

The influence of culture on perceived use of
public libraries by forced migrants in Scotland
and England

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Edinburgh Napier University,
for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2023

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, and that it is the result of my own independent work.

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Date

Abstract

The work reported in this thesis is concerned with public library use in Scotland and England by forced migrants. The findings extend knowledge of the information practices of forced migrants in the context of public libraries. These are derived from the analysis of empirical data collected from (1) formal Scottish local authority documentation on the integration of forced migrants, (2) interviews with service providers who act as integration intermediaries for forced migrant communities in the UK, and (3) community validation through interviews with forced migrants in Scotland and England.

There are five contributions of the research:

1. An understanding of the relationship between cultural factors and use of public library resources by forced migrants;
2. The need to consider the culture of service providers in explorations of culture;
3. Further understanding of the role motivational theories such as Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* has on information practices of specific communities;
4. Demonstration of a novel method of validation conducted when working with participants other than that of the target population.
5. An extension of work by Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall (2022) on the epistemic role of public libraries.

The specific cultural factors of social norms and information value are identified as determinants of information practices of forced migrants in public libraries. This contribution on the role of culture in the information practices of forced migrants is significant in the context of prior work with its focus on public library use by forced migrants and best practices for library staff to support them. In addition, the role of service provider culture was distinguished as an important explanatory factor alongside the culture of forced migrants. Here the detailed treatment of explanatory factors of information practices generates both theoretical and practical value for library and information science research.

Publications associated with this research

Salzano, R., Brazier, D., Hall, H., & Webster, G. (2022b). What are public libraries for?

Culture as a determinant of conceptualizations of public library services for forced migrants. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 59(1), 276-286. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pr2.752>

Salzano, R., Hall, H., Webster, G., & Brazier, D. (2022a). Is the public library included?

An analysis of local government documentation on the integration of forced migrants in Scotland. *Information Research*. <https://doi.org/10.47989/colis2218>

Salzano, R., Hall, H., & Webster, G. (2020). Corraling Culture as a Concept in LIS

Research. In *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, (e368). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pr2.368>

Salzano, R., Hall, H., & Webster, G. (2020a). Investigating the 'why' rather than the

'how': Current research priorities on the influence of culture on new-comer populations' use of public libraries. *Information Research*, 25(4), <https://doi.org/10.47989/irisic2032>

Salzano, R., Hall, H., & Webster, G. (2020b). The relationship between culture and

public library use: non-Western students in Scotland. *Information Research*, 25(4 (supplement)), <https://doi.org/10.47989/irisic2035>

Acknowledgements

To adequately express the gratitude I have for those I acknowledge here is impossible. Despite the pale imitation of my feelings that these words can convey, I offer my thanks to all those who supported my journey through this PhD.

I would first like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Gemma Webster, Professor Hazel Hall, and Dr. David Brazier. It has been an honour to learn from your wisdom and experience. Thank you for going above and beyond in your roles as supervisors, walking me through not only my entry into the academy but literally walking me through the global COVID-19 pandemic. I would also like to thank my panel chair, Dr. Ahmed Al-Dubai for his input that helped me advance my research. I would also like to thank Dr. Ben Paechter for his support and interest in my studies.

I would also like to thank my fellow PhD students, colleagues who shared the office before me, began at the same time as me, or started their journey when I was in the middle of mine. Thank you, Dr. Tanis Grandison, for your advice on how to complete a PhD. Thank you, Katherine Stephen, for picking me up from the airport when I first arrived in Scotland and becoming a friend as well as a desk-mate. I would also like to thank all my colleagues in the Centre for Social Informatics for their support.

This PhD would not have been possible without my participants, both of the pilot study for Plan A, and for all the subsequent studies from Plan B to Plan E. I am grateful to all of my participants for the time and stories they shared with me. The motivation of this PhD was to enhance knowledge to improve library services to communities, and without these communities I would not have been able to do this.

Outside of the academic realm, I have many people to thank. To Lolita, Shamla, Akansha, Melis, Sienna, and Leigh, I don't know how I would have survived my first year without Flat 17. To my bookclub, thank you for your encouragement. To Rabbi Pinny and Gitty Weinman, thank you for the Jewish community you cultivate for us.

