who may well be paid vast sums in tax rebates or subsidies to create jobs in a locality. These individuals are encouraged to travel and increasingly can travel to more and more localities. Put simply the tourist (or business traveller) travels out of choice but the vagabond moves around by necessity from external factors. In this case such a globalised community of travellers depend on the vagabond to maintain their lifestyle. One can see very clearly how the tourist, through their global web of connections annihilates the choices and decisions and more importantly the spaces for the vagabond to occupy.

Yet research on the trade union movement within globalisation offers an alternative reading. Indeed work in economic geography within the trade union movement highlights how steel

workers were able to mobilise their links and connections across several states in the United States in order to help prevent a steel firm making mass redundancies at one steel plant in one US state (Yeung et al. 2007). Indeed in an increasingly globalised world and economy, action to address key issues of the day may well be more effective when looking at more globally mobile communities. Recent demonstrations over climate change or tax evasion are clear examples of this. Indeed Harvey (2011) has charted how various global movements have attracted media attention and international support. In the case of the Occupy Wall Street movement Harvey argues that “by putting human bodies in that place, to convert public space into a political commons... This tactic, most conspicuously re-animated in the noble and ongoing struggles centered on Tahrir Square in Cairo, has spread across the world... and now the steps of St Paul’s Cathedral in London and Wall Street itself” (Harvey 2011, p.161). Thus while it is important to recognise that the ability to occupy or annihilate such global spaces is uneven and in most cases favours those with more capital and power – the tourist (Bauman 1997) - there are still many examples and spaces for those who may be spatially constrained to protest, to get their views across to a wider audience as well as to connect with wider global movements of resistance. Indeed in such a globalised world “it may be that we have no other option except to occupy the parks squares and streets of our cities until our opinions are heard and our needs attended to” (Harvey 2011, p.162).

A summary of the various interpretations of community discussed above can be found in table 2 below:

Table 2: Summary of the interpretations of community

Interpretation of community	Description
Purified communities	Whereby actions of community members are restricted and judged and those who do not uphold the norms associated with a particular community are chastised and deviants are disciplined. This perspective highlights the negative side of community formation/ regulation and touches upon the power dynamics of who decides such “ideal” behaviours as well as the consequences for those who cannot or do not uphold such

	behaviour.
Territorial community	Views a community as being geographically related and fixed in space and assumes few (if any) external linkages. In policy discourse one consequence is that it is assumed that all individuals within a defined boundary are assumed to be experiencing the same problems which have consequences for policy formulation and service distribution.
Relational/ Scaled communities	From global (i.e. international protest) through to local neighbourhoods, such a view recognises the external links between various scales of community. Such a view appreciates that although an individual may live and/or work in a locality, they may still have associations with more distant places or groups of people. An example could be through religious or migration patterns.

For the purposes of this research, relational communities is of most relevance as it offers a more spatialized account of communities within cities and how such processes impact the embodiment and production of public space. It is now time to explore how community has been used within urban policy by government - namely deliberative democracy.

3.3: Towards a new understanding of participation through Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy in its most complete form involves un-coerced, reasoned, inclusive and equal debate (Chappell 2012) and has become popular in academic circles as a way to incorporate as many people as possible from a range of different backgrounds. The twin aim of this is to ensure decisions meet the needs of as many people as possible as well as increasing the legitimacy of such decisions (and decision makers) in the political sphere. Deliberative democracy models can take one of two forms – macro and micro. Macro deliberation is an “ongoing disaggregated process of discussion in the public sphere” (Chappell 2012, p.12) and has the ability to set the agenda of themes and discussions for further deliberation elsewhere. Micro deliberation is very much locally based relying heavily on face to face interaction. Due to the fact that micro deliberation is easier to study

empirically, the theory of deliberative democracy originated very much from a micro deliberative perspective (Gutmann and Thompson 1996).

The premise of deliberative democracy derives from the view that decisions claim legitimate power through the presumption that the decisions reached “represent an impartial standpoint that is equally in the interest of all” (Mouffe 1999, p.747). Of course such processes are not entirely new, governments of all persuasions conduct focus groups to help formulate policies but deliberative democracy requires more than mere public consultation and the question of who participates becomes important. Deliberative democrats hold the view that the general public should not only be consulted but also should have a meaningful say in decision making (Ryfe 2005) and in this respect shares many similarities with a right to the city thesis (Harvey 2011). Issues concerning inclusion, equality and legitimacy are important strands to deliberative theory which I will discuss but first I want to distinguish between two key theorists as they have become two of the most prominent theoretical positions and because they offer two opposing frameworks within which to consider deliberative democracy – Rawls and Habermas.

Rawls (1972) focuses on a possibility of stable agreements (or doctrines), whereby individuals enter the debate of public negotiation. These differing value systems are then negotiated with a view of achieving a stable decision through “overlapping consensus” (Chappell 2012). Crucially for this theory, agreement over common policy or law may be reached within the basis of their own competing reasonable viewpoints (the term “reasonable” has been contentious for some academics – see Mouffe 1999). These acceptances are then viewed as evolving into further agreement over time. For Rawls, legitimacy is secured through living politically “with others in the light of reasons all might reasonably be expected to endorse (1997, p.116). For Rawls’ theory, public reason is secured through reciprocity – the belief that as rational human beings with contrasting and conflicting viewpoints, individuals should outline their argument with the view that the arguments themselves are reasonable and that can be endorsed by other rational citizens.

However, it is arguable whether human beings are rational in their actions and whether self-interest and beliefs held by an individual compromise their rationality.

The second philosophical tradition stems from Habermas and focuses explicitly on communication – the belief that all communicatively rational actors are able to share knowledge and experiences with one another to arrive at mutual understanding. Habermas's theory takes place in an ideal speech situation. Following Chappell (2012), a number of characteristics can be identified; first all citizens who are able to make contributions should be included, participants should have equal discourse within the debate and finally, such debate should be free of coercion. Crucially, for Habermas, the decisions that are subsequently reached can only be translated into law through a legislature. This is important as Habermas advocates that existing political structures should not be disregarded in their entirety and that deliberation should be incorporated within existing political structures. For purposes of this thesis, the Habermasian perspective will form the foundation of the discussion and arguments presented below because it emphasises the potential for negotiation to take place between different actors as well as ensuring participation with all actors who have a stake in the decision making process. While the characteristics presented above form an idealised vision of deliberative democracy, practical issues when considering how deliberative democracy can be implemented in the “real world” inevitably present themselves in dynamic ways as people are not always rational individuals as human agency is subjective and can be inconsistent (Hillier 2003). This should be considered if a theoretically and empirically consistent form of deliberative democracy is to be formulated.

One issue to account for is whether participants are heterogeneous or homogenous in nature. At its very heart deliberative democrats believe that for deliberative democracy to be legitimate all participants should be included in the process. One caveat to that is that for some people they will pass the opportunity to participate because of the belief that they are not directly able to influence the result or that it may not be accepted by elite professionals (Ryfe 2005). In an example in Perth, Australia, after a process of deliberative democracy

which had taken place in determining a city plan, elected representatives and officials amended the proposal to meet their own agendas (Chappell 2012). In this light the sector of the population who holds this view are those who may be excluded in wider society – those with fewer education opportunities, unemployed, and those with other responsibilities. Such processes can reduce heterogeneity. Furthermore, as self-selection often occurs when formulating micro-deliberation (the form used most often to determine local need) this often results in homogenous groups. The issue is that those involved will typically hold the same views as fellow participants and the key theoretical point of transforming beliefs and viewpoints within deliberative democracy is greatly compromised as diversity is an indicator of a deliberative mind set (McLeod 1990). Additionally deliberative democrats fear that such homogeneity compromises central deliberative advantages of equality as while everybody within the group may have had their say, not all will be so engaged in the “deliberative” process of negotiation and compromise. One must also be aware that the “usual suspects” may be over represented in such deliberation processes which may exacerbate the position of those who deliberative democrats wish to access. Such power imbalances can have major implications when trying to assess the representativeness of such political processes. Other theories have focused on increasing deliberation within existing institutions (Chambers 2002) to help increase the representation and be more attuned to need and local characteristics.

A fourth element of deliberative democracy is the requirement of equality and inclusion. While the argument above covers some elements of equality (most notably that of people), deliberative theorists go further and argue for equality of people and ideas. While coercion can be overcome and satisfied by incorporating facilitators to ensure all participants can have their say, a larger focus is especially on minorities to ensure their rights and arguments are heard and deliberated. Equality of ideas or “propinquity” runs into problems when considered alongside politics of presence or descriptive representation (see Mansbridge 1999) – that it is not enough for minority groups just to be incorporated if these groups

cannot be included in wider political processes. Possible solutions lie in the airing of ideas. By stipulating a minimum amount of time for each participant, all ideas have a chance of being aired. This would be impractical in macro deliberation (Dahl 2006) but, as should become clear, community participation within local regeneration is necessarily local and so the basis for this thesis is necessarily premised on micro deliberation. One more beneficial aspect is that it allows views to be stated and to the point (Chappell 2012). Nonetheless, it can be argued that not everybody has the same abilities to air their points of view – those who conduct public speaking or those more educated may be able to give a more persuasive argument. This inequality is sadly a reality in contemporary life and in public services in particular and is one deliberative democracy is unlikely to overcome on its own. One way deliberative theorists have approached this issue is through “substantive equality” which is an issue that has been covered differently in the literature. One way is to adopt Rawls concept of primary goods covering basic rights, freedoms and justice (1972)¹. The other is adopting Sen’s capabilities approach (1992)² covering a range of characteristics such as well-being, self-respect and happiness. The theory behind this focuses on the ability to transform the above characteristics into realised dreams and goals. Thus it recognises that individuals who may be mentally ill for example will require greater resources than someone who is of sound mind in order to achieve equality. The most obvious example in deliberative democracy is cognitive ability in order to discuss, comprehend and initiate debate. While it may then be easier to determine and overcome basic inequalities such as food and shelter, water – the more social manifestations of basic inequality, it is another thing to overcome more physical inequalities such as cognitive functions and abilities.

¹ Rawls’ (1972) theory of primary goods focuses on the characteristics such as the institutions of society necessary to create a just society. If these conditions are met then a rational human being is then able to pursue his or her conception of the good.

² Sen’s (1992) capabilities approach is more concerned with the functioning of society. The belief is that those in society with larger capabilities (such as nourishment, happiness and self-respect) are more able to adopt a life and lifestyle of their choosing. Sen not only accounts for such capabilities themselves within individuals but also on a person’s ability to convert these resources into actual livelihoods. Sen’s approach recognises difference between individuals (difference between participants) and that those with fewer capabilities need more help to participate in community life than those with more capabilities.

Indeed this is a part of life that one has to live with and recognise that such inequalities are beyond the remit of any one theory or political institution to overcome.

While for the most part equality considerations are clearly part of wider structural inequalities that goes beyond deliberative processes, the inclusion of deliberative democracy into existing political structures is one way of helping to incorporate often “excluded” individuals into wider political processes. This allows for innovations from deliberative democracy to emerge which may help to spread innovativeness and inclusion into other areas of public life.

Inclusion in this respect can be loosely defined as including “those who do not have the opportunity to participate in the normal activities of citizens within a country” (Chappell 2012, p.73). On a political level exclusion can cover exclusion based on race, gender, sexuality or age which manifests in all areas of public life, most notably in allocation of resources. On another level, political dealing can also occur which favours the elite and most powerful in society (Young 1990). For Young, what is most troublesome is that not only individuals or groups may be excluded but whole perspectives on an issue may be excluded from the public debate. For deliberative democracy to overcome this, the process of selecting deliberators should be inclusive as well as the deliberators having the practical ability to attend such meetings. For micro deliberation, the selection of participants is an important way to deal with exclusion of deliberators. Following Fishkin et al. (2007), adopting random selection sampling gives all members in a population equal probability of being selected. Yet this approach does not account for practical inequalities such as time and cost constraints. People from all backgrounds work long hours and are time poor. Some theorists argue that by offering cash incentives or extra public holidays this could overcome some of the practical obstacles to partaking in deliberative democracy including that of time restraints and costs of transport to meetings (see Chappell 2012). However, it is difficult to imagine many people wishing to attend a political meeting on a holiday and whether people would use the money to take part or whether they would find alternative uses for the money.

It is also difficult to imagine who would fund such exercises when public sector budgets are being reduced. Moreover, it is also important to realise that people may still not want to get involved regardless of the incentives on offer. While this may be negative for some, arguably, if all the opportunities are given and a negative response is given, that is active decision making in its own right. Indeed by having successful deliberative debates, this could in time be the ultimate determinant in making more individuals who may not wish to take part currently, actively choose to partake in future. Still, this does not address one important issue concerning people having a lack of efficacy or involvement with the system. This could be addressed by specifically involving disadvantaged members of society or by conducting empowered participatory governance (Fung 2004), by showing that individuals can make a difference by demonstrating the benefits of local decision making to individuals themselves from more distant bureaucrats. Viewed in this light, this step could be an especially effective tool in overcoming exclusion as well as equality issues within propinquity.

A third element worthy of consideration is that of consensus. Habermasian deliberative democracy has as its ideal type consensus focused on moral (affecting all mankind) and ethical (concerning issues of a specific society) concerns (Chappell 2012). Although such a restrictive dualism is rather problematic as there will no doubt be issues that cross over both areas. In this light, Habermas himself realises the need for comprise that must fulfil three elements; it should be advantageous to all, exclude those who withdraw from cooperation and should not allow exploitation (Habermas 1996). Again these seem very restrictive and may make the process of deliberation more difficult. One has to ask whether consensus is ideal or indeed necessary especially in complex societies (Young 1990) and indeed increasingly mobile communities. For one, consensus is very much an idealised vision more than a practical reality. Additionally, a wider framework of agreement may be agreed which may form a part of decision-making in future. Furthermore, consensus necessarily includes compromise and for Young (1990) the excluded may be sacrificing too much which may

compromise their position in society further. Bohman (1996) critiques Habermas' use of what he terms singular reason and for reasonable policies to come only from one perspective at the expense of others. Indeed, more recent third stage deliberative democracy models emphasise success even when parties advocate only their own interests "and public reasoning takes the form of intense negotiation" (Mantysalo and Jarencko 2014, p.39). This issue of perspective can be taken a step forward by that it is through the stories of people that will give rise to dialogue forming trust and mutual affection we can move beyond self-interest and start;

"questioning and exploring beyond one's initial set of ideas is made explicit... In order to sustain the reflective process, a format is needed which is flexible enough to allow different ways of writing [and decision making] to be combined" (Winter 1999, p.65).

Thus through a plurality of voices and ways of gathering views, a unified narrative can be projected out of the diversity offered by the community as more controversial viewpoints (and indeed viewpoints that had not been considered previously) are opened up for wider discussion and critique so that ideas and views that are more acceptable to that community can emerge (Ledwick 2011). As Defilippis et al. (2006) argues "such processes are part of a wider analyses of social and economic inequality, and such analyses necessarily include conflict" (p686) through exploring experiences of structural inequalities within a place (ibid). Indeed, it is through such a diversity of experience that allows for a perspective of "multiple truths" negotiated through dialogue (see Pussey 1989) to counter the view of there being only one identifiable truth that through rational means can be accessed and relied upon (O'Donohue 2004).

A final point on deliberative democracy is to argue for its inclusion into existing institutions within a liberal society (Chappell 2012). While some may advocate that deliberative democracy should become superior to that of representative democracy, this model advocates for deliberative democracy to be incorporated within existing institutions of political decision making. The arguments for this are numerous but can be summarised by

the lack of appetite from the public for additional public institutions as well as a lack of political support for such a move (ibid) especially when the public sector is undergoing significant budget cuts.

More importantly combining deliberative democracy within existing public institutions overcomes many of the criticisms of such an approach (discussed below). For many theorists, deliberative democracy can only be legitimate if all participate. In a liberal democracy, the choice to participate or not is of crucial importance. Many representative democrats lament the decline in voting as a sign of voter apathy but would hesitate at making voting compulsory as such views go against the belief of free choice of individuals. Additionally, decisions inevitably involve all individuals. For example, debates over public services inevitably involve most if not all citizens. Indeed, a key benefit of deliberative democracy is that it allows for a deep and meaningful discussion before decisions take place (Chappell 2012). This is essential in ensuring legitimacy for decisions even though people may not necessarily agree with the outcomes. As has been shown, deliberative democracy can be costly to participate in, requires legislature to enact decisions as well as assuming that consensus and rational debate will ensue. Therefore, it is imperative that deliberative democracy is viewed as one of many systems within a wider political system. Thus, micro deliberation on issues giving rise to local concerns such as planning future growth of cities or on local resource allocations would greatly benefit public life alongside more traditional forms of representation to ensure politicians are elected and ejected out of office based on decisions made. This could allow for a deeper understanding of politics and political decision making extending beyond the arguably tokenistic participation that we have seen previously (Arnstein 1969).

3.4: From Habermas to Lefebvre: an awareness of space

While democracy is an important concept within this thesis, this section will illustrate how a Habermasian focus on democracy has limitations which need to be addressed. A Lefebvrian

interpretation of space will be articulated and it will be argued that in contrast to Habermas, Lefebvre accounts for the inhabitants of space, their creation and performance of space together with their impact within the wider city. Firstly, at a practical level, it can be argued that the writing around community and Habermasian democracy assumes “that a direct relationship exists between urban problems, community and place” (Larsen 2013, p.404). Again, this assumes that communities have tight pre-defined boundaries, are homogenous, and one can argue, as having few links outside such boundaries. Yet for Mustard and Ostendorf:

“the focus on the neighbourhood should not be taken as the only, or as the dominant, way out: social life and social interactions are no longer confined to neighbourhoods, while social opportunities may not be neighbourhood-related. The community may have lost its territorial link.” (2008: p.90).

Indeed evidence from Denmark suggests (as has been argued above) that community is no longer associated with neighbourhood (ibid). Such a relational view is problematic when considered from a Habermasian perspective as language has its own conventions and rules within different communities which are influenced by norms and power relations (Kellner 2013). From this it is difficult to agree with Habermas’s argument that language contains norms to critique oppression and promote democratization within wider society (Habermas 1982) when language itself is “situated within a conflict between truth and untruth, universality and particularity, communication and manipulation” (Kellner 2013, p.272).

Further critiques have been advanced in particular around concerns of power as well as regarding the assumed neutrality of processes of communication and negotiation (Mantysalo and Jarencko 2014, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 1998). Their argument centres on powerful members of society closing debate down, which may particularly affect less powerful and marginal members of society. This is reinforced by Habermas’ preference to secure consensus around issues that are complex and are unlikely to be easily resolved. At its extreme, a focus on consensus may result in policy and outcomes that go against the needs of those it is supposed to represent (Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 1998).

Furthermore, Fraser (1990) argues that power imbalances cannot be bracketed or controlled in any meaningful way, while others have argued that it is impossible to achieve equality while wider structural inequalities exist (Ellison and Ellison 2006).

Moreover, Habermas's predominant focus on language or communicative rationality means he neglects relational interpretations of space including how space is lived, enacted and embodied. Put another way, while Habermasian democracy posits that social justice can be addressed purely through negotiation, the complexity of everyday life in which the City Library is located, warrants further temporal and spatial analysis. The next section will attempt to address such issues through Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space.

3.4.1: Lefebvre: space as embodied

The work of Lefebvre is important for the purposes of this thesis as through his work he demonstrates how space is actively produced and lived relationally, that combines with time, which is then played out within the urban sphere as Schmid (2008) surmises:

“Space does not exist “in itself”, it is produced... Lefebvre proceeds from a relational concept of space and time. Space stands for simultaneity, the synchronic order of social reality; time, on the other hand, denotes the diachronic order and thus the historic process of social production” (Schmid quoted in Goonewardena 2008).

For Lefebvre, as space and time are actively produced, they can only be understood by appreciating the specific context of a society including its historical relations and, crucially, its power relations and conflicts. Space is to be understood as a web of relations that are produced and reproduced (ibid) through space. Thus Cartesian space is not the object of interrogation but the activities and actions that emerge within “lived space” are of most importance. Lefebvre develops concepts around knowledge and power and identifies such processes within the urban sphere. For Lefebvre it is the urban form with its various edges and the everyday running of the city – the planning and consumption – that structures social relations;

“The city creates a situation, where different things occur one after another and do not exist separately but according to their differences. The urban, which is indifferent to each difference it contains,. . . itself unites them. In this sense, the city constructs, identifies, and sets free the essence of social relationships” (Lefebvre 2003, p 118-119).

Thus the city, or the urban, becomes a legitimate site of capitalist development worthy of interrogation. In reality urban public spaces are spontaneous and dynamic spaces which are constantly changing and in flux by various groups of people populating them at different times and in different ways.

Often this creates a divergence between how space is demarcated through administrative boundaries and that space is enacted. Lefebvre (1991) offers a useful avenue to explore how administrative and practical occurrences interact and intersect one another within the urban sphere. For example, Lefebvre offers different characteristics between “representations of space” and “representational spaces”. “Representations of space” constitutes scientists, planners and engineers who identify how space is perceived to operate and function displayed through maps, numbers and graphs focussing on traditional Cartesian interpretations of space through defined zones and boundaries. In contrast, “representational space” describes the space as “lived space” through signs and symbols of the inhabitants themselves. This intersection allows for an articulation of “everyday life” as the “link between urban sociology and social theory” (Prigge 2008 p.52) thus allowing for both action and the functional object which themselves becomes linked through temporally determined actions (ibid). Lefebvre defines everyday life as:

“Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond and their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human—and every human being—a whole takes its shape and its form.” (Lefebvre; 1991, p.97).

For Lefebvre, the urban sphere modifies relations between production, but not to a point where they can be altered. Crucially, it requires intrusion from the everyday life to ensure a space of struggle and transformation. Thus, spatial practices can be understood as being

“subjectified” by individuals appropriating that space through their spatial performances and repetitions. Simultaneously such spatial practices become objectified within the dominant spatial structures within the urban sphere.

The architecture becomes representations of “lived space” and is produced by spatial professionals and become part of the spatial construct of cities. Knowledge becomes represented through economic and political representations of space through ways of observing or demarcating space through maps and graphs of representation. In turn these become acceptable formations of urban space (which exclude certain voices and other interpretations of space) whilst also determining the dominant way of exercising power over space (Prigge 2008). In such contexts, technologies and ways of controlling space, spatial structures emerge which in turn serve to deepen knowledge creation whilst simultaneously increasing power over space (Foucault 1975). For example, zoning in city centres has had the effect of encouraging inner city flight whereby the middle classes live in suburbia compared with the lower classes, which have less choice over where they live, and are often concentrated in deprived areas.

For Lefebvre, the playfulness and creative capacity for inhabitants to occupy space through daily reproduction and the rhythms of daily life more generally are ignored by policymakers. Such rhythms emerge out of the unexpected intermingling of networks and social practices, which develop regular or repetitive punctuations over time, but are still subject to change and renewal. Such rhythms are impacted by opening hours, traffic control systems, and the meanderings of tourists (Amin and Thrift 2002). Such flows within cities originate from diverse sources that can intermingle and intensify which are both dynamic and intentional.

Lefebvre believed that not everything could be dominated by political and technological domination within society in contrast to traditional view of Marxism which Lefebvre believed focussed too much on the factory site – not everything can be consumed by capitalist logic. Thus, he believed that this could be uncovered through examining the

“everydayness” of society. Importantly, this space, by its very nature, is contradictory in that there are always spaces of resistance and rebellious factions. Consequently, everyday life also unveils the strategies from which it itself emerges against the spontaneity of the dominant order (Ronneberger 2008). This process takes place following a three stage process. Following (Ronneberger 2008), the first stage involves a totalisation of society. Secondly, an extreme individualisation occurs whereby consumption is devoid of social context. Finally, consumers are isolated. Lefebvre’s view is that such processes are not above the site of resistance. For example, while the factory floor may consist of a hierarchy, such logic cannot flow to “lived space” through diverse activities such as leisure, eating, and socialisation. In other words, one cannot transpose the space of controlled production onto the unpredictable and the spontaneous space of the city.

In order to overcome such contradictions, Lefebvre, through his interpretation that space is actively produced, argued for a model that accounts for the layering of social relations within space itself (Lefebvre 1991). Firstly, perceived space considers the overall production and reality of the urban through the activities that take place, and through the temporal rhythms that structure the use of space by inhabitants. Secondly, conceived space covers “representations of space” (discussed above) whereby land is zoned, demarcated and can be articulated through maps and graphs at a distance. Thirdly, Lefebvre develops the concept of lived and endured spaces which covers “spaces of representation” (discussed above), describing how users of space are subjected to intervention through signs, symbols and codes whilst also offering spaces of resistance (Lefebvre 1991). Consequently, Lefebvre exposes the traditional view of material vs mental space as lacking and instead inserts the importance of the third type of space – social space (Pugalis 2009). Of course, the production of space is a continual processes, forever changing and in constant flux. Each spatial interpretation is not totally inseparable from the other interpretations of space as Lefebvre itself was also interested in the relations between the three pillars of space. Through such a model, Lefebvre attempts to overcome dualities such as structure and

agency, and instead articulates that the chasm between inhabitants “lived space” and technological spatial structure can be crossed through interpretations or ideologies of space (Ronneberger 2008), offering spaces of coherence within the urban malaise.

While capitalist production has managed to keep pace with the ever moving currents of consumer demands and preferences. Neoliberalism has redirected concern with post-Fordism and the crisis of rigidity and model of state production towards individualism. A move towards individualising risk and reducing or removing social benefits and instil self-regulation, together with growing ambivalence towards the state, particularly regarding state intervention, reconfigured the role of both state and citizen within not only the economy but as Lefebvre has demonstrated, the urban itself. Current orthodoxy, which has persisted for many decades, “invites individuals and organizations to participate more actively and help solve particular issues and problems which until then had been the responsibility of specialists and authorized state institutions.” (Lemke 1975). While the opportunity for inhabitants to input and alter spatial practices must tread a fine balance between resistance (democracy) and domination by capitalism, Lefebvre’s writings on space allows for a spatial interpretation of cities to come to the fore. While it might be understandable to argue that cities are overwhelmingly dominated by capitalist rhetoric, perpetuating relations and spatial structures based on the market, Lefebvre shows how the city can be a site for resistance and for other interpretations and concepts such as a Right to the City (Harvey 2011) to gain a foothold. Such alternative imaginaries gain traction in the dynamic interactions between inhabitants and buildings within space. While space may be planned for certain functions and activities, it is socially produced by both powerful and marginalised voices. Consequently, there is always room for disruptions and alternative action.

3.5: Discussion: Participation Strategies within Urban Regeneration

Frameworks

Throughout this chapter I have focussed on the role of community in urban regeneration and how participation has been included and can be advanced regarding culture-led regeneration. I began this chapter by historicizing the role of communities within urban regeneration. I started by interrogating the term community itself to show it has as many flaws as it does benefits but that community has still played an influential role within urban regeneration. I then developed a more geographical perspective by situating communities within public space accounting for the controlled and exclusive nature of public space that communities encounter within the city. Thirdly, I contextualised how governments of various hues have incorporated communities within the regeneration process itself which has led to the philosophical debates around democracy.

The work around deliberative democracy above was initially important as it recognises the unique context including actors and circumstances at each point in time which varies across time and space. However, I felt such an approach lacks an awareness of local context and that it focusses too much on what an outcome should ideally constitute and less on the actual outcome (process over outcome). Nonetheless, I argued that while Habermasian democracy accounts for language and discourse within power, it neglects, amongst other things, to seriously consider space and embodiment within society. I subsequently argued that Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space as being actively produced is important regarding this research as it not only accounts for spatial interpretations but demonstrates how space is actively produced within society. Such an articulation allows for embodiment within space to be accounted for and reinforces the interpretation that the world as it happens and not as it is planned can be communicated, which allows for a rich philosophical position to be adopted which will benefit this research.

The relevance of community participation within Lefebvre's (1991) spatial writings means that the role of the public library can be viewed as a pivotal space and as a cultural institution with opportunities for democratic opportunity and empowerment which can now be fully explored.

Chapter 4: Background and Context

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the context of this thesis while accounting for the emergence of the Central Library redevelopment of 2009. Firstly, a brief overview of culture-led regeneration of Newcastle will be undertaken to account for the emergence of culture as a phenomenon within the location of this case study. Then, the background and history of the City Library will be discussed to contextualise and account for the choice of case study for this research.

4.2 Rise of culture-led regeneration in Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Newcastle-upon-Tyne located within the North East of England suffered from large scale de-industrialisation in the 1970's particularly in shipbuilding and coalmining within the wider region. For the purposes of this discussion, it is important to view both Newcastle and Gateshead as one entity because while political tension has been present, both councils have focused on culture-led regeneration leading to the emergence of the term "NewcastleGateshead" in policy circles.

Public art has been a focus of regeneration for some time. The 1990 Garden Festival on the banks of the River Tyne can be seen as the genesis for culture and rejuvenation whereby 70 artworks were put on display for consumption by the local area. The area has also had a track record of achieving funding for arts from funding bodies such as the Northern Arts, Arts Council and the Urban Programme (van der Graff, 2009). The 1990's also witnessed the emergence of substantial funding opportunities from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Meanwhile regional art bodies identified the need for large scale infrastructure projects and major facilities such as art galleries which culminated in the strategies devised by Northern Arts for policy which would achieve this aim (Bailey et al. 2004). Crucially the implementation of an innovative public art project in the form of the Angel of the North

gave investors and funders confidence in the ability of Gateshead Council to deliver large scale projects that led to the conditions for the NewcastleGateshead Quayside to develop as a leading culture-led regeneration project in the country (van der Graff 2009). The city was able to take advantage of new funding opportunities by arguing the need for major cultural institutions and the belief in policy circles that this would allow for a democratisation of culture to emerge. This also formed a key element in the local authorities' economic development agenda to overcome the effects of de-industrialisation combined with the move to a service based economy. Altogether, the Baltic art gallery, the Sage Music centre and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge benefitted from over £100 million in lottery funding (Bailey et al. 2004) and helped cement the city as a city of culture. The bid (although unsuccessful) for the 2008 European City of Culture set the ground works for an expansion of culture both as a policy strategy and as an economic development tool throughout the city leading to the emergence of cultural clusters in Ouseburn in the East of Newcastle as well as a more temporary and organic space within the New Bridge Street area – the neighbourhood in which the City Library is located. These circumstances set the city of Newcastle as an interesting case study in which to focus my research and I was interested in learning how the redeveloped Library contributes, with the iconic developments, to regenerate Newcastle.

4.3 Background of the City Library

There has been a public library within Newcastle since 1882 when the first Victorian designed library was built in New Bridge Street in the city centre. The redevelopment plans for the area around John Dobson Street in the nineteen sixties witnessed the first library rebuilding project in the city. This saw the library move to its current location which was designed by Sir Basil Spence, completed in 1968 and served the needs of Newcastle. Over time a number of issues emerged which highlighted the need for a new public library. Firstly, issuing library tickets became laborious and old fashioned. Secondly, the use of concrete whilst fashionable in the nineteen sixties soon became unfashionable and unloved;

“the old library was almost unloved from the time it went up. It was a product of that concrete spree. Dan Smith and the Brasilia of the North” (councillor David Faulkner quoted in Phethean 2009, p.23).

The interior of the old City Library was also outdated and unwelcome (see Figure 3).

Moreover the design led many to view the library as inward looking, disengaging and the area around John Dobson Street becoming increasingly worn down and tired looking (Phethean 2009) (see Figure 4). Additionally, the initial plans of the early sixties of elevated walkways were not fully realised which left the library and its surrounding area disjointed and not fully connected with the wider city. These developments resulted in plans for a new library to be developed to take into account the needs of an increasingly diverse and variegated society with constantly changing technological innovations. The inspiration for the new library came from visiting new public libraries in Malmo, Sweden as well as more innovative designs in London such as the Whitechapel Idea Store. Key requirements such as flexible spaces, ones that were open and welcoming were desired, and after consultation with the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), a PFI figure of £40.2 million was agreed as a budget for the new library (Phethean 2009). The changing role of the city as an entertainment and leisure hub influenced the plans for the new library as well as making the library visible and attractive for meetings and as a social space. Moreover, the need for effective consultation to ensure the new library did not become so “politically unpopular” (Councillor David Faulkner, quoted in Phethean 2009, p.34) formed a framework for how the design for the new library would develop.

Librarians’ needs centred on new technology and short timescales for project completion due to the PFI requirements while the architects focussed on the potential for the library to act as a catalyst for wider regeneration in this area of the city. This also focused on promoting the civic elements of the library building and one that would become a landmark for Newcastle acting as a “cultural destination and as a catalyst for new placemaking [sic] and urban renewal” (Phethean 2009, p. 48). Additionally, new public spaces were extended outside to improve on the aesthetics and landscaping of the new library. The new City

Library opened in June 2009 incorporating modern materials and design principles compared with the previous library which incorporated modernist architecture (see Figure 3 and 4). The redevelopment of the City Library within the context of its promotion as a cultural building as well as the aim of engendering further regeneration in the locality makes the City Library a pertinent case study in which to explore culture-led regeneration in a city that has often been at the forefront of such initiatives and one which has been globally recognised in this regard.



Figure 3: Interior of old City Library (source: Phethean 2009).



Figure 4: Exterior of old City Library (source: Phethean 2009).



Figure 5: Views of the exterior of the new City Library (source; Phethean 2009).

4.4 Maps of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

To familiarise readers to the location of this study as well as to serve as a reference for the subsequent analysis chapters, I have included some maps of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1862728&page=15>



Map 2: Map of Newcastle city centre (source: Google Maps)

Chapter 5 - Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe and justify the selected research design incorporated in this research project. The chapter starts by restating the research aims and objectives together with the research questions which this study will address. The approach, design and methods employed will then be discussed together with a justification for the selected methods and design. Finally, the chapter concludes with an evaluation of the research design where the benefits and limitations regarding the methodology together with how the selected methods have allowed me to address my research questions and satisfy my aims.

5.2 Research objectives

While the general aim of this research was to research community participation and opportunity in wider cultural regeneration, the specific research problem was to understand how spaces of participation and democratic possibility exist or otherwise within a cultural institution – the City Library. In order to address this, I identified a number of objectives for this study derived from my literature review. The literature review highlighted how urban places in particular have become increasingly commodified based along ideas of consumption based growth and development. One element of this has been a rise in culture-led regeneration strategies (evidenced by music venues and art galleries) together with a general increase in areas and institutions associated with culture including the library. However, there has been little evidence of how these institutions offer spaces of participation in light of changing funding commitments and targets, particularly how, and indeed whether culture within such institutions can become democratised and accessed by a wider audience through a mainly empirical enquiry. Similarly, little previous work has been done on the role of libraries as anchor institutions or key economic agents as a tool of urban regeneration and whether culture-led regeneration strategies offer genuine democratic spaces

or just promote development based on the desires of consumption and the tastes of traditional middle class tendencies.

The empirical focus of the research is Newcastle and as this case study has initiated regeneration through culture-led policies, culture itself will provide the empirical focus of the research. The empirical study will incorporate the City Library. Library staff will be interviewed and asked a range of topics covering whether the library acts as a cultural icon for the city, how activities around culture are implemented within the library as well as the partnerships that the library is involved with which will be subsequently mapped and analysed. This will determine whether the City Library acts as an anchor institution for the city and the opportunities and obstacles for the future. As this is a mixed methods approach a rhythmanalysis and documentary analysis will also be carried out to help contextualise the empirical study and to further understand what factors influence the City Library both theoretically and practically.

As the use of rhythmanalysis is uncommon in research I wish to justify my use of it in this thesis. Issues around how rhythmanalysis was incorporated in this research are discussed later in this chapter. Firstly, as should have become clear in the literature review, the library as a space is a complex space which from my point of view is not easily investigated through one method, and for me it was important to ensure this complexity was appropriately captured through the methods used. Secondly, as I wanted to capture all elements within the research study, this requires for human and non-human spaces to be considered. As the library building itself and the area around it constitutes in my opinion a relevant “space”, it was important that a method which allowed me to access this “space” was included.

Rhythmanalysis in my opinion satisfied this demand. Finally, a guiding principle behind this research was to determine whether the library through culture offered spaces of egalitarianism through democracy and opportunity. This, combined with the literature on commodified spaces within cities focussed me to search for methods which examined some of these issues within the library. As Lefebvre (who pioneered the use of rhythmanalysis)

was also occupied with similar issues, I found his use of rhythmanalysis satisfied these demands whilst also adhering to the geographical background of the researcher allowing for a spatialized account to be achieved.

One consequence of this is that the discourse around performativity feature in the subsequent analysis but less so in the literature review. I justify this for three main reasons. Firstly such discourse also features in research that has deployed rhythmanalysis previously, most notably in Lefebvre's methodology on rhythmanalysis. Secondly, I view this more as a finding of my methods and subsequently of my research than I do a previous knowledge of libraries. To my knowledge, rhythmanalysis is a relatively novel research method and has not been implemented in library research previously. Therefore, to include performativity in the literature review would necessarily require a significant sub-chapter which would require more words in the literature review and fewer words in other chapters which could impact on the key arguments made in this research. Finally, I view the use of terminology around rhythmanalysis as a means to an end rather than an end in itself that requires extensive justification through existing literature. By that I mean I am not explicitly researching performativity but deploying it as a result of my use of other methods namely rhythmanalysis. Some readers may also view the use of performativity emerging as a finding in itself. Therefore, for reasons relating to both issues discussed above I feel the use and discussion of performativity allows me to explore the key issues that rhythmanalysis has presented regarding this thesis and such discussion in my view remains essential parts of the analysis and conclusion chapters but less so in the literature review.

5.3 Approach

5.3.1 Research position

This research adopted the epistemological position that the actuality of the users' experiences can only be assessed and understood via the participants own constructions and experiences. This required an approach that would allow access to the participants'

subjective encounters through their use of language and attempt to understand and comprehend these experiences as they discussed their relationships, feelings and attitudes towards the venue in question. An approach was needed that offered the potential for the distinctiveness of human experience than that of the more positivist stance focussing on a natural order ordering society (Bryman 2012). Therefore, an interpretative stance was adopted for this research as such a stance allows for the individuals own experiences to be constructed through their own words and actions and to be articulated to the researcher. Furthermore, this study recognises “particularity” which must be understood within the context of time and place (Robson 2002). This reinforces the chosen philosophical and theoretical background of this study as being an interpretivist approach that “respects the differences between people... and requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of interaction” (Bryman 2012: 30).

As I was interested in staff attitudes regarding key themes and ideas that the City Library is involved with, and how they understand and approach issues such as access to services and opportunities offered by the City Library, I approached these accounts as a way of understanding how culture in particular can be transformational within a public library. I also considered how these services serve to support or otherwise the City Library as an anchor institution for the city. From an analytical perspective, I also looked for interpretations that were common to many participants as well as those which were relevant to few or even individual participants to help answer the research questions.

The literature review highlighted the complicated and difficult process of assessing areas of “best practice” regarding community involvement and consultation in regeneration programmes and deliberative democracy. My research did not aspire to set out and critique such processes and to formulate new theories of participation and to advocate its application within the City Library. Nonetheless, on a general level, where I have felt a greater level of consultation with end users would be beneficial I have included this in the analysis. In order to assess the library as a democratic public space required a suitable theoretical position that

accounted for a spatial interpretation of the research. Therefore, Habermasian democracy is insufficient as it does not give an adequate platform to spatial interpretations. Consequently, I have adopted Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space as an appropriate approach to explore whether there are spaces within the City Library offering democratic opportunities and learning exist or have the potential to exist that could be enacted to help communities and individuals to have the potential to develop the aptitude necessary to learn new skills. This could also take the form of activities or projects on offer that allow individuals opportunities to improve skills and to become more active citizens going forward.

While I may be approaching the library from a cultural and spatial perspective that does not mean that I will not be advocating any change in the City Library. The benefit of adopting a spatial interpretation is that I am able to account for all the spaces (both physical and human) which influence the operation and decision-making of the City Library whilst demonstrating how various components influence not only the library as an institution but the wider city in a spatially networked perspective. Therefore, by adopting Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space, one is able to analyse an institution as a whole, accounting for all areas of possibility, so that one can understand how and which areas can be viewed as democratic spaces. This ensures that any critique is understood in the wider context, and so that any area considered for change is aimed at the right level and the relevant spatial enclave and tier of the City Library. Whilst not focusing on power exclusively, the researcher is aware both from the literature on participation and from wider reading that power influences democratic space and opportunity. The approach adopted within this research recognises that power is negotiated, not static, and that understanding the wider network can bring about more effective and lasting change than it would if I were to focus on one level (i.e. the institution) itself. Just as Lefebvre (1991) acknowledges regarding space as enacted or lived, everyday life is unplanned and spontaneous. In this light, my research demonstrates the dynamic and negotiated nature of the City Library and that the realities and outcomes are very much part of a political process within various hierarchies of power and control which influence the

day to day running and strategic outcomes of institutions such as the City Library. How policymakers may wish for the library space to be used and how that space is actually used can diverge enormously. An awareness of space, in this regard, helps illuminate these processes within my research.

As this study is interpretivist in nature, one accepts the ontological position of constructivism whereby the social entities and phenomena under investigation are constantly changing and cannot be understood in terms of strict pre-defined categories. While constructivism has its critics, especially from feminists (see Guba and Lincoln 1994) who argue it constitutes powerful experts researching the powerless participants (Robson 2002), objectivism as an ontological position would be inappropriate for this study as the rules and regulations of the social actors associated with objectivism (Bryman 2012) would not allow for the research questions to be answered satisfactorily.

While there is no theory to prove or disprove and as a consequence this study is mainly inductive in nature, there will still be an element of deductive enquiry in the analysis of the data as trends and anomalies identified within the data will be linked back to the existing theory. This will focus particularly on theory relating to community, participation and the role of culture in urban regeneration strategies, to reach substantial conclusions which have the potential to influence policy and open spaces for participation and democratic opportunity.

5.3.2 Interpretative strategies – qualitative methodologies

With regard to the empirical enquiry, semi-structured interviews were employed in order to attain the views and experiences of the participants. There are a number of advantages associated with qualitative data collection methods. These advantages focus on the ability to generate “thick” descriptions (Robson 2002), allowing participants to, through language, construct their reality of the situation and for this reality to be comprehended by the researcher. At its most basic level interviews can be thought of as an interaction between

two people (Longhurst 2003) or as Eyles (1988) puts it a conversation with purpose. Semi-structured interviews are interviews that have “some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed” (Dunn 2000, p 52). Accordingly, semi-structured interviews offer the chance for the questions or themes the researcher is interested in to be explored whilst allowing for the input of the interviewee in areas they feel strongly about. The use of interviews allows the researcher to adequately explore the views of staff members of the City Library by elucidating the key themes which emerge.

From this, I incorporated qualitative data in the study in order to effectively capture the feelings and experiences of the participants. From an interpretivist perspective, the use of interviews is important. The opportunity to collect in-depth data on a subject as opposed to a survey or questionnaire (Valentine 2005) was very important. Furthermore, the ability to alter the questions and for the participant to be given a “voice” on their experiences and attitudes can be empowering itself. Additionally, the ability for the researcher to adopt and steer the direction of the conversation as new ideas or attitudes arise make semi-structured interviews in particular a very beneficial and effective method to use. I am also aware of the arguments which caution interviews as a research methodology. For example, Kitzinger (2004) cautions that many interviewees can withhold information or have the potential to misconstrue information, we must also realise that policy formation and decision-making is a process of reaching a decision which will neglect alternative points of view due to vested interests. Furthermore, it is also disempowering and indirectly reinforces the power of the researcher to assume that the data given by an interviewee may be suspect and assumes that the researcher is an all knowing “expert” in the field. In light of this, it is appropriate to recognise that conducting interviews is an on-going process of negotiation and co-construction between the researcher and the participant. In doing so, what people say, how it is said and even what is not said can reveal equally as much as what is said.

One critique of interview data is the narrowness of the data – as the participant saying little or nothing about reality outside the interview itself and the researcher then formulating their

own interpretation of such a reality. However, many researchers do not see this as too much of a problem because by focusing on the co-construction of the interview itself “we can say a lot about content without importing our own sense of what content is important”

(Silverman 2005, p.131). I did not view these articulations as uncritical accounts. Rather, I viewed these as contributions in an on-going process of understanding and experience while being aware that these accounts are influenced by external factors as well as the time and place of the interview.

There are other criticisms of using interviews as a research method. The main critique is that of interviewer bias (Valentine 2005). However, such beliefs often originate from a positivist perspective but from a constructivist perspective, one recognizes the “fallacy” of being human; “Whether we like it or not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual feelings, failings and moods” (Stanley and Wise 1983: 157). Indeed this is reinforced by Davidson and Layder who argue the focus should be on the interviewee; “Interviewers are not losing their “objectivity”... rather they are using the interview as an opportunity to explore the subjective values, beliefs and thoughts of the individual respondent” (1994: 125). Therefore, interviewee bias must be accepted as unavoidable but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages of interviews.

While I devised and implemented a traditional interpretivist strategy based on semi-structured interviews, I also incorporated additional methods in this study. This was for a number of reasons. Firstly, by incorporating triangulation into the research, I am increasing the validity of the study (a common critique of qualitative approaches). Secondly, from a Lefebvrian spatial perspective, it is important to account for all the spaces within the City Library and how various tiers and processes interrelate with one another. This necessarily includes policy documents, speeches and even influences and factors external to the City Library but relevant to their physical surroundings and location. I employed two further methods. One method was a documentary analysis relating to the City Library. This accounted for decision making regarding funding, priorities and activities and outreach by

the City Library which would have affected (possibly indirectly) the experiences offered in the interviews. I collected and subsequently analysed policy documents at the national level (Arts Council England reports), local level reports (Local Authority and regional agency documents) to institution reports to not only contextualise the empirical research but also to highlight and understand the various influences that shape the running of the City Library. This also allowed me to demonstrate how these factors affect the priorities and subsequently the opportunities for participation and consultation and the conditions (mainly due to funding and targets) which affect the intensity and spaces of participation. Secondly, following Lefebvre (2004), a rhythmanalysis was carried out to assess the rhythms which are generated and affect the City Library and address themes in the literature review on how cities have become commodified (Featherstone 1991) and how development has increasingly become premised on the desires and tastes of middle class consumption. This involved visiting the City Library and taking photographs of the venue and its surroundings from different perspectives on various days. From these images, and from walking around the venue and taking notes, the various rhythms (including linear and cyclical rhythms) were identified and explained to better understand how the institution is affected by its location in the city.

This also covered pedestrians and any links to the wider region as well as how the institution impacts the city and its surroundings through its physical form and what it represents. These influences also affect the decision making of local officials and venue managers as well as the role such an institution plays in the wider city region as well as the effects (both physically and emotionally) on the pedestrians and users of such spaces. Based on the argument for validity (above), I felt this multi-method approach would allow for a greater richness of data on all the factors that influence participation and culture regeneration in the second decade of the twenty first century. Furthermore, such triangulation of methods aided my aim of extrapolating and reaching theoretically and methodologically substantial conclusions for this study.

One further point I wish to make at this stage is regarding the premise of this study. Previous studies have often focussed on participation within a policy area (i.e. focussing on the New Deal for Communities partnerships in planning or collaborative planning (Roy 2015)). Previous research that has focussed on one institution (the City Library) this has often involved methods such as “sweeps” of libraries focussing on the activities taking place in the library (Leckie and Hopkins 2002). Part of this study’s originality in my view is how it incorporates these two themes from very different academic backgrounds. By adopting participation and democracy from the policy sphere combined with a cultural institution from a geographical and sociological sphere, this study attempts to understand some of the debates from the literature review in a real world setting, allowing the potential to compare and contrast between these settings.

While appreciating the value of “seat sweeps” and demographic studies used in the City Library itself, this study attempts to go one step further by directly asking staff for their views on the topics and issues relevant to this study. This is important because staff members themselves are the ones “on the ground” enacting policy decisions from various bodies and agencies and so they are best placed to answer questions relating to how activities and culture more generally is understood and enacted in the activities than say users of the library. This allows the “whole story” to be seen so that issues or targets identified nationally can be traced to comments made locally. This research also maintains the relational view of space through rhythmanalysis but also in the mapping of partnerships, between the City Library and other institutions. From such an analysis, one will be able to determine whether the City Library, through its partnerships relationally acts as an anchor institution linking communities with local and national connections and how these can be further developed going forward.

For the semi-structured interviews I focussed on small instances of resistance (such as amending opening hours) as not only offering spaces of democratic opportunity but also as instances of power, negotiation and action – by voicing concerns over opening hours or

services within the library, one acts in the hope of indirectly changing what is offered or what to focus on in the future. As my research was concerned with democratic opportunities in a cultural setting, I also paid attention to any mention of the experiences of skills learned in the City Library within wider contexts and everyday life to see whether the opportunities offered have the potential to empower individuals both inside and outside the City Library.

5.3.3 Lefebvre and space

Whilst my literature review has charted my thinking around democracy before advancing an approach which considers spatial interpretations, it is Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space that congeals these ideas and becomes most relevant to this research. Although not my theoretical position, I am aware of how power influences decision-making and exploring spaces of democratic possibility. Consequently, my analysis of policy documents and, to a degree, analysis of interview data employs Critical Discourse Analysis and is, therefore relevant, and will be described in further detail in section 5.4.3 (below).

My concept of space very much follows Lefebvre's (1991) writings on the production of space. As Lefebvre uses "triplicate" or a three term expression to explain the value of Marxist traditions within society, it is to this that I now turn. The most important "triplicate" is of space as perceived, conceived and lived. The third term disregards dualism and adds a societal process to the mix as Gottdiener (1993) explains;

"This triple is meant to convey that space has a complex character and enters social relations at all levels. It is at once a physical environment that can be perceived; a semiotic abstraction that informs both how ordinary people negotiate space... and the space of corporations, planners, politicians and the like; and, finally, a medium through which the body lives out its life in life [sic] with other bodies." (Gottdiener 1993, p.131)

Not only does such an approach overcome reductionism, but Lefebvre proposes a thesis which links the physical, the mental and the social together. Consequently, Lefebvre's theory not only considers space as relational but views space as being actively constructed as Schmid (2008) acknowledges;

“Space does not exist “in itself”, it is produced... Lefebvre proceeds from a relational concept of space and time” (Schmid quoted in Goonewardena 2008).

Crucially, such an interpretation actively positions the inhabitants and users themselves as actively creating the space as it is encountered, a space where difference, spontaneity and power permeate (Lefebvre 2003). One way Lefebvre charts such differences within space is by categorising the various ways of conceptualising space. Lefebvre develops a second “triplicate” in the form of a spatial practise (the material world), a representation of space (a model used to represent space and direct future work and policy) and a space of representation (the lived societal relations of the inhabitants).

While Lefebvre does chart three such accounts, only two are relevant here; representations of space and representational spaces. “Representations of space” constitutes scientists, planners and engineers who identify how space is perceived to operate and function displayed through maps, numbers and graphs focussing on traditional Cartesian interpretations of space through defined zones and boundaries. In contrast, “representational space” describes the space as lived through signs and symbols of the inhabitants themselves. Such a distinction allows for the playfulness and dynamic possibilities of space to be explored and accessed at a far deeper level. Lefebvre’s success is that he focuses on how societies have described space in both form and meaning. Lefebvre achieves this by considering abstract space and social space (Gottdiener 1993). Abstract space is the interconnections between knowledge and power and useful for those wishing to exert control and order on society. In contrast, social space is derived from practise, the everyday experiences that are achieved through action by members of society. As a result, Lefebvre is able to articulate a spatial account of society, one that accounts for temporal as well as difference within space. Space is both an intermediary of social relations as well as a product in itself which mediates social relations. Put another way, through a Lefebvrian approach I am able to demonstrate how a culture of everyday life can be explored compared with the everyday, culture by design expressed through top-down regeneration projects like the SAGE in Gateshead Quayside.

At this point I wish to clarify some philosophical issues raised in part by certain readings of Lefebvre and his work on the production of space (1991). Whilst aware of Lefebvre's Marxist tendencies I am also conscious of other influences on his work. In particular, through my methodological decision of conducting a rhythmanalysis within this research, I aim to show how I am aware of Heidegger's understanding of the everyday and the experiencing of space (indeed I reinforce this by my criticism of Habermas lacking experience or embodiment in chapter 2). By focussing on the everyday occurrences within the production of space, I also note Lefebvre's criticism of Heidegger – the neglect of production (of space). Indeed through my use of rhythmanalysis, I demonstrate how, through Heideggerian notions of experience, Nietzschean understanding of power, as well as through Lefebvre's notion of space and time, I show how space is thus produced as detailed within Lefebvre's (2004) work on the same subject - rhythmanalysis. In agreeing with Elden (2007), that it is only through an understanding of both Heidegger and Nietzsche, alongside Marx that Lefebvre's production of space thesis makes logical sense and offers avenues for resistance to emerge.

An important consideration of Lefebvre's thesis is that all the factors impacting a particular space need to be accounted for. This is appropriate because as my study is not deductive in nature. I wished to explore how culture is enacted in the City Library both through the physical form (as a cultural institution) and the activities taking place within the City Library and how this can be transformational for participants. In order to fully explore this empirically, all actors must be accounted for. As many of these actors which either directly or indirectly impact the space of the City Library are non-human and because actions are often derived from policy documents and speeches, an analysis of such documents was essential in order to account for all the actors within the space of the library. This relational view of space illustrates how decisions and relationships over distant spaces can have profound influences over activities at a local level. By conducting interviews with staff members of the City Library, not only are the consequences of such decision-making

revealed but a dialectic relationship of sorts is established (often indirectly) between the wishes of the users (as described by staff members) and the policymakers. Finally, a rhythmanalysis (discussed in section 5.4.2) allows the researcher direct access to the space both within and outside the library to determine how the library is used every day. Put another way, the policy documents can be seen as being representations of space, how library professionals expect the library to run. The interviews with library managers can be seen as a middle ground between expectations of library managers and their accounts of how the library is used by patrons. The rhythmanalysis constitutes representational spaces which describes the space as lived through the signs and symbols of inhabitants of that space. Consequently, Lefebvre's (1991) writings on the production of space allowed me to account for all actors involved as well as to illustrate how changes desired at one level of the library may not necessarily play out as imagined within the everyday life of the City Library.

I also want to describe the relationship between Sacco's (2011) models of culture and Lefebvre's use of space. While Sacco illustrates how culture can be variegated and diverse, Lefebvre's writings on space (1991) allow Sacco's model to be expanded further as well as providing for a rich empirical lens to explore culture within everyday life. Put another way, Sacco details possibilities of culture (from a policy perspective) while Lefebvre demonstrates the realities of such possibilities in the real world. Hence, while they both come from different perspectives, there are connections between their use within this research.

From this, I briefly wish to relate this concept to the choice and ordering of methods (discussed below). As I have already stated, this research is interested in exploring spaces of resistance and spontaneity which is beyond the scope of only one method (see Table 3).

Table 3: Characteristics of chosen methods

Policy Analysis	Interviews	Rhythmanalysis
Formal	Intermediary	Informal
Design	Design/Performance	Performance
Legislation	Authorisation/Enactment	Enactment
Politicians/officials	Managers	Everyday users
Expert		Non-Expert
Restricted		Relational – possibilities for democracy
Prescribed		Negotiated

Table 3 depicts an overview of my methods and helps to justify their use. My aim is to show that by incorporating both structured policy analysis (representations of space) through to a much more informal and unpredictable rhythmanalysis (representational spaces), possibilities for resistance, dynamic outcomes and democratic opportunities can be depicted. This has influenced the ordering of the chapters in my analysis. By beginning with the rhythmanalysis (Chapter 5) and finishing with the interviews (Chapter 8), I am moving from the culture of everyday life (rhythmanalysis) through to culture by design as designated through the library partnerships work. This helps to emphasise in particular the spaces and networks involved within the running of the City Library which hold more possibilities for democratic and dynamic participation. Policy documents are within the realms of “experts” with certain views and knowledge on how spaces and institutions should be used. The users of everyday spaces such as the library are non-experts who negotiate the space with other inhabitants as they initiate and overcome power dynamics and expectations within a space. In essence the stages of the analysis can be compared to an analogy of an onion with each method peeling back a different layer of the public library offering up different elements for analysis. It is my opinion that only by adopting a spatial interpretation can all the elements of the library be comprehensively analysed so that a complete account of the library as a public institution emerges through the research.

This relational direction from left to right of Table 3 also demonstrates how various actors are able to influence and direct outcomes within their own circuits or networks of power. For

example, policy documents are heavily implicated by institutional power and politics which forms the main process of enacting the wishes of government or agencies into the venues under their control. Library managers (in the form of interviews) straddle this middle ground in which their actions are limited to adhering to set policy whilst also accommodating the wishes of library users which can be unpredictable and ever changing. This can lead to unforeseen events by either government officials or library users as mediation re-interprets power in unexpected ways. Finally, rhythmanalysis accounts for the everyday life of the library and how the space is actually used by inhabitants which is unpredictable and dynamic, and can lead to resistance and events which a much more controlled policy document could not envisage. Consequently, it is only by utilising all three methods that a complete picture of the City Library can emerge.

Finally, whilst rhythmanalysis is to my mind an uncommon method, it has, to a limited extent, been used by scholars in recent research. In the geographical field, one particular scholar stands out - Tim Edensor - who has incorporated and advanced rhythmanalysis through a range of research contexts including a coach tour (Edensor and Holloway 2008), marathons (Edensor and Larsen 2018) to walking itself (Edensor 2010). His work in particular has guided my empirical use of rhythmanalysis and his advancement of the theory including his arguments that rhythm is “identifiable though dynamic characteristic of place and how walking is part of the concatenation of rhythms through which place is (re)produced” (Edensor 2010,p.77) have shaped my understanding of rhythmanalysis. In particular, my rhythmanalysis is in response to the call from Edensor and Larsen who argue that “ a host of other spatial contexts may be explored through rhythmanalysis... or the conditions under which forms of eurhythmia and arrhythmia emerge within eventual and everyday urban experience” (Edensor and Larsen 2018, p.744).

5.3.4 Ethical Considerations

It is timely to consider the ethical considerations associated with this study as a prelude to discussions over validity and reliability in the next section. At first glance, ethical considerations may not appear too strongly in this study. However, a number of decisions over ethics inevitably took place as I came into contact with a lot of individuals consisting of different ages, genders, races as well as more discreet characteristics such as intellectual abilities. Of course the latter is much more difficult (and problematic) to assess than the former. In this light, a wider consideration of ethics is both essential and beneficial to both researcher and participant.

Firstly, regarding interviewing library staff members, I was not able to interview such individuals off-site in a neutral space for both practical (staff were often giving up their work time to be interviewed) and cost considerations. I also reasoned that I would get richer data if the interviews were carried out in the place where the participant was more familiar which would also reduce the impression of the researcher being an elite (Bryman 2012) which could impact the quality of data.

In being aware of the tendency (for some commentators) that wider methodological issues become confined and overtly influenced by ethical considerations (see Hammersley 2000), I nonetheless chart a position relevant to this study. In agreeing with Shaw (2003) that an over reliance on predetermined codes risks compartmentalising ethics, and more generally influencing decisions over and above other methodical considerations, a framework following one of Kvale's (1996) ethical models focussing on value ethics is most suitable. Such a framework "stresses a contextual or situational ethical position, with the emphasis on researcher's moral values and ethical skills in reflectively negotiating ethical dilemmas" (Shaw 2003, p.11). While such a framework can also be combined with other related concerns related to duty (principles) and utilitarianism (consequences) models, such a position allows for the context of the research to determine how ethics should be considered.

In this study, such a framework allowed me to combine my morals (regarding how research should be conducted and how consent is established) with the reality on the ground instead of relying on codes and procedures which may look good on paper but in reality pose problems in their implementation. For example, regarding explaining the purposes of my research to potential participants, for the most part I give a general overview of my research and the reasons for conducting semi-structured interviews. However, in a number of instances, participants asked further questions which warranted a more detailed response covering issues such as why I was studying the City Library and what were the consequences if any of my research. By adopting a value framework and by using my morals as viewing all participants as equal and valued, I set about further describing the purposes and background of the study. Not only would a framework based on predefined codes make this more problematic, I was also actively negotiating consent with the participant to ensure all parties were happy to take part or not. Such deliberation and judgements were combined with more general standards set out by the University research ethics committees and by guidelines published by the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice. It can also be argued that such an approach actively allows for participants to make an informed choice democratically and without coercion which forms a major component of this study.

Confidentiality and privacy were also areas worthy of consideration. History has shown how studies, even years after publication, can still cause privacy issues as Whyte's classic study *Street Corner Society* (1993) shows. In this study, years later when actual names of the participants were revealed, consequences for loved ones remain. In this light, I adopted a position whereby all names of participants were anonymised by using pseudonyms. I justified this approach as both the city (location) and the venue have been named throughout the study. Even though the risk may be small, and agreeing with Bryman (2012) that circumstances outside the researcher's control such as theft make guaranteeing complete

privacy problematic, such an approach ensured that privacy and confidentiality were maintained as best as possible by the researcher.

5.3.5 Validity and Reliability

Both the epistemological and interpretivist position I adopted impacted my research regarding validity and reliability. As my stance is based on constructivism, this resulted in meaning and interpretation of experiences which is time and space dependant and can only be understood as an interpretation of one individual's reality. Consequently this could not be viewed objectively but could only be viewed subjectively. This understanding was also influenced by the interaction of me as a researcher between my understanding of the reality and experience being described by the participant. The impact of the researcher in the field of study in this type of research has been well known by commentators (Robson 2002). Issues surround the nature of information given, issues over the researcher coming across as being elite in contrast with the participant (Silverman 2005) as well as the overall data collection and interpretation.

This has led some to disregard validity and reliability often due to the supposed divergent assumptions and characteristics associated with positivist research (Marshall and Rossman 1989, p.147). However there has been a move to incorporate validity and reliability into qualitative research more generally by incorporating strategies that focus more on the particulars of qualitative research (Silverman 2005). These more general strategies include extended (and sometimes verbatim) extracts into research accounts, describing fully how field notes were recorded and keeping a full account of notes including shorter notes immediately after the research takes place together with fuller notes at a later date (Silverman 2005). I concur with these latter strategies as to argue against validity and reliability can be a slippery slope in deciding what is and what isn't research and with the quality of research more generally being at risk. By explaining fully the steps taken within the research and how these relate to the research questions and the overall aim of the study

ensures that validity and reliability are maintained in an appropriate manner. These strategies were incorporated into my study and are explored further in the research design and research methods below as well as in the analysis section in following chapters.

5.4 Research design and research methods

The research design must reflect both the epistemological and ontological positions of the research as well as the location and context of the overall research. Consequently, a case study seems most appropriate as one unit (Newcastle –upon-Tyne) is being researched;

“[A] Case Study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence” (Robson 2002: 178).

The contemporary phenomenon is participation within a cultural institution whilst the context is Newcastle-upon –Tyne and the multiple sources constitute the methods used including semi-structured interviews, rhythm analysis and documentary analysis. This encourages the requirements of the research by gathering the responses and views of various actors (library managers) of participation and cultural implementation within a library (cultural institution) in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The case study approach also highlights the focus of the research and satisfies both the epistemological and ontological assumptions that the world can only be understood through social interaction. As a consequence, interpretations and construction of these beliefs can only be understood in the context around these interactions.

Critics may argue that by adopting a case study approach, the ability to generalise the results of the study is limited. While this may be so for natural sciences, for many social scientists, the fact remains that not everything can be generalized; “generalization is not always possible” (Bell 2005: 9). Indeed many argue that for social science research (and case studies in particular) “fuzzy” generalizations are possible;

“The fuzzy generalization arises from studies of singularities and typical claims that is possible, or likely, or unlikely that what was found in the singularity will be found in similar situations elsewhere” (Bassey 1999: 12)

The researcher agrees with this proposition. For example, there are many towns and cities which could have been selected both nationally and internationally. Selecting any other locality would not ensure the ability to generalize any more than the chosen case study. The researcher also concurs with the argument made by Mitchell; “the cogency of the theoretical reasoning” (1983: 207), that the quality of the extrapolations between the theoretical literature and the empirical research data is of most importance to generate both data and theoretically rich conclusions. From this perspective, a case study approach is more than adequate.

5.4.1 Sampling of participants

With regard to the interviewing with library staff and as I was researching one institution, I was able to interview the manager of the library who then offered me the names of other relevant staff (such as heads of department) who I then subsequently interviewed. This approach allowed me to target my questions at relevant staff (those who managed the departments and who were in charge of implementing policy decisions and activities more generally) rather than staff members that are front of house who would not have had the answers to my questions. This approach also allowed issues that arose in one interview to influence the topics discussed in subsequent interviews. Indeed it was this approach that allowed me to identify a relevant member of Newcastle City Council to access the viewpoints of the city council regarding the issues under investigation in my research.

5.4.2 Data collection

The use of interviews offered a general structure and allowed for control of the overall themes of the interview by the researcher but allowed the flexibility to adapt the progression of the interview to suit the participant and their attitudes and experiences (Bryman 2012). From this I devised an interview schedule or framework which consisted mainly of open-

ended questions. I also followed up on areas of discussion that arose from the particular interview, especially on past experiences or comparing the City Library from one period in time to another. Linking back to my epistemological position I also felt that this not only recognised the experience being described as of equal value and importance and that in order to fully comprehend the experience being described, additional probing on certain areas was, on occasion, needed. This usually involved asking questions such as “what do you mean by that?”, “can you give an example of this?” to ensure my interpretation of the experience was accurate as possible within the negotiated space of the interview (Robson 2002).

The main reason for conducting interviews was to find out the experiences, attitudes and feelings of the staff members within the City Library covering projects that could be considered activities offering spaces of learning, democratic opportunity, self-development, cultural learning and confidence building. Furthermore, I did not view the participant’s experiences and accounts as being “correct” or “truthful” as those with different opinions were treat the same and their accounts were analysed in the same way. I felt it important to fully understand and account for the “whole” network including those on the ground – the library staff themselves. As this group of people are not in the position to be able to publish their views and experiences for wider dissemination, the only appropriate method to capture and interpret these experiences was to adopt an interview methodology. This satisfied research questions 1, 2 and 3 in particular.

Regarding conducting the interviews, the interviews were conducted between January-April 2016. An initial meeting with the library manager was conducted in January 2016 to seek consent and I then approached members of staff. The interview with the council official took place in June 2016. Most of the interviews took 2 hours to undertake with the shortest interview lasting 1.5 hours. Table 4 below includes the names and positions of the individuals I interviewed for this research.