And finally, to my family. To my parents, who taught me how to debate, how to persevere, and how to tell stories. To my brothers, who give me things to brag about to others. And to Sharmaine, my newfound Irish sister in Scotland. You gave me sweets to feed my brain and kept me mostly sane (or at least more grounded than I would have been otherwise).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Key concepts and definitions

Three broad key concepts related to this work underpin the research. These are forced migration, integration, and culture. These concepts are introduced below, with the concept of culture explored in greater detail in [Chapter 2.6](#).

1.1.1 Forced migration

Migration is the movement of people across an international border for a duration that is not meant to be temporary (UNHCR, 2016). A migrant, therefore, can be considered an individual who has crossed an international barrier for a prolonged period. There is no internationally recognised definition for the term “migrant”, however, and therefore there are variations in what can be deemed a prolonged period (UNHCR, 2016). For the purposes of this thesis, a period longer than three months is prolonged. The reason for this being that in the literature international students who may only be attending one academic term in a receiving country are considered migrants (e.g., Sin, 2015).

Forced migration is a specific type of migration. It is a migratory movement prompted by pressure, compulsion, or coercion (IOM, 2019) and relates to refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons. The individuals who have undergone forced migration may be referred to as “forced migrants” in the academic literature (e.g., Lloyd, 2017a p. 37). Outside of the academia, the term “forced migrants” may not be used. Instead, the terms “refugee” and “asylum seeker” may be used. According to the UNHCR (2016), an “asylum seeker” is an individual who is seeking asylum but whose claim has been neither accepted nor denied. A “refugee” is an individual that meets eligibility criteria set out in either the UNHCR’s mandate or national legislation (UNHCR, 2016). In the UK, the designation of “refugee” is given after leave to remain is granted (Bill 187, 2021-2022). The designation of refugee or asylum seeker is indicative of the government support provided. In this thesis, “forced migrant” refers to both refugees and asylum seekers. This usage of the term recognises the different treatment of each designation in UK legislation.

1.1.2 Integration

“Integration” is understood as the process by which migrants become fully incorporated into a receiving society (Oduntan & Ruthven, 2019 p. 792). The meaning of this term also implies that the receiving society accepts and incorporates aspects of the forced migrants’ background into itself (Gsir & Mescoli, 2015 p. 7). Activities that indicate integration include learning the receiving country’s language, sending children to school or applying for further education, gaining employment, and interacting with receiving country communities. Such activities often result in the receiving community learning about aspects of the forced migrants’ previous background. However, the term integration can be viewed negatively within communities, as it is sometimes seen as “assimilation” into a receiving society. Assimilation is similar to integration in that it is expected that migrants will be incorporated into a receiving society. Unlike integration, however, assimilation implies that a migrant neither maintains aspects of their previous background nor shares it with the new community (Gsir & Mescoli, 2015 p. 24). The determination of when integration is a form of assimilation is difficult, as there is no definition of integration agreed upon globally (Oduntan & Ruthven, p. 791). In the UK, integration is considered to be multi-dimensional, with contributions from migrants and established communities to society (Home Office, 2019). For the purposes of the research reported here, the Integration Framework from the Home Office (2019) is adopted to distinguish between integration and assimilation. However, it is acknowledged that applications of the framework may be perceived by participants to fall under assimilation. In such cases the perceptions of participants will be given precedence and the term assimilation used.

1.1.3 Culture

The term culture is nebulous in the research literature. Used across multiple fields, a culture is attributed to a specific group of people. Groups with particular cultures may be as small as a department within an organisation or as large as a religion such as Christianity. The breadth in size of group is matched by the number of definitions that have been proposed for the term culture. Due to these varying definitions of the term (as expressed in Table 2.5) it was important to adopt a single definition to be applied to the PhD research. With a clear definition of the term, future researchers will be able

to determine the relevance of the empirical work reported here is relevant to their research. In addition, a definition was beneficial to the interview process conducted in the course of this study as it allowed participants to understand what was meant when questioned about the impact of culture. The definition adopted here draws on definitions by Brady *et al.* (2018 p. 11406) and Shoham and Rabinovich (2008, p. 22). In the current work, “culture” encompasses the values systems, patterns of behaviours, practices, and accepted norms derived from historical traditions that are passed down to the next generation within a group.