Table 4: Names of interviewees and positions

Name	Position
Susan	Head of Library
Michael	Business Manager
Mel	Assistant Reading Manager
Chris	Council Official
Jane	Head of Skills
Helen	Heritage Manager

In addition to the empirical element of the research, I also carried out two further research methods – documentary analysis and rhythmanalysis. The documentary analysis involved identifying relevant organisations both nationally and regionally (such as the Arts Council England and local authority reports relating to the City Library) to identify key themes to not only contextualise my research but also to help answer research questions 3 and 4 in particular. The documentary analysis was conducted between October 2015 – January 2016. In conducting a rhythmanalysis, this involved me visiting the City Library and taking photographs of various perspectives of the immediate vicinity. This was complemented by “wandering” around the surrounding area of the City Library and actively listening and interpreting what was seen and heard. This also included metaphorically listening to the surrounding areas including roads, movements of people, nearby buildings and institutions and transport interchanges to identify effects and influences on the City Library itself and the influences the City Library had on the spaces and people nearby. The rhythmanalysis was carried out in October – November 2016 on two weekdays (Monday and Wednesday) as well as on Saturdays for a period of 4 weeks. The incorporation of rhythmanalysis helped to satisfy research question 5 in particular.

All the methodologies not only satisfied my philosophical position but also allowed me to overcome the limitations of gaps I would have obtained by just using one method (Robson 2002). For example, by conducting a rhythmanalysis, I was able to also account for external factors that affect the activities taking place inside the City Library that an interview could not account for. Furthermore, by carrying out documentary analysis, I was able to identify

other actors such as national funding bodies and government policies which impacted the City Library which could not have been covered if adopting interviews or rhythmanalysis on their own. In this light, a triangulation of methods allowed for a much richer level of data in which to analyse and draw conclusions from.

As the nature of research is messy and complex, my initial intention was to incorporate focus groups into this research. This would have taken the form of focus groups with users of the library themselves. However, this in practise proved impractical. I attended many sessions at the library including computer and ancestry courses but when I asked for volunteers to participate I had very few people willing to participate with many people citing busy schedules as a reason for not taking part. In many respects this could well be a finding in itself, that some users of the library are time-poor compared to say Benjamin's (1936) account of the flâneur. Nonetheless, this led to me to reconsider and incorporate interviews with library managers as a way to overcome this obstacle. The library manager also believed my questions could be answered by members of staff as they are the ones working with different partners as well as dealing with budgets and priorities of the council and funders.

5.4.3 Data analysis

Initially I considered an ethnographical approach as this would have been suitable as I was conducting a rhythmanalysis. However, as I used triangulation, I felt ethnography would be unsuitable when considering a documentary analysis and interviewing. Furthermore, I felt my overall methodological approach through Lefebvre's (1991) writings on space ensured I accounted for all influences of the library – representations of space through to representational space.

In order to analyse the interview data, I used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which, as Coffin explains, is “an approach to language analysis which concerns itself with issues of language, power and ideology” (Coffin 2001, p.99). Thus CDA is an appropriate method because it rejects the exploration of language as being separate from the social world of the

study, focussing instead on language as a form of social practise (Fairclough 2006). In other words it illuminates how language is used to construct or influence decision-making which then has an outcome through social practise, allowing an examination of how the discourse is shaped by power, and how discourse plays an active role in shaping these power networks.

Clearly, discourse is political, whereby people act upon society as a mode of representation (Fairclough 1992) and CDA aims to show connections between discourse and action which are so often hidden from view. Crucially, Fairclough argues that in addition to discourse being both social practise and language, CDA adds a" third dimension "which focuses on discourse as a specifically discursive practice" (Fairclough, 1992: 71), meaning that discourse acts on society in material ways. By adopting CDA, as Fairclough describes, I am therefore able to account for power within language and how it is deployed in an attempt to enact decision-making within the various connections and networks in which the library is incorporated.

Regarding the rhythmanalysis, data analysis was carried out as I carried out various stages of walking around the City Library to capture my data. I tape recorded the sounds as I walked and I sat in the public spaces outside the City Library at various times of day and weather conditions which aided my subsequent interpretation of the photographs. I watched how people used the space, the direction they came from and the services (if any) they used within the vicinity of the library. Important points of note were quickly jotted down on paper as I attempted to immerse myself into the locality absorbing the sights and sounds as much as I could to help me understand the processes that were taking place. This approach helped me to become a part of the landscape in which I was analysing but not in ways that would influence the behaviour of the people around me or how the space was used overall. This aided my analysis of the library space.

Similarly with the documentary analysis, this was analysed once I had completed my search for relevant documents from the various institutions (Arts Council, Newcastle City Council).

I subsequently highlighted accounts which supported a particular point of view and those that did not as well as highlighting parts of the text that related to my research topic. This was conducted at various geographical levels and helped my analysis of the next level down. For example, I analysed relevant Arts Council England documents at a national level as these documents helped set out the main policy requirements affecting public libraries and I also referenced this to key speeches made by ministers relating to arts and culture more generally at a national level. This then helped my analysis of the regional context as resistances or convergences were identified, and the significance of such interventions was made all the more significant as each geographical level enriched the overall analysis. Additionally, anomalies or areas of interest were also highlighted and analysed to help contextualise the institutional background in which the City Library found itself.

Once both these processes had been carried out, I then proceeded to analyse my interviews with library staff members. While software packages such as NVIVO are widely available, I purposely refrained from using such software packages to analyse my data as I felt that this would hinder my immersion with the data. I felt that by manually coding the data I would get a better feel and understanding of the data and as a consequence I felt that new opportunities or directions may emerge than if I had used a software package. This process of immersion involved multiple stages. The first stage of this process involved highlighting parts of the transcript of interest that linked to areas of my study. From this I then proceeded to group the responses into categories which then formed key headings or topics within the analysis chapter itself. This approach allowed me to group the responses which also helped shape the analysis within the thesis.

The development of such categories often changed in the initial phases of analysis and this was aided with memos written around quotes of interest. This allowed me to further interrogate the data to achieve a more coherent framework within the analysis of the transcripts. From the grouping of categories I was able to compare and contrast the responses to highlight convergence and divergence of views between staff members as well

as the city council official. This process also allowed for initial codes or categories to become subsumed within more significant categories which allows for the diversity and breadth of responses to be accommodated and their importance to be explained. Often these initial codes were comments or possible explanations. These memos then influenced the next interviews that I carried out which eventually allowed for the more general categories to emerge from the data and ensured that the data had been analytically saturated.

5.4.4 Data interpretation

Following the development of the analytical categories, I referred back to my theoretical framework to establish what the data could reveal regarding significant findings around areas of transformational potential through the culture based activities enacted within the City Library. The findings were interpreted based on the key themes and arguments emerging from the literature review. An important element of this interpretive process was whether, and in particular how, cultural activities could be transformational and more democratic. Furthermore, this also included whether Sacco's (2011) models of culture was relevant or indeed helpful within a public library setting. I was acutely aware of how different participants and professionals understand and comprehend different terms such as culture and how this may vary due to the nature academics within other institutional settings may understand and interpret such terms. This was an important consideration as I made connections between the data and the literature.

I then further developed the analysis of interview data by geographically mapping the partnerships the City Library already had in place. While this work followed on from the interview data, it does not directly address the research questions. Nonetheless, the results are interesting. In this light, this work can be found in section 9.4.1. This involved going back to members of staff to clarify points made previously with regard to partnerships but due to the nature of the interviews, many points on this topic had already been made in the original interviews. Regarding the maps themselves, the width of the arrows signified the

strength of the relationship and I developed these partnerships further in the written analysis that accompanied the maps. For clarity I categorised the partnerships into the following categories; “Economic”, “Cultural” and “Democracy, access and miscellaneous”. The accompanying analysis explained the information the maps showed regarding the City Library as an anchor institution, and then argued the relevance of the mapping data followed by discussing how this could be improved or developed going forward. This exercise aided me regarding my inquiry into whether the City Library had the characteristics associated with that of an anchor institution.

5.4.5 Ethics in practice

The decisions and actions regarding the data collection, recruitment and subsequent analysis were directly influenced by ethical considerations (see section 4.3.4). Before carrying out the research I met with the manager of the institution to get their consent to research in the City Library. This ensured I was being upfront and forthright with my choice of the City Library as a research location. This consent was achieved through written consent on a document which detailed a summary of the purpose of my research and the nature of the research I intended to carry out in the City Library. I informed ahead of time my proposed dates and times of research so that the City Library was aware of my presence.

Regarding the interview participants themselves, as I was using employees (mainly librarians) from the City Library itself, I contacted each member of staff I wished to interview beforehand stating my research aim and asking whether they wished to be interviewed. I wore visible identification at all times which consisted of my student card attached to a lapel so that I could be clearly identified and seen to be genuine. As the library in particular has requested that it was to be made clear to all participants that this research did not involve the library itself, this strategy achieved this goal and ensured I put in place additional ethical practices. At the start of each interview I clearly explained the research and made clear that consent could be withdrawn at any time for any reason. I also made clear

that the City Library would not have access to who was interviewed and who was not to ensure the participant could make an informed decision whether to participate or not in case it was interpreted that the research was encouraged or supported by the library. They were also able to decline to take part in the research without offering a reason or being intimidated by the researcher.

I informed the participants what the interview would involve and I stressed that their views, whatever they may be, would be valuable to the research. During the interviews, I confirmed at the beginning their willingness to take part and recapped on the purposes of the research. I also informed them that if there was a question they were unfamiliar with or did not want to answer then they had this right and I would go onto the next topic without querying it further. It was also made clear that the data would be anonymised which would be achieved by adopting pseudonyms in the thesis so that the comments made could not be associated with them at a later date and to ensure privacy issues were accounted for. I was the only individual who would have access to the transcripts and that the issues that arose from the interviews would not be discussed with anyone other than my supervisors. Due to the nature of the research I was not able to change the workplace of this research but I did not believe that this would have a material impact on the ethics of this study.

5.4.6 Ensuring validity and reliability

A number of strategies were employed to ensure validity and reliability in the research. Firstly, through my analysis, I also accounted for anomalies or unusual results that developed from my emerging interpretation I had from the data. This reflexive approach also allowed me to ensure theoretically richer conclusions emerged as a result. A second strategy implemented was to invite participants to share my interpretations that were emerging and asking for their responses. Such a strategy also ensured I treat all participants as equal and did not elevate my position as a researcher which could have been interpreted as that I knew all answers, but such a negotiation between researcher and participant, in my view, produced

more reliable interpretations. More generally, I implemented strategies such as transcribing the interview in full where possible within the body of the thesis as well as implementing a common analytical approach to all the interview data.

I was also aware that I would have an impact as a researcher in the field. While I was aware that I could not remove this impact completely, I was able to reduce this impact as far as possible. For example, this study involved interviews with people from all backgrounds and qualifications which were not always immediately apparent (not all library staff members have a degree in librarian studies or equivalent). For my part, I addressed all participants in the same way and asked questions on the same topic areas and letting the nature and wishes of the participants of the interviews influence the direction of the conversation. By being aware of such considerations and by treating all participants fairly, this ensured the data recorded was as reliable as possible and that researcher bias, whilst always present, was reduced as much as possible.

5.5 Evaluation

A major strength of this research design was that it allowed me to offer a detailed description of the phenomena of experiences, activities and partnerships under investigation articulated in the interviewees own terms of reference. This allowed for a theoretically rich data resource for interpreting the role of culture within the City Library and its transformational potential.

There were a number of strengths for adopting my chosen strategy. Firstly, I was able to account for all bodies and agencies that impacted on the activities and decisions in the library which impacted on the research. Moreover, it allowed me to contextualise the research on culture and democratic potential within the library. Thirdly, it allowed for the experiences of the interviewees to become enmeshed within a wider narrative of changes taking place within wider spatial networks such as financial pressures and wider social exclusion, which, while issues in their own right, invariable have implications on this

research. These are the reasons why the research design allowed me to address the stated research questions successfully.

There were, however, limitations to the research as a result of the chosen research design. One limitation was that the interviews took place within a period of flux for the City Library. Tighter budgets and new shift patterns were being introduced as well as the loss of some staff numbers which would have impacted on the emotions and subsequently the data that I obtained from staff in this context. Another limitation is the fact that some interview participants generated more data than others. Some members of staff give less detail than others, which to a limited extent, may have impacted on how that data was subsequently interpreted. Moreover, the quality of the interview data improved as more interviews were carried out. This was for a number of reasons including the fact that earlier interviews influenced the topics of later interviews, some interview locations were slightly noisier and were held at busier times which may have impacted on the responses. I also became more relaxed in later interviews as I myself adjusted to the environment in which I was working. This allowed for more open-ended questions and a more colloquial tone to become established. While the context in which the interviews took place was a limitation (i.e. interviews were not conducted in a neutral space) by acknowledging these limitations and striving to minimise their impacts on the research, such impacts can indeed be mitigated.

At a more general level, the use of innovative methods such as rhythmanalysis is not common in existing research. With regard to this research, the rhythmanalysis was limited by time (for example, the rhythmanalysis could have been done in stages over the course of a year or longer to see if changes could be identified). Nonetheless, I do not think this impacted on the research too much as I was still able to conduct a rhythmanalysis which highlighted the influences of the wider city on the City Library and the library's impact on its immediate surroundings. A significant element of the data from this research was made up from conventional methods (semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis). Had the research been focussed more on the results of the rhythmanalysis, the results may have

been different. However, I feel that if I had changed my research design, I would not have been able to answer my research questions successfully and I feel that a focus on rhythmanalysis alone or in greater detail would not have been suitable for such an in-depth study as the one carried out. By adopting a triangulated approach, I have been successful in answering a set of varied but interrelated research questions that have not only been able to contextualise the research but has allowed for an original contribution to knowledge to be made through the recommendations and has advanced existing theory in the process.

The next chapter (chapter 6) is the rhythmanalysis. I decided to begin my analysis with rhythmanalysis as I felt from a narrative standpoint; it would grab the interest of the reader as well as reinforcing the geographical and spatial focus of my research. I followed this up with the documentary analysis (chapter 7) as this does not only set the scene for the interviews but also reinforces how decisions taken at a high level of authority cascades down and influences the day to day of the operation of the library which I explore in chapter 8.

Chapter 6: Rhythmanalysis of the City Library

6.1 Introduction

As the City Library is located within the centre of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, it is incorporated within the wider rhythms of the city when adopting a rhythmanalysis approach (Lefebvre 2004). This section will contextualise and identify these rhythms and analyse their impact on the library and its surroundings. This section will contextualise and identify these rhythms and analyse their impact on the library and its surroundings in relation to Lefebvre's (2004) rhythmanalysis as discussed in the methodology, chapter 5. This rhythmanalysis will illuminate the lived experience of the library from the perspective of the researcher and the role the library plays in this particular part of the city before considering its wider interconnections. The discussion will also show how the library is influenced by location(s) and rhythms that are both societal and economic in nature. The purpose is to demonstrate that, far from being a neutral space in the wider mosaic which forms Newcastle city centre, the library actively plays and performs a quite pivotal role in shaping and influencing the movement of people within the city, or at least a major part of it, and how these city spaces are lived in every day. This will demonstrate how the library is itself a space that is connected to its immediate surroundings whilst also being incorporated within the wider city - making it a hub or an anchor and a leading public space. As such, the section will shed rich light on the actually lived context of the library before research on more structural issues regarding library management and broader policy contexts are analysed. This will give as complete an empirical account as possible of the library in such a way that supports the ultimate argument that it offers a space of untapped democratic potential and connectivity that can shape a more democratic urban experience for its citizenry.

6.2 Rhythmanalysis of exterior spaces

Firstly, I wish to contextualise the library in terms of its immediate surroundings to understand its location within the wider city.



Figure 6: City Library and its surroundings I

As depicted in Figure 6, the City Library (right) is located within the wider arterial route of the city. The dual carriageway hums with traffic (although quiet in this photo, at peaks times it gets busy) transporting goods from one place to another providing a space for capital to cement its foundations within the city. The road plays a dual role in constraining the pedestrian flow while connecting places such as the City Library with distanced places as demonstrated by the bus stop in Figure 6. Of course, the distinct cry of politics and economics come calling as those routes deemed profitable are served by bus companies in an institutional relationship of public supported transport systems resulting in a complex interplay. Those areas too distant are bypassed in this rhythm of connectivity – simultaneously including some communities whilst excluding others. Moreover, at a basic level natural rhythms of the weather can affect the rhythms of movement, what Lefebvre would term cyclical rhythms which work against the more linear rhythms of walking and a desire to venture out in the city and visit spaces of knowledge – the library.

Rhythms of culture emerge when the location of the library is considered as being located opposite the Laing Art Gallery which helps cement this part of the city as an emerging

cultural anchor, drawing in and offering those with inquisitive minds respite from the consumption of the retail core of Northumberland Street nearby as well as offering a space of democracy whereby cost does not determine access. While some may argue that libraries are found within distinct cultural quarters (Skot-Hansen 2010), this is not always the case. Regarding the City Library this is for a number of reasons. Firstly, the library is segregated by linear rhythms of speed which disconnects the library from the *Laing Art Gallery*. There is no public space linking the two spaces together. The road obstructs and interrupts natural movement between the City Library and the Laing – it must be a “forced” decision against the double crossing of the road. Rhythms of connection (such as cyclical waves of funding) are tempered in other ways by modernism’s reimagining of the city as such arrangements push the institutions into different directions over time and may only connect temporarily before disconnection takes place again – they are never connected indefinitely.

Secondly, spaces of dereliction are also present. As depicted in Figure 6 the space in the centre of the photo is a disused car-park all overgrown. While adopting a truly Lefebvrian interpretation of rhythmanalysis may view this as a space of nature, or linear rhythms of connecting the city to the traditional concept of the rural - flora and fauna - which is (in the romanticised imaginary) unaffected by humans. Yet one can view this space as being untamed, uninviting rhythms which far from offering an alternative to capital’s desire and commodification of the new economy, such spaces of natural vegetation can actually disgust passers-by into wishing for the space to be tamed by the developers remedy – made beautiful - by cyclical waves of capitalism in a desire to reach arrhythmia to match the spaces around it.

Capitalism serves to further its influence on the city by using the beauty and form of buildings as a mediator on our bodies (of desire and of identity) – a façade – just like Benjamin (1982) found in the arcades of Paris. Thus one can identify with the uneven development thesis (Dicken 2011) whereby capital actively seeks out spaces of decline for profit making as well as creative destruction (Schumpeter 1942) where capital actively

destroys previous rounds of economic activity to prepare for future rounds of profit making through new forms of economic development. The menagerie of brick and spires of glass and steel distorts the mind to identify spaces of dereliction (the cyclical spaces in Lefebvrian terms) as unnatural, as unmanaged, as areas of dereliction needing maintenance.

Consequently, we are presented with not a space of culture but with spaces of culture in a wider mosaic of decay and renewal (note the crane in the distance in Figure 8), of wealth creation (note the office block in the centre) and of confinement and control (the road and traffic lights) in spaces which urban visitors and tourists crave and congregate.



Figure 7: City Library and its surroundings II

Figure 7 depicts the rear of the library (brown brick building at left of Figure 7) and it is here where historical rhythms of renewal and change emerge – an important rhythm which further develops Lefebvre’s linear and cyclical dualism. While the road as a notion of speed and connectivity has been noted, Figure 7 can be analysed as a triumph of modernism. The roads as shown here go north, south, east and west which connects all communities with all things was the way for a city to develop in the 1960s yet in the twenty first century, time and knowledge has mediated the rhythm of the motor car in the city to equal the opposite – dirty,

unhealthy. Spaces of tarmac as a cancer, from the American utopia of the motor car we are flung back to the spaces and practices of Haussmann's boulevards. History as a rhythm reverberates around all practices of man to transport us back to that which we were. Just like in regeneration (demolition and rebuilding of cities), time and history swings back and forth like a pendulum of a clock. Those regions and cities seen as "of the modern time" which we all should adhere to are then the areas a few years later that are in decline and history now tells us that those areas with public piazzas, churches and bells and gothic architecture (ridiculed 40 years ago) are those areas visitors flock to in their droves. The intention here is to show that rhythmanalysis of the City library is far from just looking and seeing, it is about interpreting discourses and labels which move in and out of fashion both spatially and temporally. Therefore, the road which may have once appeared as polyrhythmia has changed to arrhythmia.

An awareness of temporal history also helps to decipher the location of a 1960s local authority residential block which towers over the City Library. In understanding the library as a public service eschewing nuanced rhythms of governance and bureaucracy run under the control of local government, one can decipher connections between the locations of local authority housing adjacent which may have diminished over time. The concentration of local governance services (a Remploy facility is located opposite the library) reinforces a particular historical phase of development initiated and controlled by the public sector in the nineteen sixties. While not cyclical or linear, such rhythms help distinguish between public and private space in the city. As shown below in Figure 8, the library form and shape is different to that of Figure 9. The library conceals more and looks less visually attractive from the public square (around the publicly owned/ managed facilities) than it does facing the street. This reflects the library over time becoming integrated with market financing and influences, thrusting the library into commodified rhythms of culture more related to the *Laing Art Gallery* opposite (see Figure 8). This also represents the transition of the library from pure local authority and librarian control to that of national funders and private finance

creating a cultural icon and a destination actively shaping and influencing the experience of pedestrians walking along the street and intercepting their connections.

A parade of shops can also be identified in the centre of Figure 9. Through pedestrianisation of the retail core, the linear rhythm of walking is encouraged. Of course, the posters and advertising billboards in shop windows intentionally interrupts the natural rhythm of the body. This can also be seen as signs and symbols, directing the consumer in their never-ending search for the next big thing, or a new consumer product (Featherstone 1991). Seen in this light, pedestrians are not passive within this grand rhythm of the city. Such rhythms act on and actively produce pedestrians. For not all individuals are the same – offering dynamic opportunities and resistance. Some may be those actively seeking the library (for knowledge or pleasure). Others may be consumers – shoppers - negotiating the city mosaic as they meander from street to street following the latest styles and rhythms in print magazines. They may also be tourists. They are consuming the city by comparing it to Leeds or London (all places must have similar features that can be read in this postmodern world (see Ritzer 2009), navigating the city through mapping and planning to reach certain spaces. From this perspective of active pedestrians, the library becomes an active part of its immediate surroundings influencing the movements of the pedestrian flow in turn creating a city imaginary that can change and expand or contract over time.

As Figure 8 shows, one side of the library is constructed from glass. This is notable because glass is very much an active material. It reflects, just like a mirror. It makes the space appear bigger – a mirage. Perhaps suggesting a larger, more grandiose space. Thus, buildings can and do interact with the body. Glass also interacts with more linear rhythms of light – bending it, refracting it, changing it. It manipulates. While at first glance it may appear that the glass reveals what is happening inside – transparency - it also hides and conceals. For example, let us consider 122 Leadenhall Street in central London. A building constructed purely of glass and steel. While it may be transparent in that the inside is shown, trying to humanise the space, it also conceals. It conceals the occupier for instance - a global

insurance firm which generates money insuring firms against disaster. Or think of Citi's headquarters in Canary Wharf, London. A glass and steel structure that attempts to interact with the space. The activities taking place inside are hidden. The huge trading floor activities constitutes a significant part of the UK economy but one that can make people bankrupt or bring down a national or indeed global economy. This is hidden from the pedestrian on the street outside.



Figure 8: The City Library I

Glass also controls. You can see in and see out. It mediates, negotiates and controls the space. Similar to the panopticon (Foucault 1977), self-control becomes instilled as pedestrians maybe being watched at any time and the concept of a surveillance city is reinforced – it directs and tames behaviour in the street. In this light, the library becomes an active component of the space. It focuses pedestrians to stop, think, reflect, imagine and the library building actively conceals and reveals depending on where people stand and how they view it. Perhaps this is the physical representation of what a library does. It makes us

think, reflect on what we see but plays an active role and dynamically creates the conditions for such experiences and opportunities.



Figure 9: The City Library II

As depicted in Figure 9, on the opposite side of the City Library, the space opens onto a public square linking the retail core of Northumberland Street with the library. The form of the library is different to that shown in Figure 8. Interestingly, the main floors of the library containing the books, computers and journals are disguised through small inaccessible windows. For the most part the library is encased in grey cladding with a café on the ground floor. This has the effect of instilling a cold and unwelcoming rhythm into the public square. The café, however, is the only area of the library that is exposed and displayed to the passing public. This is important as this introduces cyclical rhythms of consumption which transforms the space. Those wanting to indulge in natural rhythms of drinking and eating may consume within the library café and those who wish to loiter in the street are actively repulsed from lingering due to the unwelcoming feel of the building exterior.

The library from this perspective becomes part of the main retail core leading from Northumberland Street. In contrast to Figure 8 where the whole elevation of the library appears open and transparent, Figure 9 depicts a more enclosed space. A more interventionist element becomes apparent whereby spaces are actively withheld from view while others are put on show, demonstrating that the form of the library is managed and planned depending on the viewpoint. Figure 9 shows that the library is influenced by the shopping environment around it whereby an active “shop” window on the ground floor and concealed upper floors is the chosen form. On further inspection, the grey cladding encasing the library performs an important role and impacts the body as it directs one’s attention away from the upper floors to the ground floor, to the space most reminiscent of the new cultural economy (represented by the most heavily modified linear rhythm of drinking – the café culture of most cities (Florida 2011) - the café itself.

In this way it mimics, it attracts, and it identifies with the consumer, the shopper and the spender. It serves as an anchor, as an identifier by metaphorically directing those “wonderers” from Northumberland Street that this space is a space for them. The consumer knows no bounds. From this perspective, the library does not distinguish itself but actively incorporates itself within its surroundings. Thus, the library actively creates a space and its own (contradictory) rhythm based on consumption which is influenced by its immediate context.

From a rhythmanalysis perspective, the public space in the centre of Figure 9 also acts as a stage and the library and retail shops the actors. For when people sit or use the public space their bodies are impacted and influenced by the surroundings. The library extends the beat of the existing rhythm of consumption from Northumberland Street. Consequently, the public space allows people within that space to follow that rhythm and to be a consumer themselves. Far from being a neutral space or an alternative space, the public space in Figure 9 is an active space which together with the library helps enclose and extend rhythms of consumption into areas which at first glance may act as alternatives to its immediate

surroundings but in reality are impacted by these surrounding rhythms and actively extends these rhythms accordingly.

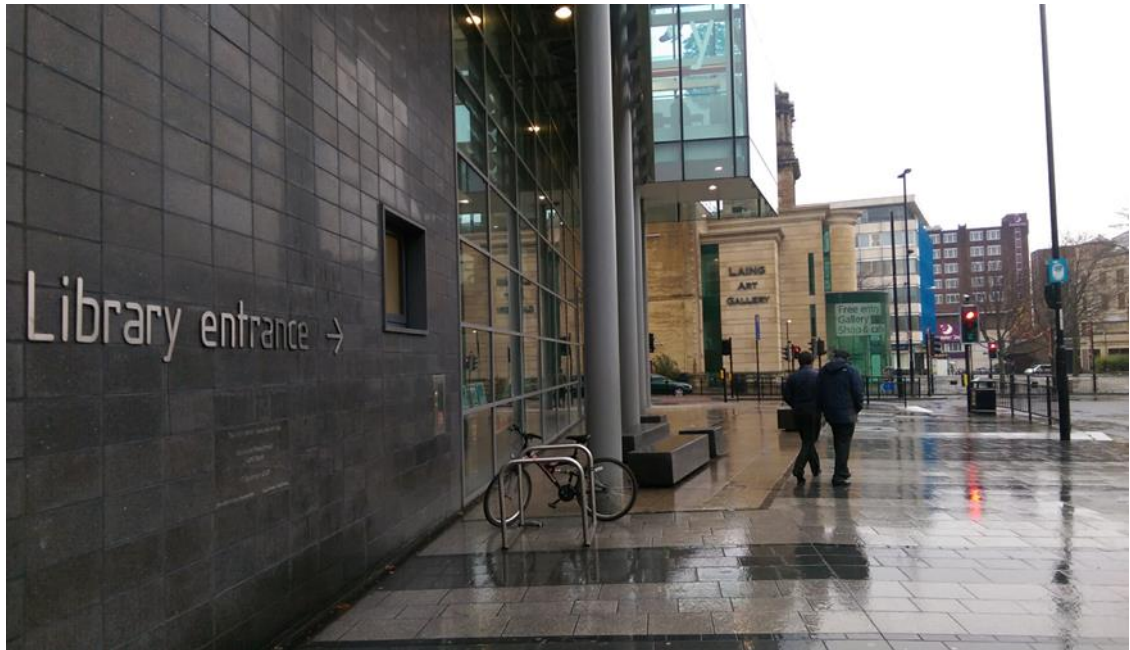


Figure 10: City Library entrance

Figure 10 depicts the front of the library building and it is pertinent to comment on the use of building materials and how they affect the rhythm of the immediate surrounding area. The dark granite materials indicate a very dark, cold and unwelcoming space which actively expulses pedestrians away. This is in contrast to the metal pole and glass overhang of the entrance which almost seems to give protection to those beneath creating a welcoming environment and attracting pedestrians towards the entrance. The use of lighting over the entrance gives the impression of the library entrance being a stage, a performance to again attract passers-by into the library. This area is also physically demarcated in the street. The use of small paving stones and drainage (materials used to drain away linear rhythms of rainfall) are used in this instance to demarcate the library space from the rest of the street. The library both theoretically and physically extends beyond the physical walls of the library building almost breaking out from itself, creating a new modern cathedral of culture (Ritzer 1999). Thus the building becomes a shop in a shopping centre – vying for attention like a

shop front altering the direction of the pedestrian flow so that those not wanting to interact or visit the library are veered away – the flow and footsteps of the pedestrians outside are influenced and controlled by the form of the library building. This also reinforces the surveillance theory of the library space outside the glass walls of the library building being under control and watched by those inside and as an active place-maker regulating the space. Not only are linear rhythms of walking interrupted but the streetscape immediately becomes entangled with the library space. From this perspective, the library actively shapes and in turn is influenced by the streetscape outside and by the rhythms based on beautification and commodification to attract pedestrians to interact and enter the library space.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the use of signs and symbols such as “Library entrance” direct passers-by, influencing their direction of walking. Again in this way the library actively controls the space. The public street is reinterpreted to that of the library. By using darker building materials pedestrians are actively directed to the entrance so that the space to the left of Figure 10 is used sparingly by the public. Additionally, the use of public seating in the shape of modern artistic structures (a sign of cultural and beautification strategies infiltrating city centre spaces) influences how a space is used. By locating seating near the glass frontage of the library, the activities can be watched by those inside the library, reinforcing themes of surveillance. It can be argued that while the entrance of the library may act as a performance space, this is far from neutral. Nuanced rhythms of observation and control come into play. While linear rhythms of rest (seating) may appear neutral, they are simultaneously transformed into an act of sitting, of resting, or resisting – a performance - observed by both near and far, both outside and inside.

From the outside, it is no coincidence that the most active and concentrated part of the library building is that which faces the Laing art gallery. Perhaps this is symbolic of the direction the library has moved in recent years (regarding funding and national priorities) and how the library views itself as a cultural icon. In this way abstract rhythms based on culture become further established as such institutions actively (and sometimes unwittingly)

shape and extend networks and associations which, over time, carve up spaces of the city as knowledge quarters or cultural anchors. These actions are not without consequences and are not the same everywhere. For example, while art galleries may traditionally be viewed as being associated with high culture (Bell and Oakley 2015), Figure 12 shows that the Laing art gallery actively promotes free access (as does the library). This also indicates rhythms of democratisation becoming established in an effort to actively democratise culture and make it economically accessible. At an elementary level, however, it is clear to see how the library and the Laing art gallery act as cultural icons or destinations for this part of the city. It has not gone unnoticed that opposite the Laing and library are the offices of a local building society. Traditionally, building societies were historically seen to be more accessible and attuned to local need than banks and therefore were seen to help communities, especially regarding financial exclusion. The building society can also serve as a warning of how institutions with societal concerns can become incorporated into wider networks and partnerships which can alter their activities and spaces they occupy accordingly. Nothing epitomises this more than Northern Rock which developed into a bank and changed substantially through financial crises. It can be argued that these mosaic pieces of various realms of the civic and of society actively forge spaces and rhythms focussing on accessibility and openness which in turn influence how this area is used by the wider public. In this light, the library actively serves as a democratic anchor institution in a sea of ferocious economic circulation and political disarray. A space where culture in all its guises can intermingle with discussion and consumption in a tense mosaic. Indeed a space offering green shoots of a modern Greek Polis – the pedestrian can glimpse at surrounding cultures from the vantage point of (relative) free access. The library in this respect not only democratises access but it democratises the wider city. The wider mosaic served up in a space reimagining itself in the twenty first century but one that still clings to its somewhat compromised publicness.

6.3 Rhythmanalysis of Interior spaces

As one enters the library building the body is immediately confronted with a very intense blue light. While at a basic level, blue can represent calmness (indicating that the space outside is full of chaos and disobedience), it also actively influences the body, attempting to relax it, shape it, control it. In extending the concept of a performative space, it appears as if the spotlight is on the individual. Far from simply walking into the library, one negotiates and is influenced by (almost unconsciously) a plethora of rhythms which impacts how the body feels and reacts. It is clear that to enter the library is to encounter (and resist) rhythms and phenomena that have become a part of a postmodern urban life whereby one must comprehend the eclectic form of the library interior.

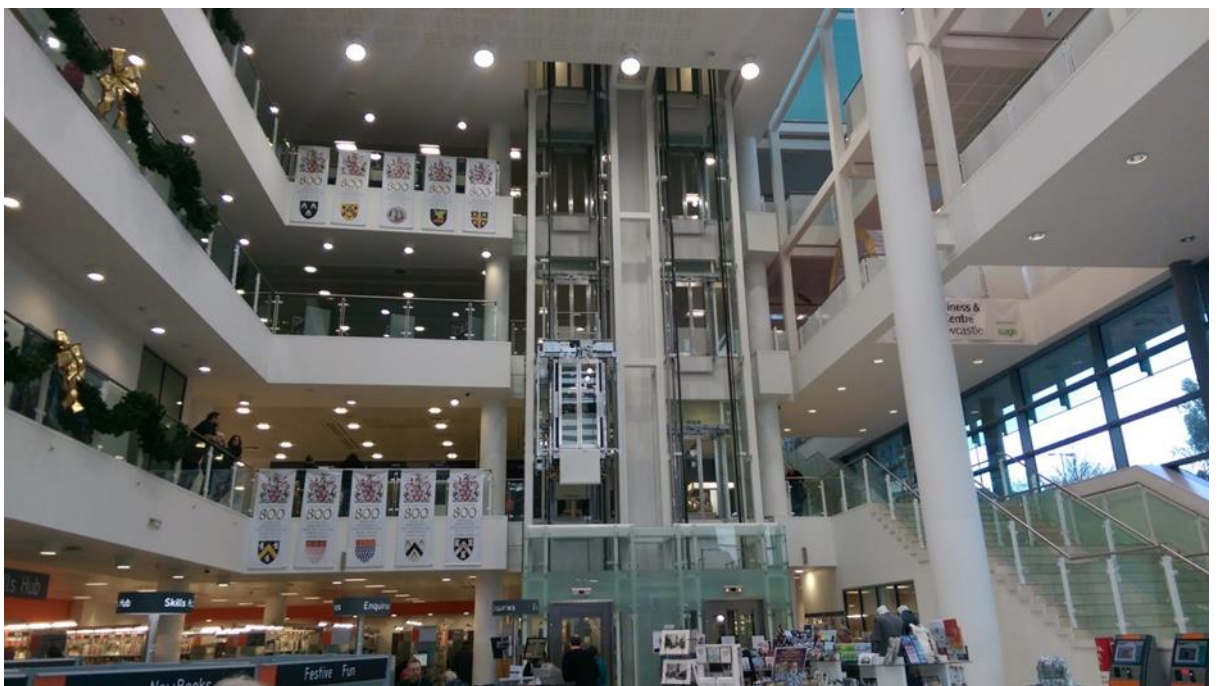


Figure 11: City Library atrium

Such a rhythmanalysis would be incomplete without considering the rhythms circulating within the library atrium and as shown in Figure 11 this is a complex space. The lifts take centre stage as they represent the triumph of man [sic] over the most natural of forces - that

of gravity, whooshing people up through 7 floors physically disconnecting people from one floor to another offering its guests the ultimate vantage point of the atrium below. At one instant liberating – you can see below therefore you are in “control” of that crushing realisation in the library as in many spaces that we are all in control and influence each other sometimes unconsciously, as we seek to regulate acceptable and unacceptable standards of behaviour through rhythms of “natural” surveillance complemented by cyclical rhythms of CCTV, cables and screens. The atrium height in this case far from offering freedom actually serves as a mirror as demonstrated by the floor balconies. I can see you just as you can see me. You are on display in an unscripted performance where unpredictability is always near but conformity and expectation set the stage.

A general air of quietness also ensues as historical ties associated with libraries permeate through the library core. A hushed conversation here, a quick call there while a lone man rests at one of the window seats. Two old ladies meet-up, hug, chat and head off together. Spaces of consumption sit alongside spaces of knowledge and self-reflection. Tills occasionally rattle as local history and special interests are bound up and wrapped into a tradable commodity. That old library adage “all things to all people” could not be clearer as an unshaved man wanders in dis-interested in what is on display forming a queue for advice on help to work schemes. As a lady passes and becomes seemingly taken with a print of Whitley Bay seafront it becomes apparent that the City Library forms a telescope of the wider city life. Rich and poor intermingle through spaces of consumption and emancipation. Stillness but also a meeting place. The divergent rhythms and practices taking place in the atrium are eclectic as one wonders whether the roof is tall enough to accommodate the variety in this space. Surely this is the town planners’ paradise – a truly mixed community intermingling with spaces of opportunity. Alas not quite? This is also the space of the unknown, dynamic and unforeseen. As late afternoon approaches the space becomes different. “Alternative” sub-cultures meander through the library in the form of groups of youths with loud voices and laughter. The mother with her crying child enters from the cold

inhospitable rain outside. The raised eyebrow as the cathedral of silence (temporarily) comes crashing down. The security guard at the door stands rigid and firm, anticipating. The artificial lights shine down from the ceiling offering a piercing beam in the setting sun. Calmness suddenly ensures as the youths head for the computers having enacted their “performance”. The security guard relaxes; the man at the window continues his self-reflection and the lady at the till purchases her desired print. Thus, while the library may be free to everyone, the expectations and conditions of how to “use” such a space is invariably conditioned and socialised by the outside world in particular spaces of consumption through naturalising variables such as dress and behaviour in a seemingly open public space.

Moreover, the use of a white colour scheme in the library atrium instils a cold more clinical atmosphere within the space. The endless doors along balconies of upper floors appear reminiscent of a hospital clinic than a welcoming space interspersed with hints of colour from the stands on the ground floor – historical reflections of helping and advising the ill, poor or infirm come to mind. This colour scheme also enhances the construction of the building- the steel girders become more prominent as does the columns increasing the post-modern feel of the building whilst seeming to bring the outside in. Optimistically one might imagine such a space to represent a blank canvass ready for self-expression but when one immerses oneself into the space a little further it can almost feel intimidating. It forces library users to look out at the world outside whilst simultaneously inviting the outside world and all its rhythms inside with the library forming a backdrop to this recital. The library becomes a façade and reveals its working only by comparing it to the speed of the outside world. Again we are the audience looking out on more unwitting actors as they glance inside the library and carry on interrupted by other forms of “control” through the traffic light and the road. It almost feels as if the library is a service station on a motorway offering a break from the rapidity and ferocity of the ever increasing speed of the road and the world more generally. This all leads back to the realisation that the world is a stage and we are all actors whether we realise it or not.

As one negotiates the large almost palatial staircase, the sounds and smells of coffee permeate from the second floor cafe. Just like any shopping mall knows how, the smell of coffee seems to give everyone a lift. The chatter from friends and colleagues, business meetings over lunch we are literally transported back in time to the original purpose of the library to debate. Just like the polis in Greece, chatter fills the air with a modern twist. That traditional meal so important to many societies is practised here like a ritual in a church as plans are made and events recalled. The speeding up of time as lunch hour comes to an end, the clattering of chairs and the quick coffee to go become vogue. Strangely no books are seen here. In fact few diners venture further beyond the library walls - they just come, consume, and then go.



Figure 12: Layout of upper floors

The higher floors are where the library appears more traditional (see Figure 12). Large open spaces and small bookcases make it easy to keep watch in the area. Modern technologies

intermingle and literally take centre stage like a command and control centre – accessing, sorting and speeding up finding that prized book. Furniture blocks the way as bodies go back and forth negotiating the space. Quietness distils across the floor as reading takes precedence. Pockets of seating emerge with people reading intently in the harsh warehouse lighting up above. Screens flash with messaging and advertisements much like in a hospital – advising and informing. Multiple imaginaries emerge on such floors through readings of latest sci-fi bestsellers to the travel guides of Spain and Italy. The academic articles from business journals attract less attention. Worlds constructed in the mind from the words of ink on a page in a fractured space - no-one talks and everyone are by themselves – a distanced community centred on the individual.

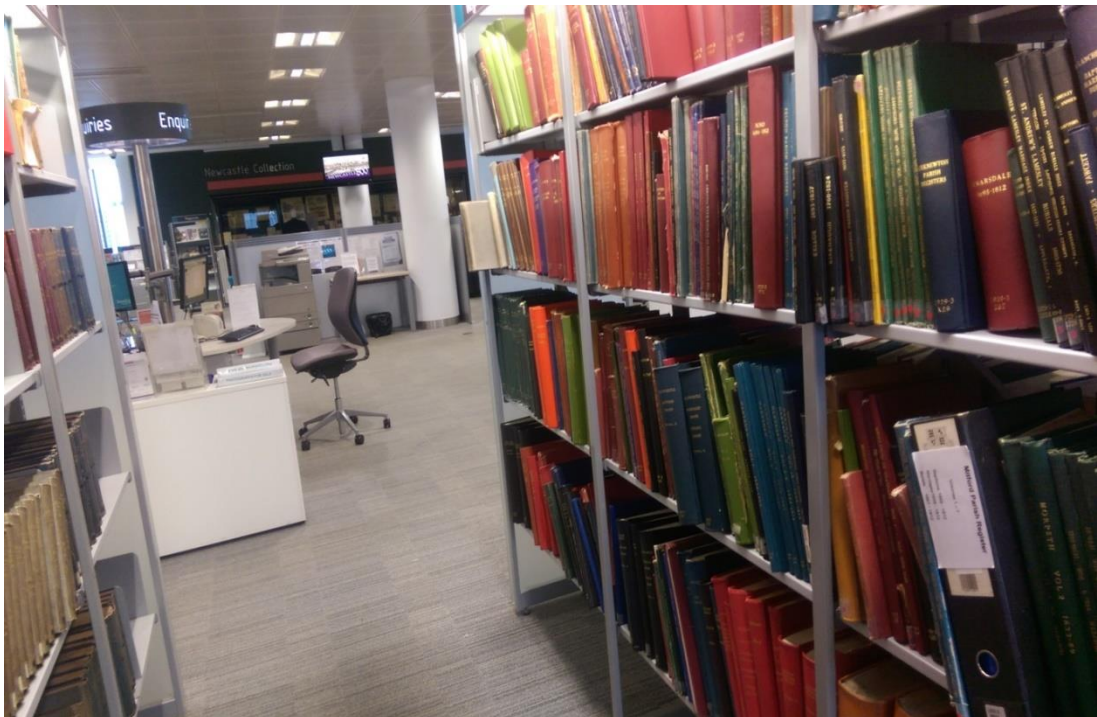


Figure 13: Research and local history floor

The upper floors contain computer and local history sections. The buzzing of the computers as an orderly line forms waiting for the next available PC. Electronic worlds link to the bureaucratic world outside. Government and employment websites, puzzled looks as

librarians assist those seeking employment. In the far corner a man seemingly works on a business case with the help of a business advisor. Multiple worlds with the same aim negotiated through different experiences - how to make more money and how to get by and receive enough money. Computer clubs for the over 60s addresses wasted time as how to order online appears to be today's topic. Self-improvement whether forced or voluntary is the common bond here whether it is learning a new skill or simply being more active consumers, directed by movement and flows of the rapidly changing world outside.

The research and local history floor (Figure 13) is an eclectic space where modern technology intersperses with historical records and local collections. The order associated with record keeping of local events shouting out to the researchers instilling a sense of civic pride. Computer screens full of family trees answering who am I and where did I come from. Students researching planning statutes of a previous era all intermingle in this common space - empowerment in action. The mysteries of the past come alive with the opening of a book and the turning of a page. The excitement and disorder captured on this floor neatly packaged, ordered and accessible demonstrates how dynamic this space is as researching, querying and exploring can lead to unknown possibilities. Nonetheless, the monotonous and cold grey colour scheme throughout the library punctuates through regulating the space, bringing one back to reality. Research to your hearts content, read and imagine all you wish but remember where you are. Weber's iron cage still reigns supreme, you can negotiate our temporal lens all you wish but the space is still of the here and now, of a city enmeshed within an economic reality. This library still runs on finance conditioning and reorienting the future. What that future will look like and what the history books of tomorrow will say is uncertain.



Figure 14: View from top of library

Alas, the pinnacle of the library is reached where the chains of limitation can be breached. The view of the city there to be consumed explored and interrogated. Comfortable seats allow the city to be gazed at from a distance, from above. Office blocks, roads and shops intermingle as a visual reminder of different styles and eras. The footprints of the past wait to be remade in the future. The cranes all around are a reminder how this space can change when the sums are right. The poetic words block the view as you are encouraged to dream of world peace created by local sponsors. One can sit and relax while the homeless man rummages through his worldly belongings sheltering from the cold realities outside. Spaces of art and culture stand alongside spaces of profit (and loss) almost waiting to pounce on those who venture outside. Though is this a façade or reflection? Benjamin has warned us already of how art can be reproduced for such social and political goals. As art may confront us in the local history section, so does profit in the café and the business advice section. Can we truly escape such tendencies or are they realities that call us to negotiate them as best we can? Some will ride the wave while others will fall. Who allowed for the creation of the art

that we see and who paid for its creation? Who is paying for this library? We must wander with care as we make sense of this space which is in view but which also connects with the outside. Perhaps one can break through the iron cage if one can find the key which is not paved in gold but struck from the same metal that encapsulates us.

6.4 Conclusion

This rhythm analysis has shown that the library both actively shapes the spaces, flows and movements of pedestrians as well as being influenced by other rhythms within the city and the immediate vicinity. In light of this a number of concluding points can be made.

The form of the library changes depending on the position of the pedestrian. The use of modern glass and steel construction materials are used on the façade facing the Laing art gallery. This more “active” library front is important because it can be argued that the library is being influenced by the institutions in the immediate vicinity. This performance space thus allows for the creation of a cultural mosaic to form whereby the Laing art gallery and the library are both spaces of culture in a wider mosaic of diverging city activities (offices block – commerce, student accommodation – knowledge). Alternatively on the other side of the library, the choice of building materials attempts to conceal the activities of the library while revealing the café on the ground floor. Such processes, show the library is influenced by the focus of consumption in nearby areas by actively extending the retail activities to the library building influencing (and attracting) certain people and movements to this side of the library – more than likely shoppers and consumers meandering from the retail core of Northumberland Street. Hence the library becomes a destination in its own right. As a consequence of this, the historical association of the library as a truly public service is theoretically abandoned as the library building seemingly obscures itself from spaces of local authority control (the tower block at the rear of the library (see Figure 9)) in favour of adopting rhythms and performances based on culture and consumption.

Secondly, the choice of materials also introduces more nuanced rhythms of control and surveillance into the analysis. Through the use of glass near the library entrance, the ability to observe the activities outside from the inside and from management in particular highlights how rhythms and movements and the performances taking place outside the library can all be affected when one is being watched. As Foucault has demonstrated, individuals automatically correct and monitor behaviour if there is a chance they are being watched even if they are not being watched at that moment (Foucault 1977). Far from being a neutral space, this rhythm analysis has shown how the body and its actions are controlled by the form and design of the library building. Thus the space outside on the street is controlled and influenced by activities inside the library with the effect of the library spilling itself out onto the street. In this light, the space outside the library becomes a performance space whereby even mundane, linear activities such as walking have an audience and an unwitting cast of actors.

Thirdly, when considering the interior of the library the constant theme of surveillance and control comes to mind. Whilst a public library may boast a welcoming and inclusive environment this is enmeshed within wider themes of control and in particular self-surveillance. One can never fully detach oneself from the outside world including the timeless issue of controlling “public” space wherever that may be. Moreover, at one level the library as a space can be seen to be the ideal type of mixed community as people from a plethora of backgrounds and occupations intermingle within the library space but such an account excludes the role of power amongst individuals as certain behaviours are discouraged through very natural bodily signs. These signs have the power to instil rhythms of control between different individuals, historically reminiscent of the traditional library creating “good” citizens. Thus while the public library may be more egalitarian regarding its users than say a shopping centre or high end department store, individuals themselves can bring with them their own experiences and world views which can set the scene for the conduct of such spaces, which is dynamic and emergent. Necessarily, this also allows for

spaces of resistance to emerge. Relatedly, this shows that rhythms can emerge from people themselves but crucially these do not appear in isolation. They formed through experience with “other” more controlled spaces outside regarding what is acceptable which then find their way into spaces such as the public library. The conduct of what is suitable in a “public” space such as the City Library is not far removed from that considered acceptable in a department store. Of course this provides a disturbing answer to the question of whether this means that the desire and worship of tradeable consumer goods is on par or exceeds that to which “free” knowledge is disseminated and if the former regulates and influences the conditions of the latter’s dissemination.

Fourthly, the analysis of the inside of the library has demonstrated that the library is still a product of institutional networks that constitute many aspects of the wider world. The library was redeveloped for a reason and serves a purpose but the activities inside are dynamic and unexpected which do not follow the rules and regulations laid down in policy documents. The vision for the redevelopment of the library cannot foresee the future. While activities within the library may address concerns and issues, such actions cannot overturn the world as we see it overnight. Partnerships must be forged but the future is uncertain and it is up to those interested in democracy to write the lines of future chapters. The library space and how it is used offers opportunities. As shown in this rhythm analysis, the opportunities very much cover democratic possibility allowing the library to serve as a deliberative democratic hub in a wider mosaic of fractured urban space and cultural opportunity. The library has the potential to serve as that which it was founded – to be open, accessible and democratic. Therefore, the library may serve as a modern Greek polis within a northern, peripheral UK city. Put another way, the library offers untapped deliberative democratic potential which this rhythm analysis has emphasised throughout. The future direction of the library regarding funding, user consultation and the institutional networks in which the library finds itself in will affect whether this is realised.

Fifthly, on a more general level regarding rhythm analysis, this analysis has shown that time is an important factor in determining rhythms. As has been shown above, rhythms such as traffic on busy roads which were seen as “of the time” in the nineteen sixties are viewed with disregard in the twenty first century – a problem to be fixed. Not only does space affect the movement of people and activities, but time can act in a contradictory manner. Many regeneration programmes have focussed on rehabilitating older areas (see Cameron 2003) as historic cities with rehabilitated historic cores become the beating heart of new rounds of capital accumulation and economic growth. Ironically, those areas that benefitted from grand modernising programmes forty years ago are those areas which are in decline in recent years. Hence, not only must the rhythm analyst hear but they must also contextualise and interpret the rhythms they encounter, realising that while time is an important feature of rhythm analysis, it also involves a complex interrelationship with wider society, which is played out in the everyday actions and movements of people and goods in the streets.

Finally, this rhythm analysis has shown that while art galleries and libraries historically were viewed as being traditionally associated with high culture (Bell and Oakley 2015), rhythms of accessibility and democracy can be detected as both the library and the Laing art gallery promote free entry. Such social concerns impact on the movements of people as those who are time rich but money poor may be influenced to enter such spaces of culture. Free access also offers a welcome alternative rhythm to nearby areas in the city (such as retail) whereby the focus of such activities is purely on generating profit and less to do with societal and educational concerns.

Therefore, in answering research question five in whether the public library has become part of the performance of the wider rhythm of the city, two points must be made. Firstly, in some respects the library has become part of the wider rhythm of the city, particularly regarding the form and function in the area between the library and Northumberland Street where nearby rhythms of consumption have clearly influenced the role and performance of the library. It can also be argued that the library is also influenced by the role and rhythms of

the Laing art gallery in forming and perpetuating rhythms based on culture and cultural consumption. This is clearly an active policy that can be seen in the architectural form of the library in literally creating a gateway to this cultural space whereby the buildings “perform” a role in anchoring this part of the city as both spaces of knowledge and spaces of culture.

Secondly, however, to say that the library does not influence and have some impact would be to neglect the role the library plays in the wider performance of the city. In effect there is a negotiation between the library and its surroundings. For example, through the form and structure of the library, it can be argued that the library actively (and literally) turns its back on what might be described as its historical roots (public ownership represented by the local authority tower block and the “Remploy” facility at the back of the library) and actively embraces this new cultural economy (through its more active frontage opposite the Laing art gallery) and it would be difficult to create a cultural space in this area without both the Laing art gallery and the public library. From this it can be argued that the library itself also influences and shapes the wider performance of the city especially along cultural lines that does interact with wider rhythms and performances in helping to create a cultural space in the city. At first glance it may be hard to argue with the view that consumption in particular has a very influential effect on wider city performance (as shown by the library building engaging in café culture consumption). From this it is difficult to disagree with the thesis that such development and regeneration policy (the new library building was constructed in 2007) seemingly perpetuates wider city development based on consumption (Featherstone 1991, 2007), particularly since the PFI promoted such influences within the design.

However, such an account adopts a “purist” approach whereby the market is antithetical to the operation of the library. This research has shown how market fundamentals regarding the design and operation of the library can complement wider democratic aims within the library. Furthermore, such an approach disregards the outcomes of the actual uses of such spaces. How buildings and spaces are planned compared to how they are actually used can be divergent. Opportunities for resistance are never far away as the negotiation over the uses

of such spaces inherently offers unforeseen dynamic outcomes. This is exciting from a democratic perspective as dynamic changeable outcomes can ensue highlighting how capitalism and planning itself may not occupy a space in totality and that users themselves may also regain control of their bodies and negotiate the space in unexpected ways offering the chance for an alternative city imaginary to be constructed in contrast to the restricted capitalist logic of social life.

Chapter 7: Documentary Analysis of Public Library Policy

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will set the context for the rest of this research in the subsequent chapters. Firstly, it will analyse and account for the national context and the implications for the operation of the City Library such as the activities the library may offer. Secondly, local documentation from the local authority will also be accounted for which will detail how decision-making affects the City Library before documentation relating to the City Library itself will be assessed to compare differences and similarities between the various tiers of governance. The conclusion will then bring the main arguments together including a consideration of how these arguments impact the City Library and its implications for the library as a cultural and democratic institution for the local community.

This documentary analysis will clearly show the influence of central government on the overall direction of public library policy, especially regarding viewing the library as essentially a cultural venue, set within a wider aim to reduce public expenditure. It is perhaps appropriate to envisage a hierarchical model with central government at the top followed by national funders, local authorities, libraries themselves and users near the bottom. Each level of the analysis will be addressed in due course. As central government has been accounted for I will now assess national funders.

National funders such as Arts Council England have influence through the ability to distribute funds to cultural amenities such as the public library as well as to represent such venues in policy decisions. Consequently, such organisations are influenced and funded themselves by central government so it is more appropriate to view this level as an extension of central government and as will be shown in this analysis, such funders may well have a position regarding a particular decision but are unlikely to openly disagree with the position adopted by central government. Nonetheless funders, through their “expertise” do have the ability to influence both which institutions can apply for funding and the activities such

funding can be allocated, which inevitably has an impact “on the ground” in terms of the activities and exercises which take place in the library. As local authorities have had their funding from central government reduced, national funders have in effect become more influential with new sources of funding mainly originating from these national bodies who themselves are positioned within wider organisations focussing on culture. While these institutions may periodically publish reports and reviews, the influence of communities is usually viewed through areas of best practise and evidence of how the views of communities impact the priorities of funding. If anything, it can be argued that the views of local communities has less of an impact than it would in previous years as funding (and subsequently the targets for such institutions) has increased to a higher tier of governance which is less aware of local difference and need. For national funders to access users’ views, it is often mediated through representatives such as librarians or regional managers who will undoubtedly distort or not fully comprehend the wishes and needs of users than if they were directly captured and understood at a more local level.

The local authority is limited by the policy formulation of central government and is not in a position of influence over this policy. Perhaps the greatest issue facing libraries from the local authority perspective is the reduction of funding by central government. Often library funding reduction is the easy target for cuts and through this action, power and influence are ceded to national funding bodies such as the Arts Council England. From this, it would appear that local authorities do have the power to decide which areas to reduce funding but of course such a decision is not one which local authorities wish to make and they need to secure legitimacy for such decisions as opposed to reducing funding in other areas which from the perspective of the local authority may be less politically acceptable. Nevertheless, through the reports analysed in this chapter, and as public libraries are a statutory duty for local authorities, they still have some influence over library policy and activities and as has been shown this has positioned the library within the wider council portfolio with the aim of

tackling digital exclusion as part of the local authority drive to place as many services online. Section 6.2 will begin the analysis by focusing on national documentation.

7.2 National Documentation

It is important to analyse, through a critical discourse analysis, the documents and speeches that have been published or presented which have an influence on the shape and direction of both the debate and of the policy regarding the public library. This documentary analysis will illustrate the key actors and policy influences by analysing a range of policy documents at both national and local level while showing how these actors operate, how decisions are implemented and how funding is offered. Consequently, the activities offered within the library will also be analysed and shown how national initiatives and priorities of central government and funding bodies have a major influence over the offering of such activities.

The first document of note is a speech to the *Future of Library Services* conference in June 2012 by the then Minister for Culture Media and Sport – Ed Vaisey titled “Speech to the Future of the Library services conference”. This speech is important as it represents the government’s ambition for libraries between 2012-15 and is very much a political document. This can be seen by the language used at the beginning of the speech with phrases such as “thriving library service” and “a library service which continues to innovate and develop” (Vaisey 2012, p.1). Such phrases appear without context or other facts and figures to support the assertions that are being made reinforcing the political nature of the speech and highlights the desire of the government to “get the good news out, and present a more balanced picture” (Vaisey 2012, p.2).

One thing which is clear from the speech and that is the government views libraries very much as a cultural asset - “our decision to give responsibility for libraries to the Arts Council England (ACE)... [which] unites cultural policy for the first time, as was envisaged in the 1950s” (Vaisey 2012, p.1). Although a relatively small text, the implications and discourse associated with it is quite profound. I wish to make two points. Firstly, the transfer of library

policy to ACE on first inspection may appear insignificant. However, when one considers that the ACE budget has been reduced by £457m between 2010 and 2015 with a projected spend of £210m in grants and other funding between 2015 and 2018 (ACE 2015) the implications of such a transfer are not as positive as Vaisey would like us to believe. Secondly, the phrase “as was envisaged in the 1950s” is a very powerful discourse as it establishes political legitimacy as well as linking back to a historical period of Conservative governance over 60 years ago. It also reimagines a romanticised historical view of previous years (i.e. the good old days) which many people can identify with. Yet one must also consider why this transfer had not happened earlier (considering public libraries were funded under the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) from 1931-2012), and more importantly why now? Under the coalition government, the political context of reductions in public spending from 2010 onwards necessitated in a reorganisation of government bodies to reduce spending. By reorganising the oversight of libraries by closing the MLA and repositioning libraries under the direction of ACE, the government was able to reduce expenditure in two ways: firstly by reducing overheads at the MLA and secondly by reducing the overall budget of ACE while simultaneously increasing the functions and remit of ACE. It is clear that far from transferring the oversight of libraries to the ACE for policy decisions (although I do not wish to discredit the role that ACE can play regarding representing public libraries nationally); libraries were more than likely transferred due to funding decisions at a national level.

Interestingly, it is not until the end of his speech that Vaisey addresses the funding of public libraries. This section is the smallest of all the sections of Vaisey’s speech (although it is followed by a section covering the closure of libraries which is related to funding). The following section is of interest in how the running of libraries is envisioned by the government; “Let me take this opportunity to state once again, that libraries are and will remain a statutory service. The challenge for local authorities therefore is the provision of that statutory service in a tight financial climate” (Vaisey 2012, p.4). It is clear that the

government's position is that libraries are the responsibility of local government and it is up to local authorities to maintain this service despite the reduction in funding for local authorities. Again, the wider context must be considered. Local authorities receive their funding through the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which has had its funding cut by 51% between 2010-15, BBC News 2015,) the biggest cut of all government departments. This fact is not meaningfully considered in Vaisey's speech except a vague acceptance of local authorities operating in a "tight financial climate" (Vaisey 2012, p.4). It is clear from this language that central government's position is that it is the responsibility of local authorities to come up with "innovative" ways of funding and supporting libraries. Yet this is contradicted by the language used elsewhere in the speech. The following quote is a good example of this;

"My department will use... reports to look for ways in which we can help local authorities. I must say that this is not a return... to top-down, inflexible library standards. But if we see wildly diverging opening hours between two authorities with similar budgets and infrastructure, there will be an opportunity to ask questions" (Vaisey 2012, p.3).

It is clear that such terminology reinserts the power and the authority of central government over local government if a local authority does not, on the terms of central government, offer an efficient service. Thus for Vaisey, central government will not and does not want to dictate how decisions at a local level are made, but if enacted decisions do not meet government standards (which are not clearly explained) then central government will indeed get involved. Such a contradiction is reminiscent of New Labour's much critiqued culture of target setting (Raco and Imrie 2003) which appears in this instance to form an important if somewhat nuanced element of library policy implementation in the Coalition government of 2010-2015.

There are some important themes which are at play within Vaisey's speech on library policy. It is clear that while central government may promote how libraries are adapting and "innovating" through library development schemes, there are some equally important discourses which although are not made explicit in Vaisey's speech have significant

implications for libraries. It is clear that funding is a big issue affecting libraries (as well as many public services) and the government's position is that local authorities should make the decisions which best suit their local areas. Yet the wider reduction in public expenditure is merely hinted at and is seen by central government as not the biggest threat facing libraries. The transfer of library policy to ACE is lauded as a major benefit for the library movement, as well as the recognition that culture forms a major element of the services that libraries offer, is made explicit at the beginning of the speech. However, the speech does not describe what form of culture libraries are associated with. It merely assumes a link between libraries and culture (at a general level) without explicitly establishing the link.

What should have become clear throughout the above discussion is funding for libraries. Central government attempts to show how libraries can innovate and develop in the future by co-locating services together for the benefit of users. However, it can be argued that far from "getting the good news out" (Vaisey 2012, p2.), this speech orientates the debate by using culture as a legitimate tool for reduced funding by transferring libraries to the control of ACE. The speech neglects areas such as democracy, public space and social exclusion, simultaneously reducing funding at a national level and through local authority funding reductions (Pateman and Williment 2013) – areas readers of this speech would immediately be aware of. Instead the focus on co-location of services and culture as a means of formulating library policy is used as a veil for a new form of localism, (a major focus of Conservative thinking and which the Coalition and Conservative governments have consistently emphasised), which, through discourse and argumentation renders central government blameless for any cuts in services but through nuanced control of targets, can act as a saviour for services which do not meet the standards of central government. From this speech, it is difficult to identify how needs and views of users of libraries are considered through this approach.

The second document of interest is a report published by ACE in 2013 titled *"The library of the future: A response to "Envisioning the library of the future" by Arts Council England*

Chief Executive Alan Davey". This report is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is the first report published by ACE regarding public libraries, secondly, it accounts for the role of the public library over a ten year period (2013-23) and thirdly it is based on research conducted with a range of agencies from councillors, academics and campaigners through to users and most importantly non-users. Regarding the last point, crucially, the document mentions that feedback was generated through "public opinion (users and non-users) voiced through online debate and workshops around the country" (ACE 2012, p.3). While ACE is attempting to target a range of users and non-users, this is reliant on such individuals having access to a computer or being in one of the locations in which ACE researchers were present with little consideration for "hard to reach" groups or excluded sections of society. Furthermore, these views will be moulded by the organisers of such events which may influence which areas are considered and which ones disregarded. This is further highlighted as the document itself emphasises the digital divide in Britain and makes this issue one of the four priorities ACE has established for libraries in the twenty first century. Not only do such inconsistencies undermine the validity of the claims made in the document but it also raises questions over the issues the participants themselves may raise and how they are represented in the document.

At first glance, the ACE document mentions key words such as "build a healthy democracy", "trusted spaces free to enter" (ACE 2013, P.3-4) which indicates at least an awareness of the role and importance of libraries by ACE for communities (Goulding 2006). Moreover, the phrase "There is a clear, compelling need for a publically funded library service" (ACE 2013, P.3) strongly reinforces the view from those that took part in the research that funding for libraries should remain a publically funded service - reinforcing the commonly held view that libraries are an important space and are highly valued (Pateman and Williment 2013).

However, the focus of the document is found within what ACE terms as the four priorities for a twenty first century library service, and this is where the substantive arguments and

recommendations are formulated. The first priority views the library as a community hub. This relatively short section emphasises the “opportunity” to meet in *free public spaces* for a wide variety of purposes will be increasingly important... [and that] libraries continue to be valued as *trusted, safe, democratic spaces*” (ACE 2013, P.6 emphasis added). The role of the library in servicing democracy and what could be termed “active citizens” is clearly an important issue for the participants of the research. However, the last section emphasises the need to co-locate services (note the relevance to the speech by Vaisey above) “which will bring benefits such as skills exchanges, reaching more people and *cutting costs* (ACE 2013, p. 6 emphasis added). The order of the points in the above quote highlights the supposed positive aspects of co-location before the most influential reason for co-location – efficiency and saving. This issue of funding does not appear until priority three of the ACE document but its importance is highlighted throughout, such as in the above quote. This section is concluded by stating that the “challenge” is to “sustain enough spaces offered by libraries to meet the needs of their communities” (ACE 2013, P.6). The word sustain is a vague concept as it could mean to maintain the status quo, but priority 3 (which I will discuss in due course) includes both sustain and sustaining within the realms of funding issues. Therefore we have a contradiction in terms – on the one hand shared space is located within the same section as that of libraries being free public spaces but on the other hand we are told that the challenge is to sustain this free and democratic space and the only way this can be done is by sharing space with other services not necessarily to improve service delivery for library patrons, but as a way of maintaining the library as a free space. Moreover, another reading of this section could be that in order to maintain the status quo and the “*relevance*” of the library to funding bodies (such as ACE) libraries will have to offer multiple services that can sustain the service whether this improves service delivery or otherwise. It is questionable whether this meets the needs of local communities and library users.