1.1.4 Gatekeepers

The term ‘gatekeeper’ is used in multiple fields though there are still inconsistencies in its definition (Lu, 2007 p. 108). In an early definition from the field of psychology, gatekeepers were defined as individuals that determine access to a resource (e.g., physical resources, information, people, etc.) (Lewin, 1951 p. 177). In the field of Library and Information Science (LIS), gatekeeper as a term is often used to refer to individuals that play a strategic role in enable the transmission of information in a group (Lu, 2007 p. 107). In addition to their role in information transmission, a gatekeeper is considered a link between community members needs and the solutions to those needs (Agada, 1999 p. 75). A key element of being a gatekeeper in these conceptualisations is the ability to link individuals with resources they otherwise would have difficulty accessing. In research with Spanish-surname rural migrants to urban areas, Kurtz (1968 pp. 65-66) the term gatekeeper was used to mean individuals who act as “systemic links” between two cultures and engage in “special efforts to make resources available” to the newcomers. The definition of “gatekeeper” used in the thesis reported here draws on the precedence of Kurtz (1968), Agada (1999), and Lu (2007). The term “gatekeeper” refers to an individual that both acts as a cultural bridge between forced migrant communities and their receiving communities, and attempts to connect forced migrants with solutions to their needs.

1.2 Background and aims

The work reporting in this thesis is concerned with public library use in Scotland and England by forced migrants. Two broad research themes are investigated: (1) in what ways are public libraries used by newcomers and (2) what influence do cultural factors

have on this public library use. These themes are addressed in the context of the field of LIS including aspects of prior work on information behaviour, information practices, and public library services. The aim of the research reported on in this thesis is to explore the influence of broad cultural factors, rather than the ways these factors are implemented by people of specific cultural backgrounds (e.g., a spiritual community, regional group, or country). See [Chapter 8.4.2](#) for a discussion of future research that should follow the foundation built by the research reported on in this thesis.

Further context for this research lies in the field of migration studies. The number of migrants across the globe has consistently risen each year. The role of the public library in the integration and support of new community members, therefore, has come under investigation.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported a global figure of 30.5 million displaced forced migrants at the end of 2020, up from 30.2 million in 2019 (UNHCR, 2020; UNHCR, 2021a). In the year ending June 30, 2022 there were 63,089 applications for asylum (Home Office, 2022a). This is an increase of 31,677 applications from the year ending June 30, 2021. This trend of increasing numbers is indicative of the continued migration patterns across the globe. The total number of applicants above is not indicative of the number of people seeking asylum who live in the UK at a given time. This is because many people seeking asylum do not receive leave to remain in the space of a year. The number of people seeking asylum in receipt of support from the government is 85,007 as of March 31, 2022 (Home Office, 2022b). In addition, a total of 688 additional individuals have been resettled across the UK thus far in 2022, meaning they are no longer in receipt of the government support above.

In line with the steady increase of international forced migration, Scotland receives large numbers of forced migrants. This figure has shown growth in recent years, as shown in Table 1.1.

Year	Number of refugee arrivals in Scotland under resettlement scheme	Number of asylum seekers not yet granted leave to remain in Scotland
2020	128 (Home Office, 2022c)	32,296 (Home Office, 2022d)
2021	1,251 (Home Office, 2022c)	38,339 (Home Office, 2022d)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Table 1.1 Growth in number of forced migrants in Scotland 2020-2021

Despite this growth, the most recent official figure for the entire population of Scotland (June 2020), records 409,000 non-British Scottish residents, representing 7.6% of the total Scottish population (National Records of Scotland, 2021).

As forced migrants continue to seek sanctuary, countries deemed safe, such as the UK, develop policies to address their responsibilities under the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees (UNHCR, 2010). Indeed, recent legislation such as the *Nationality and borders bill* – legislation to regulate the provision of nationality, asylum, and immigration – (Bill 187, 2021-2022) has been a topic of debate in the UK. Whether the bill contains sufficient provision to support forced migrants or undermines the 1951 convention, is a controversial topic (UNHCR, 2021b).