Priority 3 of the ACE document is also of interest here as it examines how libraries are to remain resilient and sustainable. The first sentence is quite clear on funding issues; “Our

research, along with reductions in public expenditure, makes clear that libraries will have to reduce costs and find other sources of funding” (ACE 2013, P.8). The language used here implies that the participants of the research agree that public expenditure should be reduced. It is interesting how in both this document and in Vaisey’s speech (above) they assume as given, that public expenditure has to be reduced and so the contents of this section are defined in this context – the discourse of austerity prevails. Therefore, one must question whether effective consultation with participants has actually taken place as the central context of the debate on future of libraries has already been decided by central government and whether such exercises are used to co-opt participants into agreement. Evidence of this can be found within this section along the lines of community ownership “communities are becoming more involved in the design and delivery of library services” (ACE 2013, P.8). This quote emphasises a discourse of localism but the danger of such discourse is that through local ownership of services (see Pateman and Williment 2013) the communities themselves can become the target of other users of such services if cuts and other funding choices are to be taken. Similarly to Vaisey’s speech above, central government can pass the responsibilities of such decision making to others in an attempt to gain legitimacy for such decisions. There is an indication that ACE are aware of such arguments; “*create a positive environment*” (ACE 2013, P.8, emphasis added). It is also clear that the term “resilient” for ACE is regarding financial resilience. There is no mention of developing spaces of democracy, social exclusion or resilient communities which are core issues the library deals with. A discourse is promoted which holds that the library can only be effective if it becomes a self-sufficient service, that without a reduction in funding, the library cannot continue into the third decade of the twenty first century. Of course there are other alternatives which could be promoted such as ensuring resilient and active communities and citizens or viewing the library as a key “tool” to ensure economic growth (Goulding 2006) and as such a vital public service. The issue then becomes that libraries must become “entrepreneurial and adept in communicating and marketing their services” (ACE 2013, p.9). The document moves from a discourse of library services as being free and being at the

“heart of the community” (ACE 2013, P.4) to a commodity and users have gone from users and citizens centred on democracy to consumers in a free market searching for a best value service. Such transformation in discourse repositions the library “from a service provided to a community to one in which local people are more active and involved in its design and delivery” (ACE 2013, p.11). One can only wonder whether the participants of the research are as aware of these transformations in public library service and delivery as ACE would have us believe.

Another document of interest and related to the ACE document above is one published by Locality, an organisation which supports community organisations, in 2013 titled *Learning from experience: Summary briefing for local authorities: For Arts Council England and Local Government Association*. This document focuses on the role of community libraries and the audience are local authorities and ACE. The Locality document sets the scene for the discussion by advocating that community libraries – communities running local library services – is a growing phenomenon; “the involvement of community groups and volunteers in library services is not new... CIPFA’s survey of public libraries for 2010/11 found over 21,000 volunteers were involved in England’s 3,300 public libraries” (Locality 2013, p.2). The document details how this trend has increased since 2010. The objective of such language is to show that this is a natural evolution of library services in Britain and that because an increasing number of libraries and local authorities are going down this route then it is portrayed as being positive. The document portrays such a decision as being a natural choice – the alternative of local authorities having to go down the community ownership route is not considered. Thus, the reader is left with the impression that many local authorities are adopting this strategy; “More than one in three library authorities now have at least one community supported or managed library within their area... in quite a number of these areas there are multiple community libraries” (Locality 2013, p.2). The possibility that central government policy may have been an important factor in such transfers of ownership is not stated and not even hinted at.

As the document progresses, it states the various forms of community owned library models in operation. Alongside this words familiar with that of New Public Management (NPM) start to appear with phrases such as enterprise and strategic;

“It is possible that community libraries ... could evolve to form a valuable part of 21st century public library services in England. But if that is the case, then further changes, including *diversification* and *enterprise*, may also be needed. Strategic planning... will be essential (Locality 2013, p.5 emphasis added).

There are three points worthy of discussion here. Firstly, one can see a clear link to the ACE document in relation to how libraries become sustainable and must diversify to become enterprising. A coherent argument, through such policy documents, is developed which views libraries as being more business orientated and be as financially self-sustainable as possible. Note however, that direct words related to finance or income is absent. To some degree, this contradicts the language in the Vaisey speech which emphasises that public libraries are a statutory service of local authorities. Here we are told that they must become business minded and business orientated to be successful in the twenty first century. In this light one must ask whether a business orientated library which focusses on financial sustainability and enterprise would be able to justify free access to its collection and use of computer and IT equipment?

Secondly, the phrase “evolve to form a valuable part of the 21st century public library” (ibid) distinguishes between two eras of library service. The document argues that the new phase of library services will consist of community libraries. The use of language here implies a sense of inevitability and linearity – that local authorities must reorganise their library services to include community owned or run libraries that diversify and generate their own income are essential and is the only option for these new times we are living in – the old ways of working will not do. Thirdly, the terminology used derives from the world of business. It can be argued, therefore, that if key local authority services are redesigned and re-imagined along free market discourses, might it not even be easier for central government to reduce funding for local authorities to spend on running the library service? This would

not only reduce opposition to reductions in funding but also indirectly justifies market solutions to the “issue” of funding these so called public services. Indeed, one is amazed to find scant reference to reductions in local authority grants and funding in a document whose audience are local authorities themselves.

The Locality document does caution readers to the possibility that communities may not want to or are not able to run a library; “Community interest cannot always be assumed... communities differ and some, particularly more disadvantaged areas, may be less able to do this and may need support” (Locality 2013, p.6). Such terminology has profound implications for areas of democracy and participation. The document argues for there to be meaningful consultation with library professionals; “[change requires] councils... to consult fully with library staff and their representatives” (Locality, 2013, p.8). Yet for local communities “community involvement is about delivering services differently” (ibid). From this it would appear that library staff rightly requires consultation with managers on changes to service but instead of the library and local authority organising positive communication as advised in the ACE document, the opposite occurs. This is done in order to gather users (and non-users) views on the service; consultation proposed in this document is merely to inform such publics on the changes that would have been already made. Issues around effective democracy, citizenship and social exclusion (Pateman and Williment 2013) are disregarded with a vague acceptance that some (more disadvantaged areas) will require more support. Importantly, this support is not to help citizens participate more effectively but to help them run services themselves whether this is their desire or not. Participation, it would appear, is on central government’s and local authorities’ terms and not on the local community’s terms.

While the ACE research document found;

“A clear, compelling and continuing need for a publically funded library service.”

“It didn’t matter whether they use their library or not, people are vocal and passionate about their value”

“Public libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all” (ACE 2013, p.3).

The discourses and trends that emerge and that have been discussed in the Locality document to some extent contradict the needs and views of the public. While the public want a publically funded library service, community libraries described in this respect are viewed as publically funded despite the need for them to be able to run financially sustainable and generating their own income. While the public value the public library as a public service, an awareness of this “value” is absent from the Locality document. Finally, while the public want libraries to be free and open to all, local authorities encourage libraries to generate their own income which clearly contradicts the wishes of the public. It is clear that there are significant divergences between the desires of the public and the restraints and options being offered to local authorities.

Another document of note is a submission by ACE in March 2014 to the William Sieghart commission and the advisory panel commissioned to produce a report on public libraries for DCMS. This document is useful for this analysis as the audience is primarily central government and the tone of the submission is clearly different in nature to that of *The Library of the Future* (2013) report. While the submission begins by detailing the results of the ACE (2013) report showing that libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all, yet the next section starts with the following “Is the current delivery of the public library service the most comprehensive and efficient?” (ACE 2014, P.1). The discourse adopted here clearly poses a contradiction – can a service be comprehensive (all things to all people) while still being efficient? Of course efficiency could mean a number of things. It could be associated with a general trend of reducing bureaucracy along the lines of “best value”

associated with the New Public Management discourse which has been instilled into modern public sector governance (Dicken 2003). Alternatively, it could mean doing more with less in a normative manner – achieving a “good” service with less money or investment. This contradiction is not explained in the submission document. One could also argue that considering the principle audience is central government this could be an attempt to adopt the thinking and terminology of central government (around areas such as efficiency measures and “cutting waste”) to ensure legitimacy and to justify the importance of supporting and (where possible) funding for ACE and for public libraries more generally. The fact that such discourse and language is used at the beginning of the document (compared to other documents where funding and efficiency is approached in a more nuanced way) supports this argument. This language also highlights the role ACE finds itself – acting as a supporter of public libraries (and other cultural services) while simultaneously being subjected to the beliefs and practises of central government which at times can be a contradiction in itself. Consequently, ACE must appear to be a supporter of public libraries but it must position these arguments into a discourse that central government understands and approves.

Another important issue ACE wishes to address is related to participation; “What is the role of community libraries in the delivery of the library offer?” Although a small section, it sets out the view of ACE on this issue. While the importance of participation is outlined; “The principle of involving communities in the design, delivery and management of their library service has been a positive development” (ACE 2014, P.2), it is left underdeveloped as an argument. No examples of such participation are listed and the terminology “inform” indicates very limited meaningful consultation along Arnstien’s ladder of participation (1969). This lack of detail on participation is worrying as the literature on public libraries highlight the importance of effective and meaningful consultation and participation with communities (see Dudley 2012). This submission document merely skates over the issue of participation as something which has been done for many years without commenting on how

useful this consultation is and what form this participation may take. While ACE shows an awareness of participation in this submission, it may be that participation may not be as important for central government in the context of other “political” issues such as funding so little emphasis is placed on participation in this context.

As the submission develops, ACE defines the relationship between ACE itself and the public libraries; “Our role...is that of developers, not funders; advocates not inspectors” (ACE 2014, p.2). ACE positions itself as separate from the control of central government while showing itself as a “true” supporter of libraries even though ACE supports libraries through funding initiatives and because of this they can be defined as a “funder”. Contrast this with the language used in *The library of the future* report whereby ACE advocates how libraries should develop whilst seemingly accept that libraries have to run services more efficiently and to become self-sustaining. In this submission document ACE are “developers, partners, advocates and investors to support and encourage the development of libraries” (ACE 2014, p.2). At first glance this may appear to show ACE as a positive supporter of libraries, however, the terminology used indicates vagueness on ACE’s behalf as to its actual role regarding libraries. This should be viewed in the context of libraries being a new sphere of “culture” which has come under the authority of Arts Council England since October 2011 (ACE 2013). As ACE has traditionally focused its activities on more “traditional” pursuits such as museums and art galleries, at an institutional level, ACE may be careful how it positions itself due to the fact that public libraries are also funded by local authorities as a statutory right.

The above is supported by the following phrase which highlights how ACE traditionally views the areas of public life it operates in – culture – “The Arts Council is well positioned to support public libraries. We fully recognise the broad contribution of public libraries, and bring their particular expertise as *cultural hubs*” (ACE 2014, p.14 emphasis added). This focus on public libraries and culture is reinforced with the following phrase “We are exploring ways in which libraries can increasingly be seen as places where people can

experience great art locally” (ibid). Such a viewpoint fits the institutional context of the government department (DCMS) and Arts Council England itself. However, little is mentioned about how libraries themselves view the library as a cultural entity compared with an education (book reading clubs, homework clubs) or societal (social exclusion, active citizens) focus.

Again, this submission document advocates the use of collaboration and partnership with a range of government and non-governmental agencies “to develop a “narrative” which sets out a rounded perspective about the state of the sector, its successes and challenges” (ACE 2014, p.4). This is interesting as it shows an awareness of the importance of the use of language and discourse in how issues around public libraries are communicated to a wider audience. Of course, one must also ask whether participation with library users and non-users will take place to determine such challenges and successes in the sector. From the list in the document, governmental agencies, library and local government associations are mentioned but local communities are strangely absent. If a “narrative” is to be developed, then the issue at hand is whether local communities and users will be merely told the issues surrounding libraries or whether local communities will be given meaningful opportunities to offer their views of the issues and challenges affecting public libraries.

The ACE document discusses the funding of libraries and immediately contradicts itself earlier in the document by stating that Arts Council England has been funding libraries; “since October 2011, the Arts Council has invested over £5 million in project funds” (ACE 2014, p.5). Interestingly, ACE use the term invested instead of funded. This is important as invested appears more business orientated and comes across to the reader as if the institution has a stake in the success of the project whereas funded would reinforce the view that ACE is distanced from the libraries and also positions ACE as another form of government authority. It is clear that ACE is trying to present itself as a valuable partner to libraries while simultaneously positioning itself and the decision to invest in such projects as a “sound” financial decision – in terms central government would understand and approve.

The foundation of libraries as being a cultural service is reinforced by the following quote “we have found ways to make Arts Lottery funding hospitable for public libraries” (ibid) which appears to concede that the lottery bodies may have had reservations about funding public libraries as they may appear to fall outside the traditional area of cultural life.

However, this reinforces the argument that culture is being used as a mechanism to attract funding in light of funding reductions from central and local government. The implication of this is that firstly, a trend of shifting funding and responsibilities onto cultural and heritage bodies (who may not be familiar with the needs of public libraries) and this can seemingly justify and legitimatise reductions in public (central and local) funding. Secondly, funding from such cultural bodies reduces the funding available for other cultural institutions such as art galleries and museums. Such transitions necessarily require the library to become (and behave) more “cultural” in order to satisfy the requirements of such funding bodies.

It is clear here that the library is associated as a place of culture but in a different form, as defined by traditional pursuits of literature and is heavily promoted as the Carnegie built libraries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In this context, these are described as “cathedrals of culture” (ACE 2014, p.5). This terminology links the older libraries associated with “educating” the lower classes by the upper classes and viewing the library as a place of grandeur and history (cathedral) with modern day cities focussing on culture as consumed within the modern city enacted through activities such as eating and shopping habits (Featherstone 1991, 2007). Again this historical reference creates a romanticism associated with public libraries and justifies this link with culture by asserting that public libraries have always been associated (the reference to cathedrals could be seen as a strong argument in this regard) with culture.

While democracy is detailed in the submission document, its interpretation is narrowly defined. Although important, the emphasis on democracy is based on accessing services with phrases such as job-seeking, obtaining financial assistance and paying the TV license used in this regard. Whilst not discounting the importance of accessing online services to

overcome social exclusion (Dudley 2012), a wider interpretation of democracy and citizenship is absent. For example, there is no reference to the potential for debating and discussion of ideas or decisions within the library for patrons. Libraries are the ideal place to debate current affairs and to enhance and expand our horizons to become active citizens (Pateman and Williment 2013), yet there is little or no reference to citizenship anywhere in the document. This oversight poses issues over how strengthening democracy through library services is realised by librarians through policy and is interpreted and understood by funders and government departments.

It is also in this section where funding takes centre stage “it is hard to imagine that the combination of the growth of the virtual offer and the financial pressures will have no impact on the size of the network of library buildings” (ACE 2014, p.6). This is the first time, ACE, through their published documents, has stated that the current size of the library network may be compromised due to austerity. Note also that in *The Library of the future* document funding was not explicitly described by ACE (although the need to change services due to reductions in funding was implicitly described). ACE proposes “radical change to secure a resilient and successful library” (ibid). Again the same language was used in the Library of the future report which frames sustainability financially. The emphasis is on libraries themselves devising solutions to generate their own income and to be less reliant on local authority and central government funding. Indeed, ACE acknowledges that the changing governance structure of libraries (such as community managed libraries) have come about because of funding reductions both nationally and locally – a statement which was surprisingly absent from the Libraries of the future report. Funding and its effects on delivery of services forms a major part of the document unsurprisingly as the audience is linked to central government (DCMS) and, therefore, funding of services will form a major element of the decisions taken by DCMS where projects and grants are concerned.

Familiar discourses are used here such as “efficiently achieved through a strategic approach” (ACE 2014, p.8). It is interesting to note that the same terminology is used throughout the

ACE publications highlighting that such terms are seen as important and, therefore, should be implemented and recognised by libraries themselves. Therefore, similar terminology is used to develop a consistent argument for efficiency savings to be implemented. More importantly there is also an acknowledgement that the role of the community is also another way of making savings; “community-managed libraries is of a different nature, and is perceived in different ways largely because they have been born more of financial pressures than service improvements” (ACE 2014, p.10). Such an admission is important as it clearly poses a danger that the participation of communities is more a cost-saving feature than that of service improvement. Democracy and participation viewed in this light may have the ironic outcome of placing more pressure on local communities to run services instead of local government. In this light, one must ask whether participation positively or negatively affects the spaces for democracy and to question the assertion that libraries are free and relevant to all communities.

The analysis of national documents and policy statements has highlighted a number of points including an awareness of funding issues but how this is portrayed and described differs depending on the audience. An example of this is how ACE vaguely hints at changes in service delivery due to funding cuts (giving the impression that such changes are natural and essential in the 21st Century library) while in the submission to the William Sieghart Commission and the Advisory Panel for the DCMS, ACE openly acknowledge the pressures and effects of funding cuts throughout the document. This highlights how different agencies and organisations disseminate information and influence policy direction in different ways at different levels. It is also worth mentioning a lack of discussion and awareness about how libraries can tackle social exclusion (and not just digital exclusion), something that is consistently debated by librarians themselves (Goulding 2006). While the analysis so far has focussed on national documents and policy statements which influence library service nationally, it is important to source and analyse local policy statements and documents covering Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

7.3 Local Documentation

It is important to review local documentation relating not only to Newcastle City Library but the wider context of library service provision throughout the city of Newcastle. The first document of interest is a service plan for the *Customers, Culture and Skills Division* which charts the savings that have to be made or that have already been made in various divisions and the progress of these changes. While not exclusively focused on libraries, this document also sets out the ambitions of the council and how it views services to develop and change. This document also charts the council's desire for as many services to be accessed and operated digitally by 2016 (Newcastle City Council 2014) "which could leave people digitally excluded" (ibid, p2), a feature libraries are well positioned to deal with.

In this document the council is very open about the threats to the service "the service is required to rationalise and prioritise the support activities and programmes provided... due to the reduction in staffing and budgets to support the stock fund" (Newcastle City Council 2014, p.1). Compared with national policy documentation where funding is often only hinted at or is framed in a positive way, here we have a very upfront verification that due to budget cuts from central government the services provided has also been reduced. Moreover, while budgets have been cut, such language also simultaneously renders the council blameless over which services (and libraries) have been moved to alternative funding arrangements or have been closed. Indeed, the council's assistant director of customers, culture and skills David Fay has provided a rationale for choosing certain libraries in certain areas of the city to remain core libraries;

"In Newcastle we agreed we needed a core network of eight libraries...these were the City Library, five larger community-based libraries; Gosforth, Shieldfield, Kenton, West Denton and Benwell; one at Newburn because of its location and difficulty for residents in reaching the nearest [library]; and Walker, an area considered in need" (The Journal 2015, p.3).

The important point here to note is that decisions over service use are inherently political at both national and local levels (Central government is run by the Conservative party while

Newcastle City Council is run by the Labour party) and it is important to account for these decisions in assessing the effects of policy in a locality.

The council states that “The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 places a duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service” (Newcastle City Council 2014, p.2). The use of language is important here as it portrays two different distinct messages. The first is that the council must legally provide a library service but a second interpretation is revealed when the words comprehensive and efficient are analysed. For one, is it not the case that these two words are contradictory to one another? Can a service be comprehensive (when one local library has been closed) and efficient? Secondly, the use of “efficient” is a word found in national policy discourse from a business perspective. The interpretation here is of a local authority blaming any loss in service on national government priorities and decisions while simultaneously legitimatising the cuts to service through their interpretation of statutory laws. This shines a light on the institutional nature of local authorities and their relationship to central government. It may be central government who decides on funding and services which should be prioritised in funding but it is up to local authorities to not only decide on which services should be protected but then legitimise in any way those services which have been cut.

Of course, the local authority recognises the inequalities faced by residents and lists the library as the main service to help overcome such inequalities “[How] to address inequalities faced by residents across the city... For example, the Library Service provides opportunities and activities for all residents to access learning resources such as PCs and Broadband access... books, newspapers and journals.” (Newcastle City Council 2014, p.3). This is in stark contrast to the little recognition in national policy documents such as the ACE report in inequalities and the role libraries can play in this endeavour. This also highlights the possible inter-sectoral nature of libraries depending on the local circumstances of a given community.

It is also apparent that some of the avenues which have been adopted to mitigate potential library closures have their own problems; “the partnerships funded libraries approach presents added complexity and a potential additional cost pressure” (Newcastle City Council 2014, p.8). This indicates that some of these more entrepreneurial approaches may cause more problems and will at the very least introduce more complex governance structures and accountability issues. It is worth questioning, if in the future these models are promoted, whether issues to do with participation and spaces for democratic renewal for communities will still be encouraged. Indeed the cost pressure is directly implicated in the following quote “The 2016 budget proposals required significant service transformation... Library proposals are resulting in a positive outcome for services in the local community, but do bring cost pressures and complex partnership arrangement” (ibid). It is again questionable whether a positive outcome for communities can be achieved or sustained if cost pressures are becoming an issue, especially as an efficient and sustainable library service is the key aim of libraries in the twenty first century (ACE 2013). Of course, it is premature to speculate on the likely impacts so soon after implementation but when efficient services are the order of the day, it is unlikely that a model of service delivery that is financially unsustainable will be palatable to ACE and other funding bodies in the future, especially when the library network has had to reduce library funding by £172,000 over the 2014/15 financial year (Newcastle City Council 2014).

It is impossible not to find sections of the report focussing on co-location of services and it is hard to conclude that this is due to overall cuts in funding when over the 2014/15 financial year the local authority is reducing funding for the independent cultural sector by £678,000, management for culture, leisure, libraries and customer contact by £89,000 and senior management in the same department by a further £236,000 (Newcastle City Council 2014). Co-location in this respect offers the potential for services such as libraries to locate in the same facility. However, if new models of library ownership are causing problems, then a total reorganisation of key services and their delivery will inevitably result in unintended

consequences for users in particular. This, combined with the fact that £236,000 has been cut from the management budget not only means such services will lack the leadership and skills necessary to implement such changes but will also have a knock-on effect on end users and the services offered. Already we are told that reductions to “the Library Stock Fund also compromises the ability to purchase books and periodicals/ journals and newspapers. This has resulted in complaints from our customers” (Newcastle City Council 2014, p.10). We can observe that the quality of the service has declined for some users, is it therefore highly likely that further cuts will further reduce the service on offer and impact on the ability of the library to offer democratic spaces for debate and participation. Also, is it not unreasonable to speculate that those most deprived will see the quality of their library offer decrease the most? All agencies may recognize the link between culture and libraries may have increased over time, but when changing service roles and funding cuts are brought into consideration it is unlikely from a governance perspective that culture will help libraries offer more democratic spaces of exchange and learning, especially when the virtue of improving democracy in libraries has so far been neglected in the literature analysed thus far.

Another document of note focuses exclusively on the library services of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and reviews the year 2012/13 regarding service provision in the city and is one of the most recent documents on libraries published by the local authority. From the introduction of this document, it is clear that a focus on exclusion is at the minimum recognised by the council with the phrase “the three themes of a working city, *decent* neighbourhoods, tackling *inequalities* and a fit for purpose council are all clearly evident in our work last year” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.2, emphasis added). Again, a local tier of government, through their publications recognise and account for much of what the literature recognises as being important issues for communities, in particular excluded communities (see Goulding 2006). Furthermore, as this is described in the opening section of the document and is further elaborated on the opening page with the phrase “we contribute to tackling

inequalities for example through our work with Disability North for people with disabilities” (Newcastle City Council 2013 [sic], p.2), the importance of libraries in combatting social exclusion is clearly emphasised. Towards the end of the opening section, the use of partnership working is also discussed;

“some of our libraries will close in 2013 but some have also been saved through innovative partnership working. We have also been working with local communities, some of whom have stepped forward with offers to run their local library. We are determined to work *collaboratively* as part of a *cooperative council* to maintain a vibrant, *inclusive* and forward looking service” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.2, emphasis added)

It is important to contextualise this point as the reader is given the impression that such partnership working is put across in a way which gives the impression that this is the answer to cutbacks to library services in the city. Yet in the *Newcastle Service Plan* document (above), the disadvantages and issues over cost are clearly emphasised. It is apparent that the local authority itself has misgivings over this issue but these are not articulated in this document. Thus, the local authority is caught within the institutional network in which it operates. For accountability and transparency issues the council acknowledges the issues over the new library partnership structures but to a wider audience of librarians and interested parties it must stand by and justify the decisions made over library structure even if the council does not wholly support such endeavours. A similar situation was also evident in the national literature with ACE which presented changes to library structure as a natural element of libraries service development to librarians and the wider public. However, in submission documents for central government, the ACE reports issues over funding and changes to service provision were seen as key issues for the library service to grapple with. Such instances highlight the variegated position of institutional partners such as ACE and local authorities in seemingly supporting decision-making which they simultaneously disagree with. Finally, this also shows that ultimately central government has a lot of power in enacting changes to services through funding levels, principally through such institutional networks which satisfy criteria set by central government. The outcomes on service quality

and provision are inherently local and are mediated by local circumstance but the potential for user feedback in these situations appears at best limited and at worst non-existent.

Furthermore, the discourse used in this text highlights collaboration projects a positive impression of such endeavours and secondly it implies that the wider community of users support the decisions taken which crucially helps to legitimise the political decisions taken over how the library service in future will look with little regard for the impact on more excluded communities. For example, it is recognised in the literature that social capital is greatest in more affluent areas (Putnam 2000). These areas are more likely to run successful community-led or owned enterprises and are also the areas which localism itself generally favours. Yet many of the libraries which are due to be community run or managed in Newcastle are in deprived neighbourhoods. It is questionable whether these new libraries can be as inclusive and forward looking in creating spaces for citizenship and deliberation for all local communities.

The document develops over several sections including children services, heritage, health and wellbeing, going digital and community libraries. For the purposes of this research not all areas will be covered below but first to help briefly contextualise the empirical research, I wish to spend some time analysing how “City Library” is described in this document. This particular section of the review document emphasises the positive developments through 2012/13 such as student placements and work placements. Importantly, and this is also a general point throughout this document, none of the issues or problems encountered throughout 2012/13 are discussed. This is important because from an analytical perspective, we must question what is discussed but also what is not. This lack of awareness of issues encountered by the library over this period invariably raises questions over quality of service to users and whether the library service, as a cultural attraction, is offering spaces of participation and skills development in an economy which offers plentiful opportunities for those with critical thinking and debating skills and little to those who do not.

It is also interesting to note how the City Library has adopted more entrepreneurial strategies promoted in the national literature such as ACE; “Confidence in the Business & IP Centre has been demonstrated by the success of funding streams including a grant from the European Development Fund as well as...Arts Council England and Barclays Bank” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.3). The first thing to note here is how diversified the funding streams have become, not just relying on local government. Secondly, the library is able to attract funding from the private sector – Barclays Bank. This is important as not only is the City Library adopting entrepreneurial characteristics to remain financially sustainable (ACE 2013), something encouraged by national agencies, it is also expanding its range of services along economic and business support lines (such as the Business & IP Centre). Clearly the type of services promoted may well have an effect on the sources of funding the library has access to.

It is also interesting to note that the council view the Business & IP Centre (whom the British Library support) as a link to culture; “working with UK’s national library [British Library]. Not only does it enable us to secure funding from many organisations... [it] helps us to expand our relationship with local cultural organisations such as Seven Stories and regional universities” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.4). From this it can be argued that the council not only views culture as a way to develop relationships with other institutions across the city and region but that they view culture as way to access funding. As was implied with the national documents, culture is seen as a something to adhere to so that such institutions can access funding from cultural bodies. If we consider private sources of funding, it is not impossible to argue that by defining libraries as cultural institutions, the library can be incorporated into wider redevelopment plans based on the library acting as a destination (Skot-Hansen and Jochumsen 2013). Indeed one does not need to look far to see evidence of such arguments as South Tyneside Council (seven miles from Newcastle) are promoting regeneration in South Shields town centre with the library serving as an anchor

institution (ICIC 2011, Morris et al. 2010) to attract private investment and further regeneration based on retail and consumption (Featherstone 1991).

Another section of the annual review document is titled heritage and encompasses a broad range of activities the library service in Newcastle is engaged with. Interestingly, heritage, from the perspective of the council is focused very much on culture and place;

“The priceless collection in the City Library reflects the growth development and change of neighbourhoods, industries, local culture and most importantly the people who lived and live in the city. They help us to understand our contribution to our city and are invaluable in creating a sense of place and belonging” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.7).

This is important as a focus at the local level does help local people understand their local history and to feel a sense of pride in their area which can help local people take an interest in their local neighbourhood. Of course, having an awareness of where we come from and where we belong can also be empowering allowing for new spaces of participation to emerge leading to what some have termed a new right to the city through public libraries (Buschmann 2013). The library also develops this by offering images of local places over time through free online platforms such as Flickr (Newcastle City Council 2013). While accepting that not everybody has access to a computer, such methods do offer those who may be spatially mobile gain access to such resources enabling more people who may not be able to access the library in person access to such library resources in their own home at a convenient time. Such measures help communities identify and understand change in their city and also offer the potential to understand how the city is changing currently as new industries and rounds of economic development take place (Dicken 2011). These tools may also lead members of the community to engage in future changes in their city and to support or resist these changes. Indeed there is evidence of engaging with the development of the city taking place; “with funding from the City Council Regeneration Department [we] also delivered a series of talks and walks on Shields Road [an area of Newcastle City Centre] in November” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.9). Here we can see that partnership working with the regeneration team of the council offers spaces for participants to understand the

history of a place and which “actively encourages participants to research their own interests” (ibid).

The targeting of such initiatives is important to help regenerate and upskill communities (Abo and Audunson 2012) and the review document gives examples of such activities “cement lasting partnerships between the British Library and four libraries; Newcastle, Leeds, Norwich & Norfolk and to engage young people aged 16-24, outside of formal education” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.4). Two points can be made here. Firstly, the geographical spread of libraries involved covering city and rural areas offers spaces of participation and engagement beyond one locality. In a geographical sense, the places involved become relational from a societal perspective (Massey 2005) as the library(ies) act as meeting points for the participants to embark on future projects in a collaborative nature. Some argue that such projects often target the “usual suspects” – those who participate time and again (Raco and Imrie 2003), however, in this instance the focus is on excluded young people outside formal education. This is important because such involvement can help re-engage disaffected young people who are traditionally excluded from the knowledge economy due to a lack of skills. These projects allow participants to build on and develop new skills associated with debating alongside traditional skills such as reading and writing to become confident to develop new hobbies or training opportunities. Although direct deliberation or participation may not directly take place, such services offer the potential for participants to indirectly engage in Habermasian democratic ideas such as through deliberative democracy as a process, and it is clear from this document that the City Library are engaging in these types of activities.

Interestingly the library service in Newcastle has its own publishing arm which focuses on local history of the area. These publications involve “producing well-researched illustrated books... [while] generating income to enable more books to be produced” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.10). This is policy influenced directly by central government ministers and policy documents which argue for libraries to become self-sufficient by generating income.

What is interesting is the focus on local history and heritage which is not only a cultural product but is also the focus of library engagement with local communities. One can argue that the focus of the library is clearly on local communities as it would be hard to imagine tourists and visitors from Manchester or London would be interested in the local history of Newcastle unless they had a special interest in the area. Indeed, the selling of merchandise on the local area may also increase the awareness of local campaigns and general history with the local community highlighting how libraries have developed policies to become financially sustainable whilst addressing local issues.

Another section of the review document which is relevant is the section focussing on health and wellbeing as healthy communities can also be more active communities (Raco and Imrie 2003). This section is also where the library service works with multi-agency partners to respond to the needs of the community. A key focus is on social health covering issues such as mental health conditions which have a profound effect on community health and which often affect deprived communities; “The books on prescription scheme provides self-help reading for adults to help manage wellbeing... self-help books can help people understand and manage common conditions such as depression and anxiety” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.13). It is also interesting to note that there is a national group focussing on libraries and wellbeing “Newcastle Libraries working with the Public Library Health Development Group” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.13). This is clear evidence that the library service nationally as well as locally recognise the role public libraries can play in helping local communities lead healthy lives (Goulding 2006). Strangely, the role of libraries in helping communities lead healthy lives are scantily mentioned in the national documentation.

Surprisingly, this section on health also links directly to culture;

“In partnership with Manchester City Council we were granted Libraries Development Initiative funding to deliver a cultural project. We commissioned a group of major cultural organisations to explore and develop an approach to engaging vulnerable adults... [this] encouraged older people who are experiencing difficulties, perhaps through economic, health or other reasons, to experience and learn new skills” (Newcastle City Council 2013, p.13).

Although we are not told the exact details of the project, this would indicate a far deeper role culture plays in the activities and events of the library service in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Of course, the issue is that some areas of life can be associated more with culture than others. For example, sessions on local heritage, debating and walks around the city are more reminiscent of culture than say health sessions targeting vulnerable adults. While this analysis has shown that culture plays a fundamental role in the activities of libraries, this idea that culture can be one thing and everything at the same time is problematic. This can lead to the concept becoming “fuzzy” as its definition and use is not clear cut. Furthermore, it can lead to manipulation and “bending” of programmes to meet certain objectives, often on grounds of funding. It is clear this plays a role in this example above as the library was awarded funding to run an initiative specially focusing on culture. Therefore, as funding is increasingly moving from local government to alternative funders with specific targets (such as Arts Council England) who have culture as targets – many of the activities libraries run will be amended to incorporate culture even in areas where the link is dubious.

A section of the review document focuses on the Business & IP Centre within City Library. This section represents the library’s focus on the economic element and is the first library in the country to have a Business & IP Centre (from now on referred to as BIPC). Between September 2011 and 2013, 2,200 people have taken advantage of the BIPC covering marketing, branding and business start-up (Newcastle City Council 2013). Furthermore, ERDF funding as well as a share of £600,000 from the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has helped extend the programme for a further two years (ibid). While I do not wish to dismiss such work (as this programme will undoubtedly help businesses in the city and wider region) I do wish to comment on this link between library activity and funding. It appears that funding bodies and requirements are increasingly dictating the policy direction (regarding events and activities) of the library.

As a move away from local government to other sources (ACE 2013), it is clear to see how themes such as economic development and culture (in its various interpretations) frame the

library's activities in order to qualify for funding. As has been shown, culture (and economic development) can easily be incorporated with an increasing range of areas of public life including health and wellbeing. One wonders whether the priorities or themes of the library would change if funding bodies stated other objectives such as numbers of new readers or if local government support was maintained or whether the autonomy of libraries was increased to enact programmes based on local need which could be more beneficial. Far from libraries being able to choose the direction and nature of events, it would appear that increasingly libraries are looking to the requirements of funders and shape library activities and policy accordingly.

There is also recognition of how libraries can support unemployment and job creation; "Job Clubs provided through the library service support individuals... [while the] BIPC based at the City Library also supports SMEs which in turn bolsters employment throughout the city." (Newcastle City Council 2014, p.3-4). Clearly both national and local agencies value the role libraries can play in tackling unemployment, social exclusion and job creation in their localities. In fact the BIPC facility is a useful component which not all central libraries have and can have a profound impact in supporting job creation in the city and wider region. Perhaps more attention could be focussed to explore how this could be developed going forward. Such attributes of libraries are not even hinted at in the national documentation.

A document published as this documentary analysis was being conducted titled *2016/17 Budget proposal: Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)* outlines the future of the library service from 2016/17 in Newcastle upon Tyne. Whilst the document acknowledges challenges and outcomes disproportionately affecting vulnerable and excluded communities (namely disabled and their carers, job seekers and the elderly), the council's ways of overcoming these issues focus on ensuring the library network has a wide range of opening hours (even though all libraries including City Library are having their opening hours reduced – City Library opening hours are being cut from 69 to 45 hours a week (Durcan 2016)) as well as focusing on digital services. Yet the same document also acknowledges

that poorer families tend to have no access to a computer in their own homes. The document also points out that job seekers may be penalised if they cannot search for jobs digitally on the library computers (Durcan 2016). Indeed the consequences of these proposals may in effect place some unemployed people in financial exclusion and poverty because they cannot access computers to search for jobs as they cannot afford to purchase their own computer. Such a contradiction highlights the precarious position such communities may find themselves in as well as showing the apparent inability for the council to implement any meaningful help or assistance to these vulnerable groups who are economic disadvantaged that is made worse through austerity imposed by central government. Furthermore there appears to have been little or no engagement over how consultation and participation has been implemented in the face of reductions in funding from central government due to austerity. Indeed this shows that in this instance the power and decision making of central government takes precedence over local issues or concerns.

Overall, a common theme of this section on the citywide context of library provision has shown that themes and concepts such as culture (in this case heritage focussing on history and local identity) are being increasingly used as a tool to attract funding from funding bodies. One reason for this is because many funders such as ACE promote arts and culture throughout public life more generally. Therefore, it can be argued that services (and libraries) which cannot be shown to increase cultural awareness or increase employment or job prospects – areas which focus on helping vulnerable residents – are those which are affected due to overall funding cuts. The local authority has stated in its service delivery plan that changing ownership of some libraries is causing governance and cost issues which will undoubtedly affect library service more generally in the coming years.

From this, while culture through a heritage lens that focusses local identity and history, can increase participation and debate amongst communities, it can simultaneously influence policy and engagement practices to meet criteria set by funding bodies at a national level. Viewed in this light, the local authority, library professionals and the wider community have

less say in how or what areas to focus on as funding moves from local government to national funding bodies. As culture and economic development (although not unimportant areas) become key concerns at a national level, other more societal or outreach services such as branch libraries and community or mobile libraries are marginalised.

7.4 Newcastle City Library Documentation

Now that the national and local context of libraries has been discussed and analysed, it is appropriate to analyse documents relating to City Library itself. The first document is an events guide (Figure 15) and details the events between September – November 2015.

Overall the document focuses on two themes – economic development (through self-publishing, access to research) and culture (through heritage) which is common with the two themes identified in the local library literature (above). Most of the events are free to attend which is positive in terms of access; many of these activities are based at City Library (This document was collected from the City Library but the text covers events organised by the librarians themselves across the city). This centralisation of services may exclude residents from outer areas or from deprived districts where costs of transport may prove too expensive. Nonetheless, the activities and events on offer do cover all times of day (morning, afternoon and evening) so that shift workers, day workers and those who are unemployed or are looking after children can attend. However, one also notes the lack of advertising of services such as local government services or welfare benefits online especially as this is promoted in the literature (Pateman and Willimant 2013). Such a service is vital to those who may be digitally excluded but may not feel confident enough to seek such services for themselves. Perhaps the assumption is that this service is known to all when in fact few people who may need to know are not aware of this service especially if they are new to the library.

It can also be argued that while extensive, the list of activities are aimed at sections of the community who may have the time and resources to attend such events. For example, there

is only one event – “get online week” – which it can be argued targets a particular disadvantage – digital exclusion. Furthermore, this particular service satisfies the local authority’s ambition regarding accessing services digitally citywide (Newcastle City Council 2014). The City Library states that it provides access online 24/7 remotely. This is positive in that library services can overcome spatial distance and time constraints and forms part of the services offered in the review document. Of course, one must also recognise that such strategies will not reach everyone as there are still a significant minority of users who do not have access to a computer at home (Dudley 2012).



Figure 15: City Library events guide – “Page Turner: What’s on in Newcastle Libraries”

One important topic that is promoted is that migrants can have access to citizenship tests to help them gain British Citizenship. This is important as migrants often reside in deprived neighbourhoods and by helping these groups become citizens they then have a right to access such resources (i.e. voting). Once settled these groups may then wish to start their own businesses and create jobs, but they also help regenerate such communities through diversity. The library also offers mock driving theory tests which will help increase the likelihood of passing the driving theory test. This may indirectly help increase social mobility of these groups in society as they may then be able to drive to more distant localities (for shopping, pleasure or to visit new places) as well as having access to jobs which can help regenerate the communities in which these people live.

A final point relating to this document is the apparent lack of services advertised to tackle participation within the wider community. Many of the events appear stand alone with the indication that a guest speaker will speak to the audience about a topic or theme they have knowledge of. There seem no events or clubs such as debating groups which could involve a different topic being discussed and debated every week or month which would directly help communities develop debating skills and help them have a voice in politics both locally and nationally. I am not suggesting that the events offered are not useful or relevant. Rather themes such as culture and economic development guide the list of activities, an argument I alluded to in the review document from Newcastle City Council. This point reinforces the one made earlier that at least to some extent the priorities and objectives of funders at a national level influence the type of activities and overall focus of the library.



Figure 16: “Welcome to Newcastle Libraries” form

Another document of interest relating mainly to Newcastle City Library (but also relating to public libraries throughout the city) is titled “Welcome to Newcastle Libraries” (2012)

Figure 16) and gives a general overview of the facilities and services that may be used at the library and any charges these incur. Regarding outreach for those who are unable to visit the library, outreach services are promoted which helps bring library services to such groups.

Furthermore, the library does not charge children (under 16s) for overdue books. This is

important as any charge may deter poorer families borrowing books as they encourage children to read and develop skills which help equip themselves with the skills for the knowledge economy. Finally, the library also offers the information in alternative formats which can help engage people speaking foreign languages or those with visual impairment (e.g. braille) to help include a diverse range of communities. From this perspective, the library attempts to engage with diverse communities who may not view the library as relevant or useful in their lives.

The documentation from the City Library shows a wealth of activities on offer to a variety of social groups covering a range of interests. However, most of these activities appear to fall within two categories – culture and economic development – with few specifically targeting activities on exclusion. The only exception is digital exclusion, however, as the local documentation has shown the council has an ambition to digitise many services and views the library as the ideal agency to help tackle the digital divide (Newcastle City Council 2014). Specific classes on debating societies are absent and some events appear to be expert led, offering few opportunities for audiences to discuss and debate issues relevant to library users. As has been shown throughout this analysis, it can be argued that as funding bodies cover diverse areas, the services offered will be influenced by the funders' requirements. As areas such as participation and deliberation appear to produce less tangible results and may not directly result in job creation or reducing people on welfare, such priorities do not receive the same attention and therefore the same level of funding as other activities.

7.5 Conclusion

From this analysis it can be argued that users of the library (and the local community) has very limited influence over library policy and the consequences on the ground. While national bodies may carry out consultation, it is clear that the context has already been decided upon (reduce funding of libraries and transfer this to national funders and market forces) which limits the influence of users in influencing other actors involved in library

policy. Where awareness of users need is shown (such as digital exclusion at the local authority level) this is geared more towards the local authority's needs and wishes than purely users themselves. Adopting Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, the form of consultation and involvement of users and local communities can be representative of merely informing such groups of decision making with little tangible spaces to offer an alternative for directly meeting local need.

In considering both research questions 3 and 4 (see below) it can be argued that from a policy direction, other actors in the wider network do not allow equal or even effective access for members of society to purposely contribute towards giving their point of view and having these views effect real change. Consequently, this does not allow opportunities for developing active citizenship or democratic spaces to be opened up.

Considering research question 4, the main point can be made which is that although the library remains a statutory public service of local authorities with central government still enacting and directing library policy, culture is still promoted and viewed as central to libraries. However, this particular view of culture is increasingly geared towards funding issues and little to do with participation. While Newcastle City Library does offer some events and workshops based on cultural heritage, the emphasis, especially from central government is that libraries are very much cultural amenities and that culture in this way can be seen as a way of attracting funding with little evidence of how such culture is offering meaningful and effective participation from the perspective of public library policy.

Chapter 8: Interview Analysis of the City Library

8.1 Introduction

This analysis of interviews undertaken with library managers and a council official regarding the City Library has been divided into three sections. The first section accounts for the rise of culture and regeneration within the library, which contributes to answering research questions 4 and 5. The second section covers research questions 2 and 3 and focuses on collaboration, partnership work, social exclusion and general library practises. The third section covers anomalies which were issues brought up by a single interviewee as opposed to being raised by many participants. For reference I have included the research questions below:

- 1) Does the City Library offer spaces for users to construct a “right to the city”?
- 2) Does the City Library offer spaces of participation for residents to have a voice in the future development of the city?
- 3) Does the City Library offer equal opportunities for access to all members of society in contributing towards active citizenship and democratic prospects?
- 4) Does the City Library, through its ownership and subsequent role in society become a social anchor in the city offering a space for cultural participation that can lead to socially inclusive economic development?
- 5) Has the City Library become part of the performance of the wider city rhythm?

The analysis as a whole helps contribute to research question 1 and it is important to understand that overlaps exist between different sections and research questions and various points made may also have implications on other areas within this study.

This analysis will chart how culture in all its forms and interpretations has developed and evolved within the City Library. Crucially, the definition and interpretation of culture will be derived from how interviewees themselves define culture and enact it within the library space. From this it will be argued that both Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011) are present within the City Library and will highlight how Culture 3.0 can become a transformational ideal within the library. Secondly, the analysis will account for the rise of partnerships within the library and will argue that while the main reason for such partnerships is economic considerations, some partnerships can be beneficial including those which have helped spread Culture 3.0 ideals throughout the library. It will be argued that while the potential for a right to the city is present (Lefebvre 1968), a number of obstacles persist which limit this potential including non-transparency with bidding and funders as well as a more general lack of effective consultation over the running of the library. While civic pride will be discussed as a possible way forward in terms of constructing a right to the city (Lefebvre 1968), this analysis will conclude that unless funders and agencies recognise these potentials and fund the library service to meet these goals, such ideas will remain as ambitions only which will have consequences for the library and the local community.

8.2 The role of culture within the library

The interviews with library staff and council officials generated a number of points of discussion. The first key theme to emerge is one that is associated with culture in a general sense. All library staff agree that culture has become an important part of their work. Phrases such as;

“Obviously there is a sense of civic pride and we’ve seen that from when we’ve had exhibitions or some of the events that we have and we are part of that cultural scene”

“Oh yes I totally agree, I think the library plays an important role within the cultural services”.

(Selection of interviewee responses with library managers, 2016).

Of course culture can mean different things to many people but on further analysis it became clear that culture from the perspective of the library staff falls within Sacco's (2011) models of culture within both Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0. Culture 2.0 is present because the emphasis is clearly on the library being part of a cultural scene which is out there on the street seemingly ready to be consumed. The priority of the library within the cultural services as opposed to say education or outreach services reinforces the City Library as an attraction or destination in a similar vein to an art gallery or museum. Culture 3.0 establishes itself in the way civic pride is described as such emotions can be the genesis of personal development and empowerment. If civic pride is established then users gain a sense of who they are and where they come from and can lead to further visits to the library perhaps to take part in other library services such as skill development which may also lead to upskilling. Furthermore, while the responses above place the use of exhibitions as a way of attracting visitors to the library (Culture 2.0), it can also have the effect of increasing civic pride or in developing people's interest in a particular hobby or skill which they can then take forward and develop further in the future. This highlights the library space as dynamic and full of possibilities as democratic avenues such as civic pride can be developed in unintended and exciting ways by users themselves.

Moreover, many library officials felt the library building itself acted as an icon for the city. Susan (head of library) thought the library building integrated the library service as a cultural offer in its own right;

“This [City Library] is a fantastic building. It is an ideal cultural building. We do a lot of events so I would like to think it is really high up on the list of the cultural offer for Newcastle” (Susan, head of library, 2016).

Similarly, Michael (business manager) felt the library building served as a beacon for the area;

“Probably the vision for the building when it was rebuilt in 2009 was that it was a kind of beacon. It was bright, it was open and transparent, you could see what was going on inside” (Michael, business manager, 2016).

Such opinions reinforce Sacco’s model of Culture 2.0, particularly in its association with the realisation and promotion of cultural mass markets and consumption through place branding and urban redevelopment whereby the economic potential of culture is realised and enacted upon. As Jochumsen et al. (2015) have argued, such grand redevelopment projects centred on Culture 2.0 involving libraries whereby the association with culture is realised is typically also through “extensive use of art and culture in urban regeneration, city-branding through iconic cultural institutions and the use of events” (Jochumsen et al. 2015, p.3). This supports the arguments made by the library staff (above) who feel that through the design and architecture of the building and supported by the service they offer, culture forms a critical element of the library. Indeed one staff member recalls the intention of the council at the time of the library building was designed;

“One of the requirements in the PFI bid that went out was that we were going to be a flagship building with innovative ways of working. The main entrance to the old building was hidden away on Princes Square. They wanted to make it more on the highway so you could see it from Monument [station]” (Mel, assistant reading manager, 2016).

Indeed from this account it can be argued that decision makers at the time of the redevelopment wanted an innovative and iconic design which supports Skot-Hansen et al. (2013) in their observation that library redevelopment schemes have indeed entered culture-led redevelopment frameworks. One way is through cultural icons whereby the building creates a wow-factor and becomes iconic to a particular area. Furthermore, iconic architecture is in itself part of the elite or transnational class (Sklair 2012) whereby architecture through networks of architects and clients construct a building where the design itself becomes iconic and an attraction in itself. While not the case with the Newcastle City

Library, this does show evidence of a general trend of incorporating iconic architecture to send out an image to investors that Newcastle is similar to cities such as Barcelona or Bilbao which strive to demonstrate that they are “globalising” even though economic indicators may indicate otherwise (Sklair 2012).

Moreover, this also demonstrates that public institutions (such as the library) are also becoming ever more involved with the institutional networks that constitute iconic architecture and urban boosterism. Additionally, this also appears as another space to engender an opportunity for consumption and spectacle within the city which may well satisfy the needs of such a transnational capitalist class (Sklair 2012) as opposed to local residents and communities. The question remains whether it is useful or indeed necessary for public institutions such as the library to engage in such practices when the benefits to a city like Newcastle, let alone to the library service itself, are not apparent and could well be skewed to a particular segment of the population. This also provides evidence for the City Library to be a key actor within urban place-making whereby the library acts as stimulus to initiate further development in the vicinity;

“Like I say a lot of it [regeneration] is more down the Quayside and we might not get as many visitors but I think that will change in the future because obviously it is the turn of this part of the city now” (Susan, head of library, 2016).

As the surrounding area along John Dobson Street and the East Pilgrim Street (see Maps 1 and 2) development gather pace with demolitions taking place and proposals in for a temporary shopping park with the intention to develop a mixed use scheme comprising shops, offices and cultural amenities in the coming years, it can be argued that the design, location and offer of the library may well impact on the development nearby. Indeed this is reinforced by the council official;

“Well I think it has certainly got potential...I think the opportunity for the City library is that the East Pilgrim Street block is in theory going to be redeveloped in due course and there are lots and lots of artists based there [these artists occupy short term lets in buildings due to be redeveloped and hold meetings and offer studio space for young emerging artists] at the moment and it is quite possible that the redevelopment of Pilgrim Street block [sic] will have a cultural component to it” (Chris, council official, 2016).

While Chris, the council official, supports some of the arguments associating libraries to culture-led regeneration based on Sacco’s (2011) Culture 2.0 model, he contradicts other accounts made by library staff. For example, Chris states;

“I think it is a significant cultural building. Quite how iconic it is I don’t know” (Chris, council official, 2016).

Clearly from the council’s perspective, the library redevelopment project serves as a function (to renew the library building) with little awareness of how the form of the building may directly shape future development in the area. It could well be that since the redevelopment was completed officials have become aware of the significance of the building itself as evidenced by the head of skills;

“when you look at the other redevelopments around the city they are very similar, very glass [sic] so whether or not this was the start of you know the phase of the development of the city I don’t know” (Jane, head of skills, 2016).

While such comments do not contradict the argument that the library adopts themes associated with Culture 2.0 (Sacco 2011) regarding its design, they do highlight how such associations may only emerge over time when new developments are compared with one another. No doubt the architects of the building and officials within the council working on the PFI (Private finance initiative used to apply for funding to redevelop the City Library) bid had a particular aim which was to make the building a flagship library but for other officials within the city to make that connection may well develop organically with smaller buildings than they would with larger master planned regeneration schemes.

Although Chris was not involved in the redevelopment project, he appears to cast doubt on the arguments made by library staff;

“I wasn’t involved in the redevelopment at all but the old building was just not fit for purpose any longer. I think it was probably a coincidence of money being available and the need to renew because it is pretty much built on exactly the same site as the old library was on”. (Chris, council official, 2016).

While Chris makes valid points about the availability of money, nonetheless, any redevelopment project can only take place if finance is available. One only needs to look at the Sage, Gateshead to see the significant funding from central government and other funding bodies involved to make the project a reality. Indeed Culture 2.0 is arguably based on securing funding for such redevelopment projects with the aim of encouraging further regeneration in the vicinity as well as recognising the mass market potential to tap into and generate an economic impact through higher visitor numbers and associated services such as cafes etc.

The potential of the library acting as a flagship clearly has not gone unnoticed with a delegation from Birmingham visiting the library for assistance in the formation of the new Birmingham City Library which has followed culture-led regeneration principles (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013) and has served as an anchor in the Birmingham City Centre;

“In fact I am positive we had a visit from Birmingham. We did actually because what happened was we had a contingency who came from Birmingham and they looked around the building. They had a tour of the building... so we did get a number of visits and I think it has probably shaped a lot but I think we have had an influence on a number of local authorities” (Susan, head of library, 2016).

While the presence of Culture 2.0 (Sacco 2011) can be identified in and around the library, a much more nuanced and potentially transformative element of culture is in evidence associated with cultural production based on Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011) characteristics. Helen, heritage manager at the library, provides an account of such production in action;

“We also had funding again which was a smaller, regional pot but working with groups of people who have learning disabilities and difficulties so they produce some fabulous artwork in the sessions and then each of the authorities picked a different Shakespeare play and then all that artwork will be put on banners and they will tour around the region. There is still the original artwork and that will be all digitised and put on all these pullup banners that go around the region so we worked

with a group called *Arcadia* with that and a local artist” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

A number of points can be made. Firstly, not only does this imply that the library as a space is multi-functional and transformative (acting as an art gallery in this example) but it offers a platform for members of the public and those socially excluded or disadvantaged (such as those with disabilities) who may not have similar opportunities in other cultural venues. The library becomes an art gallery which through active production and interpretation democratises the production and subsequent dissemination of that art which is evidence for Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011). As Sacco himself notes; “accessing cultural experiences increasingly challenges individuals to develop their own capabilities to assimilate and manipulate in personal ways the cultural contents they are being exposed to (Sacco 2011, p.4). In many ways and unlike many professions, such as practising law or dentistry which requires years of training, artists interpret the world or a subject into a form that can be disseminated to a wider dissemination audience. It is only because of socially produced institutional networks between well-known art galleries that allow “iconic” artists such as Tracy Emin or David Hockney the opportunity to showcase their work to a wider audience. The library in this respect becomes a people’s art gallery where work of the people for the people is showcased which may engender civic pride, empowerment and upskilling for those involved.

The emergence of prosumption which is a person who consumes and produces something at the same time (Ritzer et al. 2012) has given rise to the emergence of two way communication between institutions such as library users as consumers and producers of art. The rise of performativity, the ability for speech and communication to not just be seen as a single action, but to be able to construct and perform an identity through such an action (see Butler 1997), throughout society involving new ways of working and relationships between audiences and producers has implications for libraries. However, the quote by Helen (heritage manager) is a perfect example of a library institution addressing this new performativity turn (Butler 2007) in society as “performative space” is used to describe

spaces in which library users are inspired to create new artistic expressions or are given the ability to design, create, and produce various kinds of products or cultural artefacts in interaction with other users and professionals (Jochumsen et al. 2015).

Such co-production covers all forms of creative pursuits including theatre;

“we have got the people’s theatre who we have worked in collaboration with in borrowing items for the Shakespeare exhibition and they are going to do pop-up forms of *Richard III*” (Helen, heritage manager 2016).

Again here the library acts as a performative space whereby cultural activities associated with traditional high-end culture and what Sacco (2011) would determine as Culture 1.0 becomes accessible to a wider audience with end user involvement.

Secondly, this also indicates the potential role libraries can play in economic development as endogenous social hubs. While it is accepted that libraries have played a role in economic development for some time (see Pateman and Williment 2013), by focussing on the unique role of libraries in society (i.e. working with excluded individuals), libraries could develop more socially inclusive endogenous economic development strategies which may benefit wider audiences and demographics. Indeed, there was also evidence in the interviews that cultural co-production of creative material with older users is taking place;

“So we did a project. It was called Marigold TV involving TV companies training extras. I think they were generally perhaps over fifties but it was a project that worked really well and we had a huge turnout and I think we are looking to run that model region wide” (Michael, business manager, 2016).

While such a project may be specific, the fact that the library had a high turnout and involved older residents who may traditionally feel excluded from the “new” economy such as creative and digital, reinforces the role of the library as an anchor institution exhibiting the potential to adopt endogenous economic strategies. This provides further evidence for libraries to act as anchor institutions more broadly. Moreover, there is evidence that the art that is created is already being developed for the market;

“We are looking at another partnership now about the arts and enterprise. So using creative artists in the library space to develop business and using the Business and IP Centre to influence and help with matters of intellectual property, people creating work, is there an impact, does it borrow from somebody else’s work, are they allowed to use that, what is the value of their own work and how do they protect their own work?” (Michael, business manager, 2016).

Crucially, Newcastle City Library has developed the Business and IP Centre (BIPC) with help from the British Library to help businesses grow and develop in the region. This has the benefit of tying the library and the work produced in the City library into wider institutional networks to help realise market potential. This infrastructure located within the library allows for work to be co-produced within the library space involving a wide range of users as well as excluded groups. This work can then be displayed with the help of the BIPC and other partners and can be marketed to a wider audience for the benefit of the producer of such work. Not only does such co-production involve upskilling and empowerment for the cultural producer, but as the library is able to target a range of groups, this can impact on those which the market may neglect such as the elderly or unemployed. In this way, and developing previous arguments on the role of the library and wider city development, the library can be seen to be developing more socially inclusive forms of cultural production associated with Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011). As such, the library also contributes towards the general upskilling of library users while simultaneously being viewed as a key economic partner in the city to help develop socially responsible endogenous economic strategies that are attuned to the needs of not only the market but also the needs of the people.

This supports recent research on libraries becoming places where performative space is enacted in “supporting publishing and distribution of user’s products, and providing stages for their activities” (Jochumsen et al. 2015, p.6). Culture within this version of Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011) is much more nuanced and less associated with spectacle and consumption and has the potential to be transformative depending on local context. Through upskilling and practise through to cultural production, users (or producers) can become empowered to develop art and culture relevant to the needs and experiences of the producer which can then

be marketed to a wider audience. This supports recent work by bodies such as Newcastle City Futures which argues that anchor institutions such as universities (and I would argue social anchors such as libraries) are key nodes in the city to harness the economic potential for the city (Tewdwr-Jones et al. 2015).

8.2.1 Summary

It is clear that the City library in Newcastle is firmly embedded within cultural institutional networks both within the city and further afield and is seen to be a component of wider culture more generally within the city. However such an overarching view is too broad. By adopting Sacco's (2011) models of culture we are able to better analyse and contextualise the library and its relationship with both culture and the wider city.

The library through the design of the building adheres to Sacco's Culture 2.0 model of forming a focal point within the city/street and incorporating innovative architectural design principles such as the use of glass, silver fins and steel which clearly has the potential to influence future development within the immediate vicinity. It also adopts principles of the time such as incorporating grand building projects to achieve an economic "hit" boosting consumption and footfall adhering to the library serving as a cultural icon and as an active place maker within the cityscape (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013). There are many examples of such projects in towns and cities through the UK and beyond.

However, it is when the library is analysed through Sacco's Culture 3.0 model that the most innovative and transformative potential of the library is realised although there are some limitations and caveats which must be appreciated with such an approach (below). Such a framework does offer a good starting point for adhering to and imagining a transformative potential of the public library. The City Library clearly exhibits evidence of promoting active production of artistic and creative material covering many sectors of the cultural industries. Through the upskilling and empowerment associated with such activities that hold the potential for culture to act as a democratic tool to encourage users to learn new

skills relevant to the economy and to create and fill new gaps in the market for such skills.

This would ensure a socially inclusive endogenous economic development strategy, serving as an anchor institution for the local community which could benefit wider society.

Nonetheless, while there is evidence to support Sacco's model, this analysis has also shown the limitations of such a binary theory. Firstly, Sacco's model assumes an almost linear drift between Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 whereas this research has shown it is much more nuanced than that. While not being restrictive to such a model (say Culture 2.5) it is important to account for the fact that there is the possibility that Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 can be evidenced at the same time which may in fact help draw people into the library in the first place. Secondly, such a model neglects the fact that venues that may adopt Culture 2.0 characteristics can also be "retrofitted" to adopt Culture 3.0 themes which Sacco's model seems to neglect. Thirdly, such a linear model is problematic as it appears to imply a prescriptive framework that if adopted will automatically result in more democratic and involved activities.

Notwithstanding these important limitations of Sacco's models of culture, it does provide a useful framework to help show how co-production of culture can help transform the opportunities of the users involved whilst acknowledging that such a model must be viewed as flexible as possible. This means recognising the not so big gulf between Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 and appreciating that if it is applied to case studies which can show areas of improvement (i.e. greater consultation between funders and users) then this can aid not only future research but can help make activities which identify with Culture 3.0 that much more applicable to the "messy" and complicated real world examples of co-production of culture like the City Library.

8.3 Role of partnerships in the library: economic realities and democratic potential

The role of partnerships within the library was also a common theme that emerged from the interviews. At a general level, the use and implementation of partnerships appears to strike a balance between economic realities and to become more relevant to users. It is clear from the council official that economic imperatives are the main reason behind the move to partnerships;

“so the sense in which both the cultural sector and the library sector and the museum sector [sic] have to work with whatever partners they can find who share sufficiently their aims and objectives or mission to be able to make it a workable partnerships and I also think who can bring money to the table or who can facilitate money”.
(Chris, council official, 2016).

This is understandable as the local authority will be more focussed on budget considerations due to recent budget restrictions and the fact that they are the main funders of the library service in the city. However, the range of partnerships and collaboration present within the library is varied and there is a huge cultural element to this and the Arts Council England (ACE) is one of the main funding bodies for such collaborative projects;

“What they do is fund partnerships that help the arts so we have a few times submitted specific projects that can be financed by Arts Council money”

“They have their own guidelines on it. For example, they don’t fund equipment and there has to be an artistic element which is when we are putting in the creative writing [bid] we have to think really hard about who we are working with, who we are involving, what the audience is and what the artistic element is”

(selection of interview responses with library s, 2016).

While this highlights the presence of culture within the partnership, it also implies that culture in some respects appears to be forced upon the library through the institutional networks the library is currently involved with. From the perspective of democratic opportunity, the potential for users to have meaningful input regarding the activities on offer appears minimal as the ACE appear to set the agenda and the library appears to adhere to these guidelines. This is reinforced by Chris at the council;

“I think I have a particular view on the Arts Council. I think the Arts Council has not adapted well to being responsible for libraries. I think they certainly when they took them over they gave the impression that they just thought libraries was another set of venues for them to do culture in or for people to do culture in. I don’t think that they thought hard enough, I still don’t think that they have thought hard enough about the cultural values of libraries and libraries’ services” (Chris, council official, 2016).

Such an argument reinforces the view of some of the generalisation of culture or the “just add culture and stir” approach to cultural policy more generally (Miles 2015). Indeed such an interpretation again questions the input for service users to shape the delivery on offer. Cultural activities centred on co-production may serve well from an endogenous economic development potential, however, if users have little potential to influence such services, then the buy-in and ownership of such activities may be limited as the programmes may only attract those interested in the activity on offer. This reduces the number of potential producers of such art and the transformational policy as a result.

This has further implications from a democratic perspective. This is problematic for a service such as the library. As libraries are seen to be spaces for deliberation to take place (Pateman and Williment 2013), the role of libraries is undermined if users cannot effectively shape the library offer. This is also an issue throughout the library service as many librarians stated that while users can leave feedback on issues affecting them, this appeared limited to very marginal issues;

“there wasn’t any flexibility in that you could increase their opening hours but they have swapped a couple of days around like why couldn’t we open on this day instead of that day. So there was a bit of flexibility there and they have been very honest. We have got this huge amount of money to save; if you have got any other ideas but really there wasn’t much wiggle room really” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

Such practises, while beyond the control of librarians themselves, reduce the potential of effective change to meet the needs and demands of users. Just like the ACE partnership, this illuminates the institutional networks and “power” of funding bodies and local and national government agencies to ultimately determine the direction of the library which is supported by the council official;

“I think the council can pretty much define what goes on in there... and I think the local authority has a lot of say in what is provided and what is not” (Chris, council official, 2016).

These arguments highlight the unequal power differentials of both partnerships and decision-making as bodies such as the ACE and the local authority ultimately decide (through both funding guidelines and statutory service) the library offer with the library users a minority voice in such discussions. This is important as many interview responses recognised the unique attributes of the library;

“the City library is the most democratic because you can use it without having to bring any evidence of who you are”

“we are a safe space for people with mental health problems or learning difficulties and that is a designated safe place so there will be certain places around the city where people can come if they are not sure where they are at or if they need a little bit of help we are a designated place”

“You know we are target driven to some extent but the whole idea of having a library is to have a safe public space”

(selection of interviewee responses with library managers, 2016).

While such quotes reaffirm the library as a unique space (Goulding 2006, Goulding 2009), they disregard the fact that libraries have limited manoeuvre to meet the needs of the local community as evidenced by the council official’s comments (above). While the City Library may well offer a sanctuary to members of the community, quite how users (especially from deprived areas) can have a meaningful input to take true ownership of such a service and adopt a Lefebvrian “right to the city” through the library (see Buschmann 2013) is questionable. One interviewee went as far as to link a lack of engagement with wider social exclusion issues;

“it [social exclusion] is a huge concern because social exclusion leads to all sorts doesn’t it, anti-social behaviour you know it can be a real problem. People don’t feel engaged with a society if they can’t access support” (Michael, business manager, 2016).

Clearly social issues within communities such as a lack of social capital can and do affect behaviours and libraries in many respects are attuned to address these issues (Evjen 2015).

However, as Michael demonstrates, if engagement, access to services and consultation are absent then not only do societal issues become further entrenched but the “social glue” that exists within the library between communities can disintegrate which would leave communities and citizens in a worse position.

However, beyond requesting books and associated material, there is little evidence that library users can shape the activities carried out in the library. Furthermore, there appears to be a very insular environment whereby library staff submits a bid which adheres to ACE funding requirements and which is restrictive in itself but there appears little collaboration with end-users. If interactive cultural activities are to have any meaningful effect on the potential for cultural co-production to attract users and to develop skills useful for the local economy, users must want to learn these skills to ensure such activities have maximum impact. While not disregarding the potential for informal conversations to take place which may impact the nature of such bids, there appeared no evidence in the interviews that suggested partnerships involved substantial user involvement. If anything the bids process come across as a checkbox exercise and highlights the rather distanced yet powerful position the ACE in particular has regarding library project funding and can be evidenced from both librarians and the council official in their responses above.