In the field of Forced Migration Studies, legislative developments are of particular concern. This is due to their impact on all aspects of the forced migration process, including policy development, and its implementation at local levels. For example, Niemann and Zaun (2018) note that increased numbers of forced migrants prompt the enactment of policy in a manner that is stricter than it might have been in the past. In the case of the UK, policy implementation differs across its constituent countries due to devolved powers (e.g., Mulvey, 2015; 2018).

Of relevance to the empirical study discussed in this thesis is the scope of such powers in Scotland, as compared to England. Local governments in Scotland are responsible for the following: (1) provision of mandatory duties e.g., provision of education; (2) permissive powers e.g., recreation services; and (3) regulatory powers e.g., environmental health (Mygov.scot, 2017). While the issue of asylum and seeking refuge is an area over which the Scottish Government has no control (Scotland Act 1998), it does take charge of many social service provisions at local level, such as education, social care and adequate library facilities for all persons resident in their area (Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973). Through services such as education and social care, local governments in Scotland support the integration of forced migrants. There are indications that provision related to the integration of forced migrants in

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Scotland may be more compassionate than is the case in the rest of the UK (Mulvey, 2018).

As conflict and crisis continue to break out across the globe – for example most recently in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and with new intensity in Iran – it is expected that the upward trend of asylum applications and resettlements described above will continue. As such, it is important that entities with a role to play in the support of community members are able to provide appropriate resources. Public libraries have been shown to contribute to the social well-being of a community through the provision of information resources and the development of community programmes (Martzoukou, 2020). Therefore, public libraries could provide valuable support for forced migrants entering the UK, both in terms of information needs and integration.

The aim of this doctoral research was to extend knowledge of the information practices of a specific subset of newcomers – forced migrants – in UK public libraries. This aim was achieved through the analysis of empirical data collected from (1) an analysis of formal Scottish local authority documentation on the welcoming and integration of forced migrants in their new receiving country, (2) interviews with service providers who act as gatekeepers for members of forced migrant communities in the UK, and (3) community validation through interviews with forced migrants in the UK.

There are two major contributions, one theoretical contribution, one methods contribution, and one minor contribution of the research:

1. An understanding of the relationship between cultural factors and use of public library resources by forced migrants;
2. The need to consider the culture of service providers in explorations of culture;
3. Further understanding of the role *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* has on information practices of specific communities;
4. Demonstration of a novel method of validation conducted when working with participants other than that of the target population.

5. An extension of work by Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall (2022) on the epistemic role of public libraries.

The main contribution of knowledge to come from the empirical work reported in this thesis is a new understanding of the relationship between culture and public library use by forced migrants. It has been established from the research reported in this thesis that the specific cultural factors of social norms and information value are determinants of the use, and non-use, of public libraries by forced migrants. A second major contribution is the importance of the culture of service providers as a determinant of public library use by forced migrants. A theoretical contribution of the research is the role theories of motivation, such as *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, have in research on information behaviours/practices. Such theories can enhance understanding when applied to the field of LIS. A final minor contribution of the work is extension of findings by Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall (2022), where the epistemic role of the public library is highly valued by library users.

1.3 Geographic scope of research

As discussed by Appleton (2020), public libraries in the UK are governed differently, dependent upon the constituent home country in which they are located (i.e., England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, or Wales). It is expected that differences in governance may have an effect on the policies that drive the resource provision. While the collection of data from all four constituent home countries would be desirable, participants in this study came from only England and Scotland. This was in part due to sampling method and access to potential participants in Northern Ireland and Wales. Although the findings of the work relate to public libraries in England and Scotland, it is expected that some of the findings and discussion could be generalised to the larger UK context. Indeed, findings related to specific cultural factors found to be related to public library use could also be generalised beyond the UK context.

1.4 Timing of the empirical work

The implementation of data collection for the empirical work reported on in this thesis took place during the recurrent lockdowns of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This

impacted the initial research plans in ways that are discussed in more detail in [Chapter 4.2.1.1](#). The adjustment to initial research plans introduced limitations to the research, most notably through the reliance on the perspectives of service providers rather than forced migrants. Although the findings of the work reported on in this thesis reflect the perceptions of service providers, it is expected that the contributions will lead to further research with a focus on the perspectives of forced migrants.