While the lack of overall meaningful consultation may be the case at a general level, differences do exist between different areas of Newcastle. While this research is based on the City Library, a number of libraries within the city were redeveloped at the same time as the City Library including Gosforth library to the north of Newcastle (see maps 1 and 2). Furthermore, the following section reinforces the geographical effects on social capital, resilient communities and the impacts on user consultation which are of relevance to this research. Additionally, as users of the City Library come from all areas of Newcastle the following is relevant to the purposes of this research. As Gosforth is considered to be a very affluent area of the city, the role of the local community in decision making of the library service in Gosforth was substantial;

“Particularly at Gosforth they were very vocal there and I think at the time they thought they would just duplicate what this offer is what they had done elsewhere and really it wasn’t actually going to be any better than what we already had so they were straight and said well this is not going to be any better so they were really vocal and it did change the plan” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016)

The importance of this is the disparity between affluent and poorer areas. Clearly, the residents of Gosforth were better able to mould the library offer to the needs of the users and bring about change. One wonders whether other wards would be able to bring about similar changes to meet their own needs and whether the effects of adapting the service similar to Gosforth had any knock-on effects in other areas, particularly poorer wards. Again this points to communities, drawing upon their own social networks and experiences which are more plentiful in affluent areas. This was also mentioned in the interviews regarding another affluent area, Jesmond to the north east of the city centre (see maps 1 and 2), where;

“they have got members of the community who have got all the various skills that they need so they have got an ex-head mistress in there, somebody who used to be a librarian, they have got the real wherefore to put in for funding to get other activities and within the building they are running lots of other events to make money for that building” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

From this research it is clear that less affluent communities would not be so resourceful with their library service and from the interviews conducted, there appeared to be little evidence of library use in poorer areas let alone input or ownership;

“They said oh they won’t move out of the estate because I was like Fenham library isn’t too far, there is Kenton and there is Blakelaw. They won’t even go there. You will have to come in” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

This raises a number of points. Firstly, if communities in poorer wards do not use local services; it is doubtful they will travel to the City Library and use their services. In this light, the effects of activities based on Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011) may have limited overall impact in its current form on offering a transformative potential to engender economic growth that is inclusive if only users from more affluent wards and visitors attend the City Library. This would also limit the potential for less affluent communities to use and benefit from the

services on offer which in turn limits the potential for a Lefebvrian right to the city (see Buschmann 2013) to be developed for all users.

Secondly, the evidence from Newcastle indicates a divergence between effective community consultation reinforcing the view that libraries are not open to all in spite of what librarians may feel (Pateman and Williment 2013). Furthermore, one wonders how often the City Library in particular is visited by individuals from less affluent wards and what they use the library for. Unfortunately such data at the library does not exist, but it is hard not to query whether the City Library is used by affluent locals and interested and transient visitors instead of excluded communities;

“leisure visitors may go there to try and get information about the rest of the city but I suspect that they probably don’t use its services in any particularly sophisticated way” (Chris, council official, 2016).

Despite what library managers may say, such processes reinforce the view that the library acts as a destination (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013) for the city serving as a signpost for visitors to construct a path through the city with the library serving as a hub in such construction of the city narrative. Nonetheless, it also gives credence to the argument that the library is an anchor institution for the city (ICIC 2011) with the partnerships described above reinforcing this trajectory. This is also reinforced by many interviewees who mentioned the closure of other services and the co-location of such services within the library. While such partnerships may serve economic need premised on economies of scale and budget cuts, unfortunately they may also lead to compromises with the library service. Even the council official felt this was a concern;

“The other thing of course is that certainly in Newcastle, the libraries have what we used to call customer services functions have been put together so I suspect that there has been a dilution of library services and they have become much more generic. So in a sense I think libraries as libraries are less distinctive than what they once were” (Chris, council official, 2016).

Here we have the ironic situation whereby the design of the library building over time at least has become a destination and a flagship in its own right but while recent partnerships

and co-location of other services in the library has made it attractive to more people, the distinctiveness of the library service itself has been reduced which inevitably impacts on the local library users. In many respects this leads to the destination element of the library being the major focus as has been acknowledged by library staff;

“the Great North museum and their library and so there is a group where we meet every quarter. I think it is just so we know what they are doing I mean that is how as I say we promote and we sometimes have their pop-up banners in and they will offer us a tour round so that we can say oh did you know they have got this up at the library and the museum so it is very much that we can promote what they are about” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

This risks positioning the library as a way of increasing footfall at other (mainly cultural) institutions in the city in the similar way a traditional tourist information centre would operate. The library also would be seen to be promoting a tourist trail based on consumption and spectacle (Featherstone 1991) as opposed to alternative visions or cultures within the city. This would indicate that the library is merely a “signposting” service to other events instead of the library events. This also risks generating accusations of institutional “capture” by the traditional cultural sector instead of helping to transform existing cultural policy along more socially inclusive lines. Furthermore, from this it can be argued that unless partnerships are carefully planned or are enacted for reasons more than just economic necessity they can risk compromising the main purpose of the building – offering a library service (beyond merely a book lending service) for the use and benefit of the local community and visitors alike.

While some partnerships (connections and new ways of working together with different institutions and organisations within a city or region) may well have an economic necessity attached to them which has implications for democratic possibilities, other partnerships do form a critical element of some of the advantages the City library offers regarding its economic development potential. For example, the BIPC partnership between the City Library with the British Library (offering help with entrepreneurs and local business (above)) clearly forms a crucial element of the attraction to firms and businesses to work

with the library to help businesses grow. Partnerships are becoming increasingly important. Not just the economic necessity of running an efficient service but by developing links with various organisations within the city to ensure a full package of services can be offered to users and business. Not only is the signs of the City Library becoming an emerging anchor institution for the city but it simultaneously makes the library more attractive to more people and sectors of the city and wider region. Moreover, many partnerships appear to add to the services the library offers;

“We work with so many partners and to be honest again that is what helps to give the service that work we give [sic]”

“I think working in partnership helps because other partners can bring along what we can’t offer”. (selection of interview responses with library managers, 2016).

At the time when the empirical research was taking place, Google had taken over space in the atrium of the Central Library;

“I don’t know if you noticed on level one we have now got Google Garage which is a pop up space. They have looked at different sites in Newcastle but they are in different places across the country so they are in Manchester library so that is here until July and they are giving obviously digital advice and advice for businesses.” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

Clearly such partnerships help generate funding for the library to continue to offer services but it acts as an additional service for the business community as well as entrepreneurs. In many respects such partnerships are also evidence for Sacco’s Culture 3.0 (2011) model as through the Google Garage, businesses and individuals are able to get help and advice (as well as to network and generate contacts) from experts covering digital and media communications which form a crucial part of the economy. The potential of such partnerships to the library is described by Chris the council official; “the library just in economic terms because it has a social role [sic] as well it has a tendency not to charge the same sorts of rates as more commercially driven organisations” (Chris, council official, 2016). The library through such partnerships not only increases its relevance to businesses and users more generally but increases its credentials as a key tool for economic

development across the city. As digital and creative services fall within culture, it also forms a key component of cultural policy which can be socially inclusive to the needs of local businesses or SMEs – those firms which are more embedded to their local area than larger national or international firms (Pike et al. 2010) and can contribute towards local economic growth.

Furthermore, as many partnerships relate to culture from both their funding streams and activities, this helps to legitimise the City library as a place to “perform” culture.

Performativity here refers to how actions by patrons allow their own interpretations and views to be enacted within the library space whether it is through creating a story, artwork or enactment. For a place to adhere to the principles of culture-led regeneration it must act out or “perform” these activities (Jochumsen et al. 2015) in practise. Not only does the library signpost visitors and tourists to other services, but through both the offer and the quality of the services of the library, these must be spaces where culture can be performed interactively as well as maintaining the quality of these services which is reinforced by the council official;

“So I don’t think that on their own either the cultural sector or the library sector or any other sector is enough to make Newcastle a destination. I think it has to be a combination and a balanced combination... but I suspect that as important are the quality of the services that are provided in each of those buildings.” (Chris, council official, 2016).

While such partnerships have become increasingly common within the City library, they have allowed culture not only to emerge but to become established as a key practice which is premised on Culture 3.0 (Sacco 2011) associated with co-production of art and creative material. As argued earlier in this section, partnerships and collaborations must be managed carefully especially when they are based purely on economic realities. However if partnerships such as the BIPC partnership (which was initiated by the library) offer advantages which can really help transform the potential for the library to act as a socially inclusive endogenous economic development tool and one whose origins and work increasingly involves culture and creativity. The potential of the City library to have a

transformative effect on the local economy and society may well be realised and the foundation for a Lefebvrian “right to the city” (also see Harvey 2011) may well be achieved.

8.3.1 Summary

This section has analysed the increasing role and importance of partnerships and collaboration as evidenced both in the literature and its impact on issues of relevance to this research. While partnerships are becoming increasingly important within the City Library (as they are in many areas of public life) they bring particular challenges and opportunities for the library. Some partnerships have come about because of economic necessity and cutbacks elsewhere. While this model may preserve the service in question, there is a risk that they may impact the library service for users. The concentration of many services may well transform the library into acting as a stopping off point for visitors which reinforce the library acting as a destination (Skot-Hansen et al. 2013). In such cases the opportunity to construct a right to the city (Buschmann 2013) through the library may well be compromised. Additionally, some of the institutional networks between funders, particularly the ACE in this case study appear to limit the consultation with library users. This is important because for any transformative potential to take place, end users must feel a sense of ownership to engage and shape such activities and events to their needs. This is the “right to the city” in action. For such activities to become relevant to end users some element of consultation with end users must take place. From the interviews, there appeared little evidence of such input.

There are also advantages associated with partnerships. For example, the development of the BIPC at the City Library was developed organically between the City Library and the British Library and it appears to have benefitted businesses in particular and it can be argued that such partnerships reinforce the library as a key economic development tool for the city and region. Moreover, the fact that Google has chosen to locate in the library and in the city of Newcastle as opposed to other locations demonstrates the influence the City Library is

having. It also demonstrates a move to digital and creative services which is not only part of culture and the new economy but allows local businesses involved in the cultural and creative sphere to expand, meeting the needs of the local economy. From a social perspective, it is not hard to imagine the wider impact such partnerships may have if key funders such as the ACE could link up with firms such as Google when operating in the library. Through meaningful end user consultation with library staff and users, they could well generate crossovers and transfer of tacit knowledge between businesses and end users and would reinforce the City Library as a true anchor institution in the city (Tewdwr-Jones et al. 2015). This in turn could ensure socially inclusive economic development which not only builds on existing work which sees libraries serving economic need (Dudley 2012) but recognises that the library can offer a right to the city which does not compromise the needs of the market but may actually help local communities to become more attuned with local economic need and circumstance.

Of course, as more services are cut and library funding reduced, it is essential that policy makers appreciate such a role within the library so that libraries are not only funded adequately but that they are recognised as being a core nexus in the local economic infrastructure of both the city and the region. This also extends to the hard to reach groups. Rather than seeing the City Library as the central hub it may well be important to expand such partnerships to community libraries especially in poorer wards. If local communities can see such work occurring in their local library it may well link them relationally with the work and effort taking place in the City Library.

8.4 Anomalies and additional points

This section follows on from the previous section but covers perspectives and issues highlighted by one or two participants but were not encountered widely within the research. While such issues may not have been widely reported in the research that does not mean that such issues are inconsequential - they are still important issues to be discussed.

8.4.1 Civic identity and community disharmony: a new right to the city?

One particular issue concerns issues associated with civic pride from the activities occurring within the library;

“From a cultural point of view obviously the bit I was talking there about the collections that we have here is says it is looking forward to Newcastle’s past. Obviously that is a sense of civic pride and we’ve seen that from when we’ve had exhibitions or some of the events that we have.” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

From this account it is clear to see how heritage and cultural artefacts from Newcastle’s past influence and reinforce local identity which also has implications for empowerment and community formation (Evjen 2015). It is not hard to understand why this was not mentioned by a few other interviewees apart from the manager of the heritage department because the Heritage department clearly focuses on such issues whereas the BIPC centre will focus less on such issues. Moreover the development of the civic sphere was developed in many ways by another staff member including the use of the library by MPs for their surgeries with constituents as well as by other staff linking the library to wider civic issues;

“We had the young girl from Pakistan – Malala. Oh yeah she has been here. What happened was we were asked to be the venue because she was meeting another young lady who has just come to the UK who was doing a lot of work and who was from Syria. It was in the press and everything and it was excellent and it really raised the profile” (Susan, head of library, 2016).

Here we can see how civic pride covers many different issues and can be developed in many ways. As shown in the above examples, the civic sphere can be the tangible elements of liberal democracy to connect and strike a chord with constituents as well as serving as a forum for consultation with people. This also has connections with wider city consultation, highlighting the multi-faceted approach libraries have regarding their role in society (Coatham et al. 2010). However, as Susan describes above, some features of the civic sphere can also take the form of wider one off events which may well reinforce the global outlook of the city of Newcastle to a wider global audience. Such profiling not only makes the library more relevant to the city and the narrative it wishes to project but it also legitimises

the library space as a true community space. This allows some of the issues described in the literature review such as communities being associated with more than one identity to be explored, practised and performed to show and to reinforce what such an identity means (Dwyer 1995, England 2011).

Moreover, relationally speaking such perspectives support the view that space can be, and indeed is related with networks and associations that cut across space but can become realised in fixed places (Massey 2005). Indeed it can be argued that such events in that moment in time show how the library space in a bustling city centre becomes relationally connected with issues in Syria and Pakistan regarding education for children and refugees and the implications for the movements of people across space.

Of course there was also evidence of community disagreement regarding the activities taking place within the library;

“you have to balance everything I mean some of the libraries you know not everybody will think oh my goodness there is a story time and I am trying to do something here and you have got little kids singing and the parents saying well this is a community facility and obviously when the schools are out it is going to be a much more lively place so you offer and zone your library and you’ve got to try and cater for everyone”

“you’ve got a space for everything but there are sometimes if we had singing in the atrium or we had some music, that all travels up the building but that might be just for half an hour. That is something that is really good so you know you have got to constantly sometimes because some people [sic] may not necessarily like that but then that is not a reason to do something because then we are a library for everybody and you have got to cater for everybody that comes in” (Helen, heritage manager, 2016).

This is a clear example of how community disagreement can become a prominent issue in a library, particularly when diverse activities are taking place within the building. In this regard librarians become negotiators between contradicting voices over where when and for how long certain activities can take place. Such responsibilities transfer a lot of responsibility to the librarians as they rationalise queries and disagreements to ensure a library for everyone and a meeting space for all (Aubo et al. 2010). This shows in many

respects how libraries encounter many of the same concerns associated with other arenas such as community consultation – balancing the needs of all – which invariably involves winners and losers (Hassan et al. 2011).

In many respects it is naïve to assume that libraries can be open and inclusive to everyone as communities themselves are riddled with power inequalities, incompatible demands and diverging needs. Just because a library is viewed uniquely by the public and is seen to be a unique public space (Goulding 2006, Dudley 2012) it does not mean that community disagreement (even over negligible issues such as activities going on within the library) can be overcome there. If anything events, such as a visit by Malala Yousafzai, serves to unite communities over common areas of concern such as wars, terror, lack of education, gender issues and refugees. If we are to see libraries adopt a right to the city for users then these events are ideal means to achieve such goals. Through attending events such as MPs surgeries (which also take place in the City Library) one can air grievances or issues to realise change and meetings over issues like those associated with Syria reinforce views and concerns on global and even local issues forging common ground to unite communities.

8.4.2 Going forwards or backwards: the future

Perhaps the most pressing issue discussed within the interviews was that of the future library. While many staff focussed more on the day to day issues of the library. One participant was quite clear about the future;

“This is only my view and this is one of the reasons I want to get out while I can to be honest because I have loved the job and I do believe the service is going to deteriorate through no fault of the staff who work in it, who manage it. I just think the budgets are just going to be lowered and lowered so much... but I seriously think that not too far in the future there will probably only be City Library and I think it's extremely sad” (Susan, head of library, 2016).

While Susan is referring to other local libraries closing it clearly has implications for the City Library and its role in the city and community. For example, Helen (above) referred to how some communities in poorer wards will not venture to the City Library until they have

experienced their local library. If closures were to happen then the link between the City Library and local communities would be lost both tangibly and relationally. How can upskilling through active cultural production aim to empower local (particular poorer) communities if the link to the local sphere is lost through neoliberalism and dilution of the library service? From the interviews it became clear to the researcher that the City Library relies on community libraries to effectively promote the service and attract local residents to the library. How can a right to the city be constructed if poorer communities feel excluded and do not attend the library? From this it appears the future of the library service may pose a threat to some of the issues and avenues discussed in this research. Yet the major issue at the centre of all this is funding. As Susan herself acknowledged; “we realise like everything that cuts have to be made and we are a low priority well we are not a priority at the end of the day” (Susan, head of library, 2016).

Surely if both cultural policy and libraries were viewed as key anchor institutions then funding at a national and regional level could increase or the library would be able to tap other areas of funding linked to ideas such as the “Northern Powerhouse” and other economic development streams. Not only would this help keep disaffected communities interested in the library service, but the transformational potential of the library could be realised and supported. Indeed the literature firmly places libraries as economic development partners (Dudley 2012), but this research has gone much further to show how cultural policy when viewed through Sacco’s (2011) model can lead to socially inclusive economic development, allowing library users to produce art and develop a market through that art no matter how diverse that art may be. As shown by the BIPC and Michael’s account, the library has the tools in place to support businesses and users to allow products to reach the market. Such potential risks being neglected if policies and national agencies do not acknowledge this key role the library can play in the community – a service that matches the needs of the market while acknowledging and promoting the requirements and needs of

society. A more inclusive society and economy could well be a reality for Newcastle in the future.

8.5 Conclusion

This analysis has revealed a number of issues relating to culture, communities and libraries more generally.

Firstly, while not acknowledged by the council official directly, it is clear that the City Library has followed and adopted many elements associated with Sacco's (2011) Culture 2.0 model. The fact that it serves as a flagship and a beacon for that part of the city as shown in the interview accounts with library managers reinforcing the grand spectacle culture traditionally associated with cultural regeneration in particular (Miles 2015).

Secondly, while Culture 2.0 is clear to see, there is also evidence of Culture 3.0 taking place within the library. The role for culture is clearly present as much of this activity is funded by the Arts Council and clearly focuses on the production side of art. Perhaps what is most interesting is that both forms of culture can take place almost simultaneously with the library case study displaying a spectacle form of culture outside with the more transformational, interactive culture inside. Clearly this shows that even those buildings which have adopted Culture 2.0 (Sacco 2011) elements can be "refigured" to meet the needs of production and interactive art creation. Indeed one could argue that both forms of culture may well serve the same purpose – Culture 2.0 serves as a destination, attracting people to visit while Culture 3.0 is more transformational, serving the needs of local communities through learning new skills such as art production with the potential to serve a market niche. Clearly the transition between Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 is much more nuanced than perhaps initially realised and this could benefit how we see existing cultural policy and culture-led regeneration in particular.

Thirdly, there is potential for the City Library to act as a Lefebvrian right to the city (see also Buschmann 2013) which can be realised through partnerships and collaboration;

however currently this is not fully realised in the City Library. While it is clear that many partnerships may well serve economic considerations and may compromise the library service, the partnerships with organisations such as the BIPC (British Library) and the Arts Council have the potential to meet local user needs. However, they currently lack any input from users, constraining this potential which serves to promote the needs and requirements of funders themselves over that of users and communities. This may well be the reason for the council official's comments about the Arts Council funding and libraries in this regard. For activities such as cultural production to be transformative, users must feel a sense of ownership over such services. This is currently lacking as there appears little appetite for effective consultation on such issues. This also extends to the running of the library. Beyond stock selection, the capacity of user consultation appears limited as reinforced by the council official and the decision making of the council. Clearly such issues remain key stumbling blocks for an inclusive right to the city to be constructed through the library.

Fourthly, the role of the civic sphere and civic pride in particular came across strongly in the interviews. This is not surprising due to the library's unique and multi-faceted role in society (Dudley 2012). This came across in both democratic processes such as MP surgeries and meeting campaigners helping to unite people over common causes that are universal and have an effect on all of us. In many respects this can be seen as one avenue to construct a right to the city focussing on issues that unite communities. That said there are clear limits on how libraries can help overcome entrenched differences among communities but this research has shown how multiple and diverse identities can be performed and realised which can help give people (especially from ethnic or excluded backgrounds) a greater understanding of their own identities which can be empowering in itself.

Fifthly, on a general note, the key denominator which influences whether the library can act both as a strong anchor institution and as an avenue to construct a right to the city depends on whether agencies, funders and other partners recognise that libraries have the potential to act in such ways and financially support libraries in such endeavours. Indeed, while the

funding landscape of libraries (as are all public services) is undergoing major funding restraints, it is only through appropriate funding and support can these ideas and transformations be realised within the City Library. While there is evidence of Culture 3.0 is taking place, it can only reach a wider audience if libraries are supported in such endeavours. Additionally, funders themselves must make funding more transparent and open to ensure users can shape the bid and subsequent offer. This will help ensure the transformational potential and benefits are realised and that the associated benefits “trickle down” to the wider community.

Finally, I wish to comment more on Sacco’s models of culture. As described earlier, it is important to appreciate the limitations of such a model and while at first glance it may appear that such a model of culture has its limits as an approach, it does offer a good framework to view co-production of culture if viewed as flexibly as possible, realising that one can move between Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 rather easily and sometimes can be identified together and may even over time convert from Culture 2.0 to Culture 3.0. Indeed over time and in different situations the City library (and other public libraries) may shift between various models of culture dependent on financing, political pressure and priorities. Just because a venue is adhering more to Culture 2.0 today does not mean that in a few years’ time it may not have progressed to Culture 3.0 and vice versa. Consequently, this research must be viewed as a snapshot whereby everything is in constant flux and negotiation. Not only does such an approach to Sacco’s model render it applicable to many contexts but such a reflexive approach allows for change and difference (i.e. that culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 can work simultaneously rather than being either one or another) to be accounted for. Such an approach also allows for all the actors and the effects of their decision making to be accounted for which can help (as in this research) identify current issues or obstacles to realising a more effective and inclusive Culture 3.0 model, whilst recognising that further change and enhancement is always possible.

Chapter 9: Discussion and Concluding Remarks

9.1 Introduction

The primary contribution to wider knowledge of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, that it has demonstrated how culture is very much a critical element for public libraries and secondly, it validates and advances this role of culture by arguing that it can be democratic and transformative compared to other forms or instances of culture. Instead of highlighting best practise, this research has shown how culture is much more nuanced and perhaps less visible than realised in the literature review, especially compared to more traditional culture-led regeneration projects. This has been demonstrated in the context of a public library in a city centre within a deprived region of England to show how culture can be enacted to be democratically and economically transformative. Moreover, this thesis contributes methodologically as well as empirically. Methodologically, this research has adopted a very innovative and geographically orientated research method in the form of rhythm analysis (Lefebvre 2004) which as far as the researcher is aware has not previously been used in research involving culture-led regeneration. In many ways rhythm analysis explores many of the arguments put forward against culture-led regeneration being co-opted into wider neo-liberalism and urban place-making but also shows that the library, as a cultural institution, can initiate its own influences against such hegemonic tendencies. Consequently, this thesis, through its research design and methodology, offers a re-evaluation of existing practise involving research methods, departing from more conventional strategies to one less widely practised and perhaps considered left of field. This allows for richer and alternative perspectives to be considered which would be beneficial for advancing theory in many areas of research.

This chapter will explore further how this thesis makes a contribution to knowledge as well as to highlight further areas of research. This will be explored through a discussion of the implications and issues of this thesis including the aim of this research as well as how this

research responds to the key theories in the literature review. Firstly, I discuss the findings of this research and where applicable how these findings link back to the theories discussed in the existing literature. I consider the implications of this for contexts outside the focus of this research and how it can further our understanding and add to both theory and knowledge. This then leads onto a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this research before considering implications and future avenues for research in future including some emerging work I have completed as a result of this research on library partnerships.

9.2 Contributions of the research

While acknowledging the methodological limitations of this research, namely that it is a case study influenced by the particular settings and environments found in one locality, the contribution to knowledge of this paper is six fold. Firstly, the issue of power will be considered including how the public library sits within wider networks of such power. Consideration will also be given to how the public library can initiate its own resources to overcome unequal partnerships. Secondly, it is methodologically original as it involves the use of rhythm analysis (Lefebvre 2004) alongside more traditional interviews. Thirdly, this thesis critiques and advances the work of Sacco (2011) involving models or stages of culture. Fourthly, I will demonstrate how recent partnerships have had the effect of transforming the public library into that of an anchor institution and the consequences of this going forward. Finally, this section will reveal public libraries to be much more culturally important than initially realised in the existing literature.

Firstly, at a general level, this thesis showed that power cascades between the various layers of bureaucracy with the majority of that power focussed at the heart of central government. Especially where funding is concerned, the state and its funders can perhaps unsurprisingly dictate what and where receives funding and with what conditions attached. However, this thesis demonstrates (as will be developed below) that power is itself nuanced and can be negated (Murdoch 2006). Just because power and finance may reside at one tier of

administration does not mean that power is concentrated at the centre of national government. Far from it, power as demonstrated in this research allows partnerships and new institutional arrangements to form (say between the library and local or national businesses) which central government has little control over. This research demonstrated that while relationships between funder and institution can be unequal, such arrangements can force institutions such as the public library into alternative partnerships (i.e. work with the BIPC) that can still have a transformational effect which requires more tact and capabilities of individuals than of a system as a whole. As each context is unique, consequently the actors involved within this space also contribute to the outcomes within the City Library. As the rhythm analysis demonstrated whilst capitalist influences are clearly identifiable, this does mean that the library as a space has been compromised. In this case, the library has taken advantage of urban regeneration to engender a new building and practices which currently offer opportunities for democratic empowerment. It is up to policy makers to recognise the potential for libraries in a similar way that universities are valued as contributors to the local economy and culture. Power is indeed negotiable but this must lead to greater awareness of the potential the library offers. This finding should offer hope to other public institutions, which may be impacted due to continuing austerity measures, as an alternative way of delivering services that can help people in uncertain times whilst securing greater political legitimacy.

Secondly, in accepting the general principles of Sacco's (2011) model as a framework, within the public library context, Culture 2.0 is clear to see and there is also evidence of Culture 3.0 taking place within the City Library. The role for culture is clearly present as much of this activity is funded by the Arts Council and clearly focuses on the production side of art. This is most clear when the activities and services are considered, especially as many of these activities focus on participation and upskilling. When this is the case, public libraries are open to capture the needs, desires and experiences of participants which can lead to democratic opportunities being possible not only in the actual end product (i.e. the art

or literature being produced) but also in the way such activities are developed. Moreover, this research highlighted how both forms of culture can take place almost simultaneously with the library case study displaying a spectacle form of culture outside its walls with the more transformational, interactive culture taking place inside. At a basic level it can be argued that the core values of the public library remain but they are adapted to both the needs and the wider aesthetic of the city. From a radical political perspective, it can be argued that the City Library has taken advantage of capitalist redevelopment for its own gain. This demonstrates the library conforming to anti-establishment tendencies – adhering to state demands for iconic architecture and the message it portrays from the outside while offering alternative spaces inside. Clearly this also shows that even those buildings in other towns and cities which have adopted Culture 2.0 (Sacco 2011) elements can be “refigured” to meet the needs of production and interactive art creation. Indeed one could argue that both forms of culture may well serve the same purpose – Culture 2.0 serves as a destination, attracting people to visit while Culture 3.0 is more transformational, serving the needs of local communities through learning new skills such as art production with the potential to serve a market niche. Clearly the transition between Culture 2.0 and Culture 3.0 is much more nuanced than perhaps initially realised and this could benefit how we see existing cultural policy and culture-led regeneration in particular. Moreover, this research has demonstrated that the case can be made for a more deliberately nuanced form of cultural development that is more variegated, and more democratically and culturally authentic than those which are built upon capital projects and ‘iconic’ cultural statements.

Thirdly, I wish to comment more on Sacco’s models of culture. As described earlier, it is important to appreciate the limitations of such a model and while at first glance it may appear that such a model of culture has its limits as an approach to economic development and urban regeneration, especially as it can appear to be a one size fits all style of model. It does, however, offer a useful framework to view culture as practised and enacted within institutions if viewed as flexibly as possible, realising that one can slip between Culture 2.0

and Culture 3.0 rather easily and sometimes can be identified together and may even over time convert from Culture 2.0 to Culture 3.0. Indeed over time and in different situations the City library (and indeed other public libraries) may shift between various models of culture dependent on financing, political pressure and priorities.

Moreover, just because a venue is adhering more to Culture 2.0 today does not mean that it may progress or develop Culture 3.0 characteristics in the future. Of course, such practises can only be effective or transformative if useful and effective consultation takes place.

Therefore regular input from users is essential in ways which may contradict the ideas or wishes of funders themselves or even some library managers if Culture 3.0 is to make any meaningful impact on users' lives beyond the public library. Consequently, this research must be viewed as a snapshot whereby everything is in constant flux and negotiation. Not only does such an approach to Sacco's model render it applicable to many contexts but such a reflexive approach allows for change and difference to be accounted for. Nonetheless, Sacco's model does lack an awareness of wider institutional barriers. For example, it focuses primarily on the venue creating or distributing the art but such venues do not operate in a silo. It is therefore, pertinent for such a model to incorporate and account for other actors that are involved. I acknowledge that this may be challenging and may well be difficult to carry out in practise but such advancement would allow for a more inclusive Culture 3.0 model to emerge that takes account of the messy and complicated processes that constitute the real world.

Although this research was primarily concerned with culture within regeneration, democracy and participation, the thesis does offer points related to economic development or regional policy in the form of libraries acting as key nodes within cities and regions in the form of anchor institutions. This research has demonstrated that there is evidence for a Lefebvrian City Library (see Buschmann 2013) as being an anchor institution in the city of Newcastle. This also extends back to issues of democracy as this demonstrates that the public library can offer a right to the city for local citizens through being an anchor institution for the city.

The evidence overwhelmingly shows that the City Library has focussed on economic partnerships with other businesses and institutions in both the city and region. This is not necessarily negative as some very innovative partnerships with the British Library clearly offer significant benefits to the library as an anchor institution and shows ways other libraries can adopt similar partnerships in future and economic issues normally attract the attention of policymakers, ensuring the library's relevancy to regional economic development.

If public libraries are to develop into an anchor institution in the future then two issues must be considered. Firstly, inadequate funding of libraries risks losing key staff which in turn may dilute existing partnerships and may prevent new connections being forged. Due to the nature of public libraries, they are reliant on local authority funds (unlike other anchor institutions, such as universities). While at first glance this may be a disadvantage, it is up to public libraries to be innovative and to experiment working with partners that they may not usually work alongside. Whilst not disregarding the institutional and practical implications of new arrangements, such practices are necessary if public libraries are to become anchor institutions. Indeed it is through reaching out to these new partnerships that new ideas emerge that help further embed the institution to its locality reinforcing its importance in the process. Such an approach may also make public libraries more relevant to various tiers of government aiding their future development. As stated previously, the library space is there to be "claimed" by policy makers as instrumental to local economic and social development. Geographically, this thesis has shown the variegated ways the City Library is situated within a contemporary urban setting. Whilst the library incorporates many actors across various institutional settings it is these "policy ready" attributes which make not only this thesis but public libraries more generally valuable partners for economic development.

Fourthly, the temporary nature of some of the more innovative partnerships risks these partnerships ending at the end of the funding period. Whilst recognising that many partnerships can only form due to funding being available, it is important that the tacit

connections developed are not lost if funding is withdrawn. Indeed many public services are encouraged to be more entrepreneurial in nature (Harvey 1989) but this must extend further. Public libraries already boast contacts and connections with a variety of partners which must be constantly tapped into and developed. In many ways the next task is to develop partnerships that spread outside the city linking the local space with the global – this spatial element is very important. As more connections with distant partners (such as the British Library) emerge, new funding streams may well develop and this could well position the library as a key node in a more globalised interconnected network.

Indeed, the spatial spread of these partnerships is potentially infinite as current connections are very much local in nature. This will help embed and institutionalise the City Library as a key anchor institution for the city and potentially for the region. One way this could be achieved is by recognising and promoting itself as a cultural institution. Art galleries and music venues engage in wider networks for new commissions or artists to exhibit their work in order to remain relevant and to offer something new or different to audiences. If the library embraced itself as a cultural institution beyond the local area then culture could well be a way of further developing its interconnections. As this thesis has shown, culture can be a force for good and just as culture can be democratised and transformed by the activities taking place inside the library, it may well be culture that helps steer the City Library forward in a globalising and increasingly uncertain world. This can lead the library into partnerships that can cement the City Library as an embedded anchor institution – one that is globally and locally enmeshed through democratic, economic and perhaps most significantly cultural connections which can help serve as a right to the city for local people.

Fifthly, while developers and council officials have held community workshops regarding wider city regeneration, it remains to be seen how much of an influence the comments made by local people have impacted on such schemes. This is partly because as such consultation was held recently, it can take time for new plans to be drawn up but this would also benefit from research undertaken with these developers and could form avenues for further research.

Therefore, while consultation has taken place within the library, to say that local communities have had a say on the future use of their city would be ambitious.