1.5 Theory and research method

The research resides predominantly in the broad field of LIS with connections to the field of migration studies. Within the field of LIS, the research lies in the realms of public libraries and information behaviours/practices.

There is a theoretical discussion in the field of LIS over whether the term information behaviour is equivalent to that of information practices (e.g., Savolainen, 2007 pp 109-110). The concept of information behaviour is used to cover the broad area of research that discussed both perspectives. Information behaviour can be understood to be the activities an individual undertakes in the search for, use, and dissemination of information based on the discovery of a need (Wilson, 1999b p. 249). Information practice also includes consideration of the social and cultural contexts in which an individual exists when discussing interactions with information (Tabak, 2014 p. 2223). An overview of the similarities and differences of the two terms can be seen in Table 1.2. Information practices are considered more accurate for the purposes of this doctoral research because the research is focussed on the cultural contexts which drive use of information resources. In the remainder of this thesis, the term information behaviour will only be used in instances where a cited document uses the term “information behaviour”.

Shared Concepts	Unique Concepts	
How people seek information How people manage information How people share information How people use information How people satisfy information needs	Actions related to information prompted by needs and motives Intention of seeking information Purpose of information seeking	Information Behaviour
Active information seeking Active information use Passive information seeking Passive information use Reducing uncertainty (via information)	Actions related to information can be the result of habitual activities Situated Action Recurrent action driven by community membership Social contexts Cultural contexts Embeddedness Interpreting information	Information Practice

Table 1.2 Shared and unique concepts in information behaviours compared to information practices

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are prevalent in the LIS literature. A quantitative approach is often utilised for investigations of library usage patterns (e.g., Burke, 2008) and other projects that ask the questions “how many”, “when”, and “where”. Qualitative approaches are more prevalent for explorations of the ways public libraries enhance communities (e.g., Martzoukou, 2020) and other projects that ask the questions “how (is it done)” and “why”. A similar pattern is found in research on information behaviours/practices, with the choice of methodological approach related to the types of questions asked by researchers.

As the aim of this doctoral study is to address the question of “why” forced migrants use public libraries in specific ways, it was appropriate to use a qualitative approach (as will be explored in detail in [Chapter 3.3](#)). A theoretical framework was adopted as an interpretative framework, in respects to determinant factors of information practices. The theoretical framework was chosen on the basis of an extensive literature review (see [Chapter 2](#)), from which gaps in the literature were also identified. Three separate methods were utilised to ensure a holistic understanding of the relationship between culture and the use of public libraries by forced migrants: (1) an analysis of formal

Scottish local authority documentation on the welcoming and integration of forced migrants in their new host country, (2) interviews with service providers who act as gatekeepers for members of forced migrant communities in the UK, and (3) community validation through interviews with forced migrants in the UK.

1.6 Thesis structure

The thesis is written across nine chapters, including this introduction. The remaining eight chapters are as follows:

- **Chapter 2, Literature Review:** Overview of extant research related to public library use, information behaviours/practices, newcomers, and culture across a range of disciplines.
- **Chapter 3, Methodology:** Review of the chosen research paradigm, approach, and theoretical framework (i.e., [Theory of information worlds](#), and Maslow's [Hierarchy of needs](#)) that underpinned the empirical work.
- **Chapter 4, Methods:** Description of the chosen research design and methods used for the doctoral investigation.
- **Chapter 5, Findings – Government document analysis:** Findings of the analysis and interpretation of the data from the first phase of empirical research: government document analysis.
- **Chapter 6, Findings – Gatekeeper interviews:** Findings of the analysis and interpretation of the data from the second phase of empirical research: interviews with public service gatekeepers.
- **Chapter 7, Findings – Community validation:** Findings of the analysis and interpretation of the data from the third phase of empirical research: community validation of gatekeeper interview findings using interviews with forced migrants.
- **Chapter 8, Discussion:** Discussion of the findings presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7 addressing the two main research questions (see [Chapter 2.7](#)) through the lens of the theoretical framework the *Theory of information worlds* and with reference to the findings of the literature review.

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- **Chapter 9, Conclusion:** Overview of the contributions from this work, with implications for practice and policy summarised and recommendations for future work.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction to chapter 2

This chapter presents an overview of the extant literature relevant to research on perceptions of public libraries and use of public library resources with specific reference to newcomers such as forced migrants. It also considers the concept of “culture” in academic research. The review provides the setting (the public library), and context (knowledge about the relationship between culture and information behaviours), of this doctoral study.

The chapter is arranged as follows: it starts with an exploration of public libraries in library and information science (LIS) research. This is followed by an examination of the research on information behaviours in public libraries. Then research on the information behaviours of newcomers in the public library is discussed. The concept of culture as it appears in research is then reviewed. In conclusion, it is suggested that while there is published research on the use of public library resources by newcomers, none to date has explored the reasons that newcomers do or do not use specific resources. Additionally, while researchers often reference the influence of culture on information behaviours, there is a need for targeted research on the relationship between culture and information behaviours.

The literature search was conducted on both the ExLibris-hosted catalogue of the Edinburgh Napier University Library, and on Google Scholar (initial search terms can be seen in Table 2.1). The accessibility of the academic library catalogue and the ability to access multiple library research databases (including subject-specific databases such as Library and Information Science Abstracts [LISA] and Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts [LISTA]) simultaneously drove the decision to use the academic library catalogue. Subject filters were used to narrow down search results, as required. Additional searches using the same research terms were conducted on Google Scholar. Citation pearing was also deployed during the process of reviewing initially identified papers. In addition, papers suggested by members of the researcher’s network were reviewed for relevancy. Ongoing alerts from the initial literature search were assessed over the three-year period in order to continually review newly published relevant research.

Term 1		Term 2		Term 3	Subject Filter 1	Subject Filter 2
Library use	AND	Refugee(s)	AND			
Library use		Refugee(s)			Library science	Public libraries
Library use		Culture		Refugee(s)		
Information world(s)						
Information behaviour(s)		Immigrant(s)				

Table 2.1: Initial search terms of the literature review

2.2 The research landscape: public libraries

2.2.1 Key contributors to public library research

There is a body of research in LIS dedicated to public libraries. Certain researchers contribute a large amount of work to the discourse on the topic e.g., Caidi in the area of public library research on immigrant populations, Mandel in the area of the space within public libraries (e.g., Caidi & Allard, 2005; Caidi *et al.*, 2010; Mandel, 2016; Mandel, 2018). There are also those researchers who are prevalent across multiple domains in the LIS field such as Aabø, Audunson, Fisher née Pettigrew, Jaeger, Lloyd, and Vårheim (e.g. Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Aabø *et al.*, 2010; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Borkert et al, 2018; Hicks & Lloyd, 2018; Jaeger & Burnett, 2010; Jaeger *et al.*, 2010; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Fisher *et al.*, 2004b; Fisher, 2018; Fisher, 2022; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd, 2017b; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew 1999; Pettigrew & McKechnie, 2001; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016; Vårheim 2009; 2011; 2014; 2019).

The authors listed above have also been influential in LIS beyond the narrow area of public libraries. For example, Fisher née Pettigrew, Jaeger, and Lloyd contribute to research on information behaviours within and outwith public libraries (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010; Pettigrew, 1999; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013). Jaeger’s work is primarily based in the United States, and often concerns policy, both public and internal, and the associated effects on public libraries (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010; Xie & Jaeger, 2008). Jaeger has also contributed a large portion of work on the importance of diversity to public library services (e.g., Jaeger *et al.*, 2010). Fisher née Pettigrew and Lloyd both

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have a strong international presence as researchers, collaborating with others on research outside of their home country (e.g., Borkert *et al.*, 2018; Fisher, 2018; Fisher, 2022; Hicks & Lloyd, 2018; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013). Fisher née Pettigrew has contributed a great deal of research to the topic of information behaviours, specifically information seeking, and the contexts which influence those behaviours (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Fisher *et al.*, 2004b; Pettigrew, 1999). Lloyd's work is also heavily based on information behaviours, although more on the topic of information literacy (e.g., Hicks & Lloyd, 2018; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013).