Lastly, this research has clearly shown that culture plays a significant role within public libraries within urban areas. Not only are these recognised this way from the position of the government but this thesis has shown that culture within public libraries can take many forms as demonstrated by Skot-Hansen et al. (2013) including acting as an icon for a locality. In linking theory to practise, this research has demonstrated how culture can have democratic possibilities if it is viewed in a nuanced way which departs from traditional explanations of culture involving a new art gallery or museum (Miles 2015). From this it can be argued that if policymakers recognise that culture is variegated and multi-faceted, culture has the potential to be much more inclusive and democratic if the marginal or alternative cultures discussed as far back as Williams (1981) are enacted upon in practise. If this were to be expanded to other urban institutions such as museums then a Lefebvrian right to the city (see Buschmann 2013) that incorporates culture could well become a practical ideal for both policymaking and wider society.

Put simply, this thesis demonstrates that in an era of funding restraints, increasing neo-liberalism regarding regeneration and persistent social inequalities within society, public libraries, through a cultural lens, are still important to both cities and communities. Libraries play a different role to many city institutions offering new channels of democracy whilst still adhering to practical demands regarding funding - essentially serving as a Greek polis in a modern form. Moreover, the public library from this perspective offers a conduit to Benjamin's take on the city through his arcade's project - as a façade. While the public library maybe a space of performance and surveillance, its activities and partnerships transgresses such boundaries and can offer spaces of emancipation and democratic opportunity in ways other institutions cannot. Therefore, while the City Library is influenced by the wider city rhythm, it is also incorporated within and can introduce new rhythms into the city especially when the interior of the library is analysed. If politicians are committed to

social justice then cities need public libraries in their modern cultural form just as much as communities rely on them in their day to day lives.

Finally I wish to make a brief comment on the implication of this research for the role of public libraries within cities and communities. This research has demonstrated how the role and expectations of public libraries has changed. One could term the arguments made above as a transition to a new “New Public Library” as the activities, services and how the library space is used and viewed by funders and officials has developed from that of a traditional lending service to that where culture plays an increasingly influential role. Crucially, the “purist” model of the library being completely antithetical to the market has been disregarded. This research has demonstrated that some elements of capitalism (i.e. design of the library) may complement wider democratic ideals within the library itself. As this thesis has demonstrated, the new public library may well be a complex space but it is through this complexity that dynamic spaces of engagement through culture emerge which can help challenge existing socio-economic issues.

9.3 Strengths and limitations of the study

The above account indicates that the main contribution of this thesis is how it developed the arguments around the role of culture within regeneration and society. In particular, this research demonstrates how culture can be viewed as being democratic, transformational and variegated when viewed within urban regeneration. Moreover, the methodological and research design elements contribute to how we view research in two ways. Firstly this research can be contextualised in both time and space so that any outcomes of this research are necessarily seen as being in flux and can change in the future. Moreover, the use of Rhythmanalysis in this research shows how the use of innovative and “alternative” methods can yield interesting nuanced results. This may also generate interesting accounts that may have been neglected otherwise. Furthermore, by triangulating this with other methods, such

as interviewing, helps increase the validity of the results to aid theory advancement accordingly.

Nonetheless, there are limitations to the methods I have employed. For example, while innovative, the use of rhythmanalysis as a method may lead to questions over reliability as the results are often the researcher's own interpretations with their own bias and prejudices. Whilst I cannot overcome these entirely, I did ensure that when I carried out the rhythmanalysis I was open minded and recorded all that I saw and heard. I visited the library three times a week for a month, day and night and in different weather conditions to ensure my research was not impacted by singular events. Furthermore, as discussed above, I combined the rhythmanalysis with other methods including interviewing and documentary analysis to ensure academic rigour. Moreover, I must also note that the research design requires the use of methods which account for an analysis of the spatial circumstances and positioning of the library. To the researcher's mind rhythmanalysis allows for this condition to be met. It is also the case that many methods of research necessarily involve subjective interpretation and I felt that rhythmanalysis offered a unique and enriching addition to the thesis.

The use of a case study may also be seen by some as a limitation. While it is true that generalisations cannot be made from such research, the researcher contends that while the context of this research (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) is site specific, many of the recommendations may well have relevance to other localities and situations particularly through the analysis and application of theory. By adopting a case study approach I was able to achieve depth over breadth which allowed me to uncover important considerations and conclusions as a result of this methodological approach. Due to practical constraints over time I could have included more case studies but this would still suffer the same issues of achieving an appropriate breadth to my research. Nonetheless, I feel the chosen research methods and design allowed me to address the research aim and questions effectively.

A key strength lies in the description of the processes and issues involved in analysing the role of culture within a public library. By focussing on depth, the thesis has demonstrated how culture manifests and unfolds in various ways within the public library. This has been possible by a triangulation method but particularly through the semi-structured interviews with library staff by highlighting how opportunities presented themselves and how activities are enacted and take place through the library. As already stated above for some this is a disadvantage as these results cannot be totally generalised to other localities but what it does show is the processes and conditions that arose for culture to become an influential development within the City Library in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In this way, another contribution of the research to wider knowledge is by illustrating that these dynamics can have unknown and far reaching consequences that only a case study approach can demonstrate.

9.4 Further research

9.4.1 Future Research – Library as an anchor institution

One area that could be explored further as a result of this research is the library as an anchor institution. To this end, as part of this research, I have done some exploratory work on this topic. This work emerged from additional discussions with library staff and my supervisor. While the work below does not address the research questions directly, the results are nonetheless interesting and I felt this work would be of most relevance in this section.



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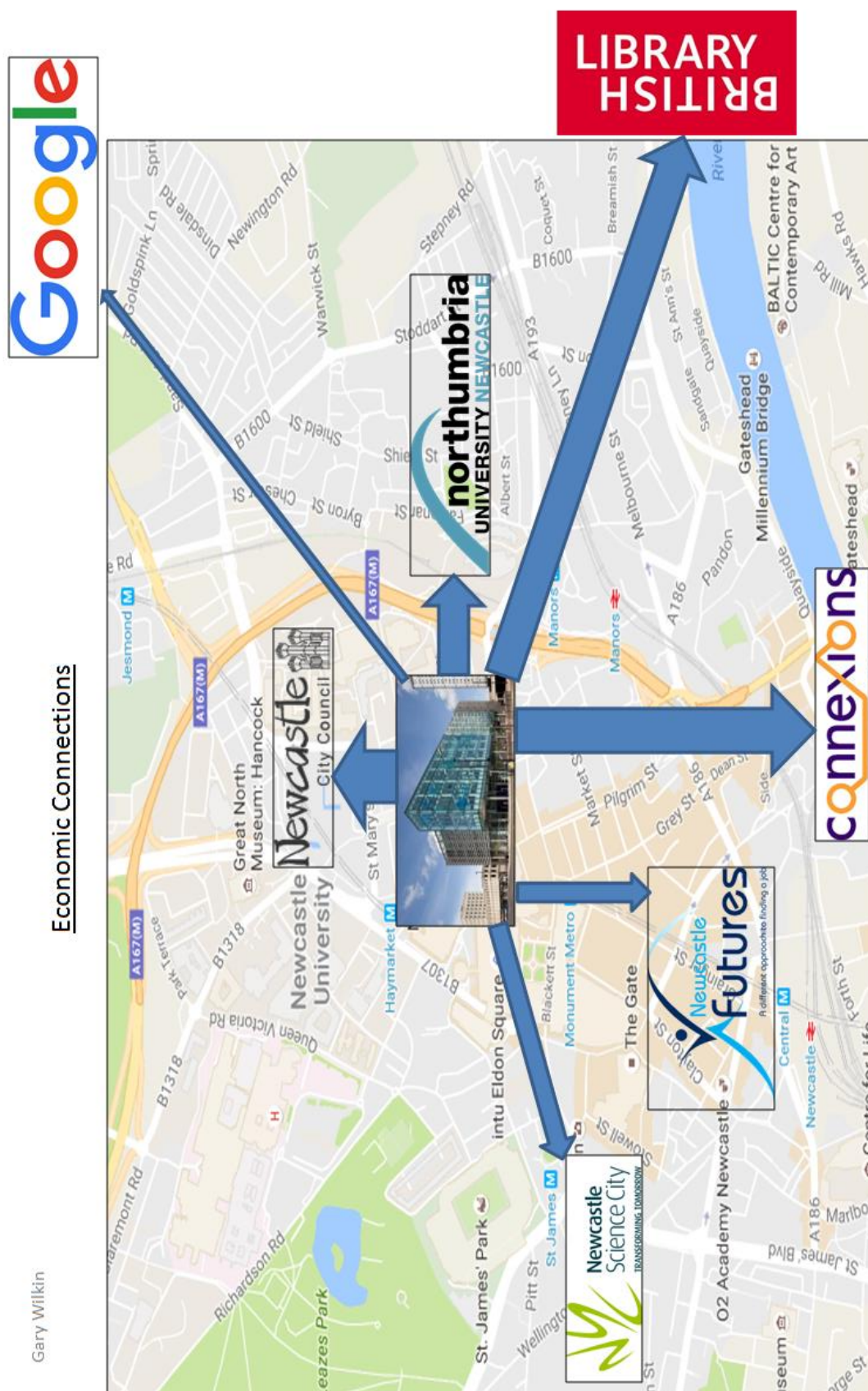


Figure 18: Economic Connections

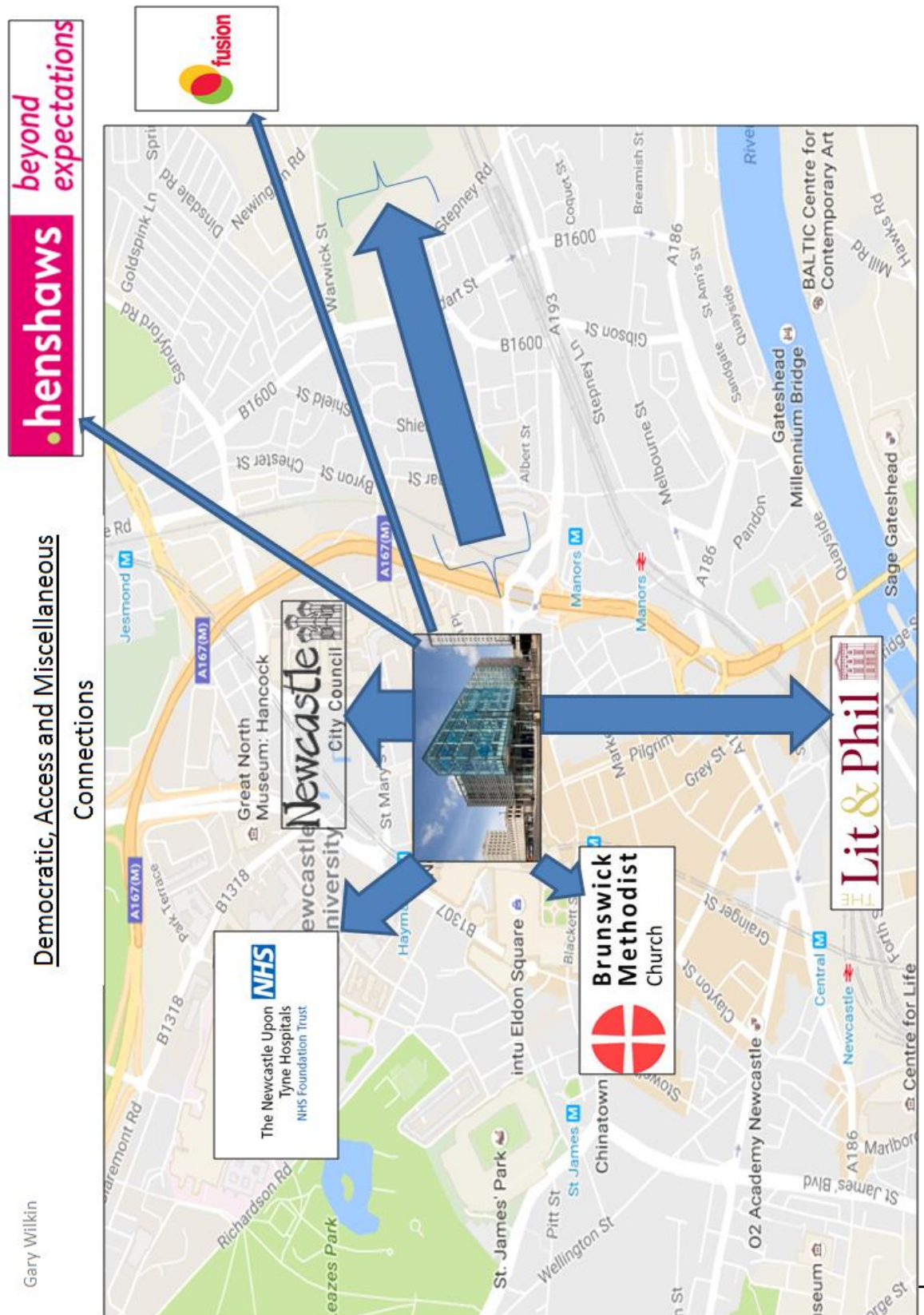


Figure 19: Democratic, Access and Miscellaneous Connections

9.4.2 Background

From the empirical work on the library, it became clear that one major theme emerged from the analysed data which was that the library was being viewed as an anchor institution (Goddard et al. 2014, UKCES 2015) through the partnerships the library was involved with. In order to develop this further, I have geographically mapped the partnerships that were discussed in the interviews (see above) to serve as a foundation for future research. While I acknowledge that due to the nature of the library as a public institution there will be many connections, I have focussed on the partnerships mentioned in the interviews as these appeared to be the most important partnerships and ones which were taking place currently rather than connections from previous years. I have then separated the partnerships focussing on economic, cultural, and democratic and miscellaneous connections which have resulted in three separate maps (see above). I geographically plotted the logos of the organisations mentioned onto a map of Newcastle City Centre based on their location. For those organisations based outside the city centre, these were located outside of the map. From the interview data I then proceeded to assess the strength of the partnerships (indicated by the width (not the length) of the blue arrows. For some connections this necessitated further discussion with relevant library staff members to assess the relationship of some partnerships while others were discussed in detail in the original interview. The following sections will discuss these partnerships and connections in more detail map by map to assess the partnerships within the City Library currently before highlighting opportunities for further integration of existing partnerships to see how the model of the City Library as an anchor institution (UKCES 2015) can be developed further in the future. For reference, the maps can be found at the beginning of this chapter. This analysis begins by assessing the cultural connections associated with the City Library.

9.4.3 Cultural Connections

Overall the cultural connections are dominated by some intensive partnerships with some significant institutions. Connections with the Arts Council is most pronounced as on many occasions library staff mentioned the fact that a lot of cultural projects were facilitated by the Arts Council through funding bids. Again, strong connections exist with local cultural players such as the Great North Museum and the Theatre Royal. In many cases these connections actually reinforce the library acting as a signpost as the partnership with the Great North Museum involves regular meetings and tours so that library staff can point tourists and visitors to these institutions to increase footfall and perform a role associated more with a tourist information bureau. Such connections could easily be developed in a similar way to those connections with Durham Cathedral and the Civic Centre where treasures are archived and put on display. This was acknowledged by Helen at the library;

“like I say celebrating 800 years of the mayoralty so we are going to showcase things that are normally in the silver gallery in the civic centre... but bringing in other people’s resources’ so they get a chance to see it. Then they might think oh I am going to have a look at Durham Cathedral now” (Helen, heritage manager 2016).

Not only would such a move democratise the library by transforming parts of the library space into that of a free museum but it would allow various communities access to high culture in a “safe” and familiar environment but it would encourage local citizens (not necessarily tourists) of the value and benefits associated with visiting local museums which would also help engender civic pride (Netter Centre for Community Partnerships, 2008, Morris et al. 2010). From this perspective the library could well encourage cultural capital amongst users so that they can appreciate local history and help give them a sense of where they are and where they (as a community) came from. In some respects this is already taking place as mentioned above but it could easily be developed by engaging with major cultural institutions in the city (ICIC 2011) such as the Discovery Museum or more cutting edge institutions such as the Centre for Life which would allow children in particular to become

exposed to cutting edge technologies and innovations within familiar surroundings which would further enrich the library as an anchor institution within the city.

Most apparent from the cultural connections map is the very limited partnership with the Sage, a major cultural institution in the region which was acknowledged by library staff;

“Actually, I don’t think we have done a lot of work with the Sage... Again though it is a difficult one because of the distance and it is in Gateshead” (Susan, head of library 2016).

Such comments highlight the current limitations of the library acting as an anchor institution due to institutional thinking around local authority boundaries. By neglecting the potential of institutions in neighbouring authorities, the City Library risks becoming a much more concentrated form of social hub being geographically rich within Newcastle but insular and disconnected to events and ideas outside the City boundary. This is especially the case as Newcastle residents will invariably cross the river and the fact that the Sage is a significant cultural building for the region. Institutional barriers appear to pose obstacles to ensuring an inclusive and effective anchor institution, and one which might be difficult to overcome due to the institutional, ownership, and funding structure of the City Library by Newcastle City Council.

It also appears from a cultural perspective, that partnerships with external organisations are funded by the Arts Council for a set period often for a period of two years. This is the case with the charity Arcadia who the City Library is currently working with involving communities to reinterpret Shakespeare through art. While meaningful and clearly beneficial to a section of the community as well as the aims of the library, such projects only last a certain amount of time which limits the scope of such partnerships. It would therefore seem desirable to build-up existing relationships so that they can continue long term beyond the project length. Unfortunately funding cuts clearly limit the potential of such partnerships but the advantages of developing these partnerships long term are clearly compelling. Again this

reinforces the points made elsewhere in this thesis that libraries should be funded adequately in order to tackle such issues going forward.

Again clear partnerships extend to local organisations such as the Laing Art Gallery and Tyne and Wear Museums which work together for events such as Shakespeare's anniversary and clearly represent strategic partnerships whereby the events staged are designed in such a way as to mutually reinforce the offer and attract visitors to such venues. While sporadic, such partnerships work because they are strategic, temporal, and serve a cause at a particular time – attracting maximum footfall as possible. However, the ability to tackle issues in society or serve excluded communities appears to be neglected within such partnerships. Clearly they benefit visitors with an interest in a certain exhibition and so they may well appear relevant to a certain audience but may be of limited value to those with no interest in such a topic or theme. Nonetheless, it does offer users the opportunity to be exposed to alternative experiences or displays which may spark an interest for further enquiry. At a basic level such partnerships may well offer users the tools to “read” the codes of paintings and artwork – whether it be identifying lions within motifs signifying power, or straw or hay representing land. At a more basic level perhaps these partnerships are more enduring because they work to each venue's strength – the Laing displaying paintings and art work and the City Library offering users access to such works.

Clearly there are many cultural connections associated with the City Library including some partnerships involving local institutions such as the Great North Museum which clearly serve as a way of exposing library users to different events and opportunities for those who are interested. However, it appears that those more “targeted” connections such as with Arcadia only last a certain period of time which clearly limits the transformational potential of such partnerships as well as the opportunity to establish a socially inclusive anchor institution offering cultural opportunities (Anchor Institution Taskforce, 2015). Clearly those partnerships that play to an institution's strength work well (e.g. co-ordinating displays to match a neighbouring venues theme) but connections which involve access and cultural

learning rely on Arts Council funding and last a short period of time. Therefore, from a cultural perspective, while the City Library clearly offers signposting to other venues to stay “relevant” to visitors, funding constraints and institutional obstacles limit the potential for meaningful cultural partnerships to develop with newer institutions (e.g. Centre for Life) or those with regional importance such as the Sage as well as developing partnerships long term. If those opportunities are realised then an anchor institution incorporating culture could well be further developed within the City Library.

9.4.4 Economic Connections

The economic connections are not as numerous as the cultural connections but there are still some significant partnerships to discuss. Aside from the conventional partnership with the council’s economic development team which is a strong relationship but is confined by institutional barriers and funding cuts, perhaps the most significant partnership is that with Connexions which is located within the library itself as this partnership offers very strong evidence for the City Library acting as an anchor institution. In this partnership, Connexions staff work within the ground floor of the library where residents make appointments and help is offered, such as help applying for jobs, CV advice as well as more general information. As this partnership is visible to see, it is also notable that whenever I have been in the library, the Connexions hub has always been busy with people waiting for appointments with an advisor or help on the computers. Clearly such a partnership is embedded within the library building itself and offers significant economic opportunities for local people and provides evidence of the library serving as an anchor institution (UKCES 2015).

Another partnership which provides substantial evidence of the City Library acting as an anchor institution is its partnership with the British Library and which has connections with Northumbria University through the BIPC (Business & Intellectual Property Centre) as Michael from the library explains;

“The impetus and the idea behind the BIPC we will call [sic] it came from ourselves and well the British Library have the original BIPC and were keen as part of their remit to take that out of London and take it into the rest of the country. We had a relationship with them anyway and we ran various schemes and things but they came up here and saw what we had on offer, it was a new building and we were receptive to do something with them... so we were in a position where we could take that and kind of brand it if you will as a BIPC outside London” (Michael, business manager 2016).

As Michael states, the ability to partner with a significant national institution and offer a service to local businesses clearly shows the ability of the library to offer economic opportunities for the local business community. The work the library was doing previously attracted the BIPC to the City Library in the first place so that the offer has developed over time and is a service few libraries in the country offer. Clearly the library in this case is a significant anchor institution in that it offers a material service for local businesses that a local council or business organisation would be unable to offer.

More recently, work with the business community has developed further with Google choosing to locate in the City Library for a period of three months offering a service called Google Garage which offered digital advice to businesses and entrepreneurs. Clearly such a partnership has developed from the BIPC partnership demonstrating to other businesses the benefits of partnering with the library for such events. Similarly, a partnership with Newcastle Science City (an organisation involved in the regeneration of a significant part of the city centre and promoting science based firms to locate in the city) for two years demonstrates that the library is actively developing its offer to businesses and local economic growth as well as focussing on niche, emerging sectors of the economy to ensure small, nascent firms have access to support and advice as required.

Nonetheless, such partnerships were for a limited period and while the library staff thought the partnerships were beneficial, there was little awareness on how these partnerships could be developed over a longer period of time. The disadvantage of pop-up connections is that they are temporary and there is no guarantee that such a partnership will be offered again regardless of how successful it may have been. What this does demonstrate is that the City

Library regarding its offer is actively looking for similar partnerships and if they can be expanded and deliver more often in the future then this would be a major opportunity and further evidence of the City Library acting as an anchor institution for the local economy and for local businesses.

Regarding economic connections, the City Library demonstrates many characteristics associated with an anchor institution (Goddard et al. 2014). The fact the library boasts having a BIPC and associated connections with the British Library demonstrate how local businesses in particular can benefit from the library and shows how the library is tapping into the needs and concerns of the local economy and helping not just firms themselves but advising individual users on applying for jobs, applying for a training course or educational qualification. As such partnerships develop it would seem natural to develop the offering for businesses looking to hire to hold recruitment events with library users looking for employment to attend such sessions and find work within the library rather than having to attend sessions in other unfamiliar localities.

Nonetheless, it must be mentioned that some partnerships such as the Google Garage are only temporal in nature and short lived hence any benefits may not be long lasting and continued support in future months may be absent. For the library to ensure maximum benefit it must seek to develop these partnerships for the long term so that they become a permanent fixture in the development of the library. It is also pressing to examine non-existent partnerships. The fact that little collaboration, from an economic perspective, takes place with the universities in the City Centre, the collaboration with Northumbria University and the BIPC is striking. For example, both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities have life science departments and one could imagine a partnership between the library, universities and Newcastle Science City which would tap into the emerging industries within the city. Undoubtedly, if such partnerships are explored and strengthened then the role of the library acting as an anchor institution would be strengthened on top of existing partnerships that clearly already exists within the City Library.

9.4.5 Democratic and Miscellaneous Connections

The democratic and miscellaneous connections cover everything from greater accessibility through to attracting new user groups into the library as well as consultation activities. Aside from regular engagement with Newcastle City Council over opening times and associated issues, the most significant partnership from a democratic perspective is that with the property developers Fusion. Even though the arrow linking the Library to Fusion on the map is narrow, I have included a much larger arrow beside it because even though the connection with Fusion is temporary, many property developers (like Fusion) have chosen to host consultation events within the City Library. This is significant because not only does this signify that the library is seen to be accessible, it shows that private companies view the City Library as a natural hub for the city to carry out consultations. This connection is best viewed as incremental because as more firms conduct democratic activities such as consultation, the more other companies and organisations will follow as Mel from the library explains:

“the organisation Fusion you know they are going to redevelop the City Baths, so they want to hold something along the lines of what we did for John Dobson Street in the library” (Mel, assistant reading manager 2016).

Clearly the success of previous connections reinforces the likelihood for further consultations for city redevelopment taking place within the library in future. Evidently, the public turned up to previous events in order to shape such redevelopment plans and crucially, such a partnership requires no funding from the library and may even increase revenue for the library through the costs involved being met by the developer for carrying out such events in the City Library. Therefore, while the connection with the individual companies and organisations is relatively narrow, the overall partnership is consequently strengthened the more often the library as a venue is used and provides evidence for the City Library acting as an anchor institution (Goddard et al. 2014) from a democratic perspective. This partnership is reinforced by councillors and local MPs holding surgeries within the

library. Such examples of “democracy in action” clearly reinforces the view that the City Library acts as an anchor institution for the city (Anchor Institution Task Force 2015).

Another significant partnership is with the Brunswick Methodist Church in the centre of Newcastle whereby regular events take place for refugees encouraging them to use the library and sign up as well as explaining how the library can help them as they settle into life in the city. Clearly, such a partnership supports the view of the City Library acting as an anchor institution as it is through the library that the refugees will gain support to access services within the city such as entitlements, applying for jobs in the future as well as education and training opportunities. Of course an ideal opportunity would be if such events could be increased and extended to other venues and institutions covering more groups further cementing the library’s role as an anchor institution (UKCLES 2015). Partnerships with the local NHS trust expands the library’s role within health and wellbeing especially as deprived communities are seen to have more health ailments than more economically privileged communities. By offering health campaigns and drop-ins it can increase the range of people the health service has access to as many people may be intimidated when visiting a doctor or clinic so may only visit when absolutely necessary. Of course such campaigns are also by nature reducing the number of illnesses or complaints by educating members of the public how to eat healthy and aid communities to become strong and resilient.

Some partnerships such as the partnership with the organisation Henshaws are beneficial but is temporal in nature. This partnership focusses on encouraging people with sight loss to visit the library and use accessible devices to aid reading. Clearly such a partnership can bring enormous benefits to the sight loss community as well as tackling social exclusion but it is only funded for a short period of time. No indication was given as to if or how such a partnership could be extended in the future as there are clear benefits with such connections. Again a major obstacle to realising the opportunities in developing the City Library as an anchor institution is the understandable reliance on funding which is usually short term in

nature but which are often the most innovative partnerships by the opportunities they can offer local communities.

One of the most interesting connections is that with the Literary and Philosophical Society library in Newcastle city centre. Both libraries engage in shared exhibitions as well as loan resources to one another and it was the “Lit and Phil” which stored a significant amount of the City Library’s resources when it was redeveloped in 2009. Yet they are profoundly opposite institutions, the City Library is a free to access resource whereas the Lit and Phil offers a membership to loan out books (although you can visit for free). In many respects the Lit and Phil represents high culture and would possibly have a different clientele to the City Library. Essentially the City Library represents a public service whereas the Lit and Phil is representative of a private club institution, yet both libraries work together from organising a yearly book festival though to sharing resources for separate events or when needs arise. In many respects by working together both libraries benefit by increasing their relevance to each other’s clientele. One library manager at City Library mentioned that some library users visit the Lit and Phil for research so crossovers do exist. Clearly such a partnership helps to increase the City Library’s relevance to groups who may not use the library (they may prefer to use the Lit and Phil through membership) and helps to overcome the institutional barriers of working with a private library which in many ways is the opposite of what the City Library represents but is a clear string in the bow of the City Library as an anchor institution (Goddard et al. 2014) to many different groups of people.

Regarding democratic and miscellaneous connections, the City Library demonstrates many characteristics one would associate with an anchor institution (Goddard et al. 2014). It has developed many partnerships with a plethora of organisations to ensure its relevance to different groups of people and to demonstrate what the library can offer. This is not surprising as the literature emphasises the library as a socially accessible institution and striving to be open to all (Pateman and Willimet 2013). Again the main obstacle facing the library is the ad-hoc nature of some of the more innovative partnerships such as that with

Henshaws and this risks such groups being allowed to drift once the funding comes to an end. Clearly this would compromise the effectiveness of the library as an anchor institution making it much more temporally and spatially dependent on policy decisions as to how the City Library develops as an anchor institution in the future. It may be important for the library to develop partnerships that extend beyond funding constraints to embed a new partnership for the future.

9.4.6 Conclusion

This analysis has shown evidence for the City Library emerging as an anchor institution in the city of Newcastle. While this covers all sectors (cultural, economic and democratic), it is undoubtedly the economic partnerships that offer the strongest elements of an anchor institution currently. That is no bad thing as it is economic considerations which make politicians and policy makers sit up and listen and with significant partnerships forged such as the BIPC which brings tangible benefits for businesses both locally and regionally.

This element could be further developed by working more closely with more traditional anchor institutions such as universities (Goddard et al. 2014) to reinforce the economic benefits of such partnerships.

If the City Library is to remain and indeed develop as an anchor institution in the future then there are two main obstacles to be overcome. Firstly, inadequate funding of libraries risks losing key staff which in turn may dilute existing partnerships and may prevent new connections being forged. Unlike other anchor institutions such as universities which have ways of generating revenue and subsequent investment into research and maintaining partnerships, the City Library is not in this position. It is susceptible to budget cuts, changing policy decisions and politics which will invariably result in a much less cohesive service if further reductions to the library are made. It is therefore crucial for policymakers in this light to view libraries differently, as influential economic partners which, through the services they offer, can encourage further economic growth and can help businesses develop new and

innovative ideas. Secondly, the temporary nature of some of the more innovative partnerships risks these partnerships ending at the end of the funding period. Not one member of staff mentioned partnerships which were developed further once the funding had stopped which is worrying and is a serious risk to the library not being able to develop its connections and cement itself as an anchor institution. This is not surprising as members of staff have had their jobs and hours cut and are constantly grappling with the threat of redundancy and an ever decreasing budget. In many respects, both of the above risks are interconnected.

One possible way forward is for the City Library to continue to develop these partnerships as far as possible by focussing on key strengths (Anchor Institution Task Force 2015). This analysis has shown a temporal snapshot of current connections as of 2016 and has revealed some opportunities to develop further connections. In many ways the next task is to develop partnerships that spread outside the city linking the local space with the global – this spatial element is very important. As more connections with distant partners (such as the British Library) emerge, new funding streams may well develop and this could well position the library as a key node in a more interconnected global network. From a network perspective the spatial spread of these partnerships is potentially infinite as current connections are very much local in nature. This will help embed and institutionalise the City Library as a key anchor institution for the city and potentially for the region. One way this could be achieved is by recognising and promoting itself as a cultural institution. Art galleries and music venues engage in wider networks for new commissions or artists to exhibit their work in order to remain relevant and to offer something new or different to audiences. If the library embraced itself as a cultural institution beyond the local area then culture could well be a way of further developing its interconnections. Indeed one staff member mentioned how the library saw an increase in footfall when it was loaned fashion items on display for a recent Shakespeare exhibition from an institution based in London.

As this thesis has shown, culture can be a force for good and just as culture can be democratised and transformed by the activities taking place inside the library, it may well be culture that helps steer the City Library forward in a globalising and increasingly uncertain world. This can lead the library into partnerships that can cement the City Library as an embedded anchor institution – one that is globally and locally enmeshed through democratic, economic and perhaps most significantly cultural connections.

9.4.7 Future research – additional comments

It is also possible to identify other areas for further exploration to help build and contribute to the themes and ideas developed in this thesis. Firstly, it would be pertinent for future research to focus on the role of Culture 3.0 within other institutions such as museums to identify similarities and differences between institutions. This could be useful in identifying whether the key themes identified in this research are similar in other civic institutions. Without being too prescriptive, this could allow for common themes and ideas to form areas of best practise which could help policymakers as well as institutions themselves to recognise these characteristics in their own daily routines.

Secondly, it would be pertinent to conduct research into other public libraries in different contexts such as in more rural or suburban areas to determine whether public libraries serve as anchor institutions in diverse localities as well as examining the role of culture in public libraries in varying contexts. This would help determine similarities and differences between this case study and other areas. Consequently, this could help determine whether the location of public libraries (i.e. being located in a city centre) had a bearing on its role as an anchor institution. Indeed if more empirical research was carried out covering various localities then a knowledge bank could be established to help critique and further develop Sacco's (2011) innovative model or framework of culture in diverse settings which could help guide culture-led regeneration and cultural policy more generally in the future.

In this thesis, I have principally demonstrated the role that culture plays within public libraries through a methodology that highlights the context in which the public library as an institution is located as well as all the actors involved in the running of the public library. This has been done so that the possibilities of culture for not only public libraries but urban regeneration more generally can be realised. This has allowed for a more variegated and importantly more democratic form of culture to be recognised and one that offers participation and democratic opportunity as key possibilities for addressing societal inequalities as well as social and economic injustices. Interesting elements of this research include the various actors across a range of tiers involved within the running of the library and how power in what appears to be a centralised bureaucratic relationship offers spaces of emancipation and democratic opportunity with culture forming an important instrument in this process. Moreover, this research has demonstrated the potential of the public library acting as an anchor institution through partnership work and co-production of services as a major opportunity, offering spaces of democratic potential. Further investigation of these interconnections and the opportunities for similar institutions to act as anchor institutions or otherwise would be a valuable avenue to build on the major points in this research.

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