Aabø, Audunson, and Vårheim are more firmly entrenched in the field of public libraries, with Vårheim's work covering multiple countries in terms of the social value of public libraries (e.g., Aabø *et al.*, 2010; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016; Vårheim, 2019 p. 4). Vårheim has been influential in the discussion of trust and social capital as they relate to public libraries (e.g., Vårheim 2009; 2011; 2014). Aabø's contributions to the field revolve around the value of public libraries, both economic and social, as well as the importance of the public library as a place (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Aabø *et al.*, 2010). The work of Audunson also covers the public library as place, as well as perceptions of the public library, public library services, and the state of librarianship (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Audunson *et al.*, 2011). It is important to note that the authors discussed here as being major contributors to the field are from North America, the UK, Nordic countries, and Australia.

2.2.2 Key journals and conferences

There are five prominent journals in which research on public libraries is published:

Library and Information Science Research; Journal of Documentation; Journal of Librarianship and Information Science; Library Quarterly; and Library Review (Vårheim *et al.*, 2019 p. 96). Geographic coverage of the literature published in the English language is centred in the UK, Nordic countries, North America, and Australia (e.g., Vårheim *et al.*, 2019 p. 99). There are papers written about other regions of Europe (e.g., Vimercati & Pirola, 2011), and the world (e.g., Nove & Harisanty, 2019; Wang *et al.*, 2019) but they are not as prevalent in the literature reported in English language journals. This geographic pattern is mirrored by the major library associations that fund research and host conferences: the American Library Association (ALA), the

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International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), and the Ontario Library Association – formerly the Canadian Library Association (ALA, 2020; CILIP, 2020; IFLA, 2020; Ontario Library Association, 2023).

There are multiple conferences at which public library research is reported, with many tied to library associations based in specific countries. The American Library Association annual and midwinter conferences, the Public Library Association conference, and the ASIS&T annual conference are primarily based in the United States (ALA Conference, 2022; PLA Conference, 2020; ASIS&T Conference, 2020). The CILIP and CILIP Scotland annual conferences are based in the UK (CILIP Conference, 2020; CILIPS Conference, 2020). The remaining major conferences, CoLIS, IFLA WLIC, ISIC, and CoLIS are international conferences that are hosted in different venues each year (CoLIS11, 2022; IFLA WLIC Conference, 2020; ISIC, 2022).

2.2.3 Geographic coverage of public library research

The research on the provision of public libraries can be characterised by a tendency towards expressing European and North American viewpoints and overlap in the research topics. There are geographic patterns in the coverage of published research, with the UK, North America, Nordic countries, and Australia being over-represented (Vårheim *et al.*, 2019 p. 99). This same pattern holds true for important conferences and professional associations as well as prolific authors in the field. While there are distinct geographical patterns of research, topics of discussion are less discrete. Although the literature can be divided into the two broad themes of services and users, a single research paper may cover multiple themes and topics (e.g., Xie & Jaeger, 2008). Thus, the field of research on the provision of public libraries may best be described as both lacking diverse voices and lacking distinct sub-topics.

2.2.4 Definition of public libraries

The modern version of public libraries dates back to the 19th century (Han, 2009 p. 277; Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 73). Despite this, in the literature there is no universally accepted definition of public libraries (Vakkari *et al.*, 2016 p. 358). This may be due to the prevalence of public libraries in the regions where a large proportion of published library research is conducted (e.g., Vårheim *et al.*, 2019 p. 99). In areas where public

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libraries are not considered common and accessible to all, there may be confusion over the role and function of public libraries (Audunson *et al.*, 2011 p. 223). This is in contrast to areas where public libraries are easily found there may be an assumption that a public library needs no definition (Audunson *et al.*, 2011 p. 223).

Despite the lack of a cohesive definition, researchers have individually defined aspects of public libraries. Appleton *et al.* (2018, p. 3) discuss public libraries as institutions in which public discourse is supported through “reliable and adequate” access to information, and spaces where community citizenship can develop. Other authors describe public libraries as tax-supported libraries for general use by the public (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 73). Public libraries have also been described with reference to their social influences (e.g., Newman, 2007 p. 889; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018 p. 585). Newman (2007 p. 889) describes public libraries as sites where a community’s culture is determined and practised; Shepherd *et al.* (2018 p. 585) discuss public libraries as “universalistic public spaces”. Audunson *et al.*, (2011 p. 220) maintains that the public library is an institution where majority and minority populations have access to literary and cultural expressions from all populations in a community. Similarly, McKnight (2009 p. 80) state that public libraries are those open to the general community. Based on the literature, public libraries may hold many roles in the community, from civic, to spatial, to social, to informational (e.g., Aabø *et al.*, 2010 p. 16; Appleton *et al.*, 2018 p. 3; Audunson *et al.*, 2011 p. 220; Berger, 2002 p. 80; Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 79).

For the purposes of this work a general definition based on the work of Jaeger and Burnett (2010 p. 73) will be used. Public libraries are considered libraries whose resources are available to the public and are often sustained by taxes and individual contributions.

2.3 Themes of interest to public library researchers

2.3.1 Overview of public library research themes: service, and users

The literature regarding public libraries can be divided into two broad themes: services, and users. The theme of “services” can be further divided into topics: “current services being provided”, “investigations into future perspectives”, and the “value derived from public library resources” (e.g., Appleton *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Samtani, 2013). The theme of “users” is primarily concerned with

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the information behaviours of users. The theme of users can be further divided into two topics: “interactions with services”, and “provision of services to particular communities” (see Figure 2.1). Both themes of research have evolved over the years, as the field of library science has changed with politics, economics, and technology (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 77, 85; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016 p. 358). There are also geographical patterns within the themes. These relate to both researchers and the topics studied (Vårheim *et al.*, 2019 p. 95).

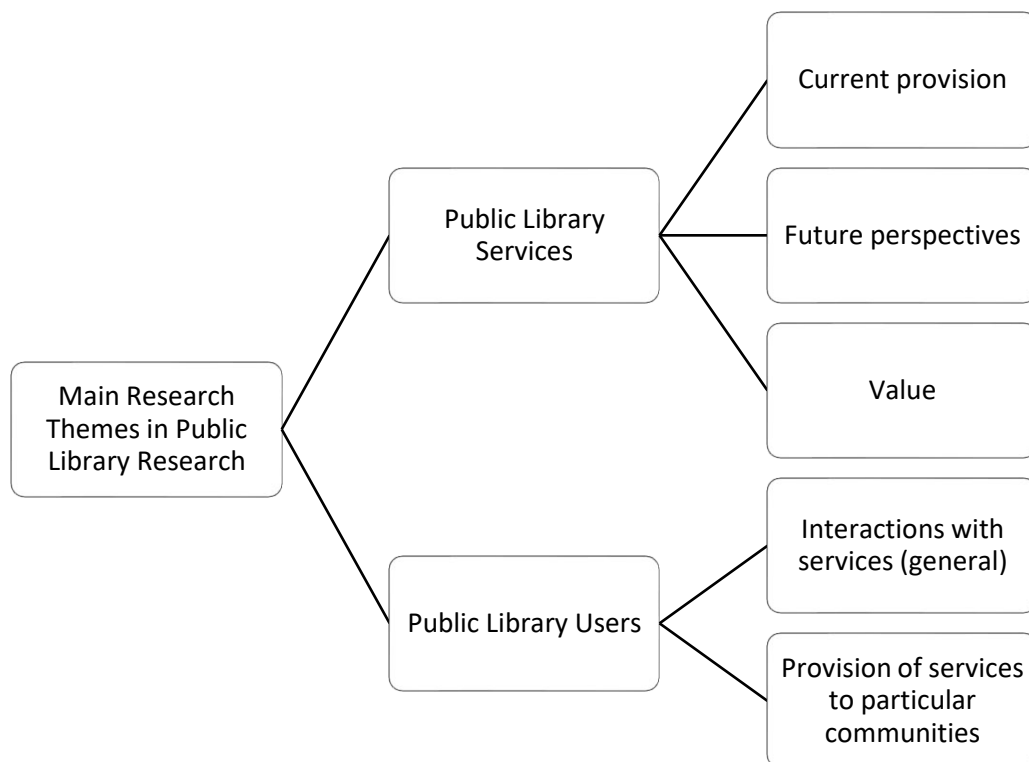


Figure 2.1 – The main themes of public library research

There is considerable overlap in the coverage of these themes, as shown in Figure 2.2.

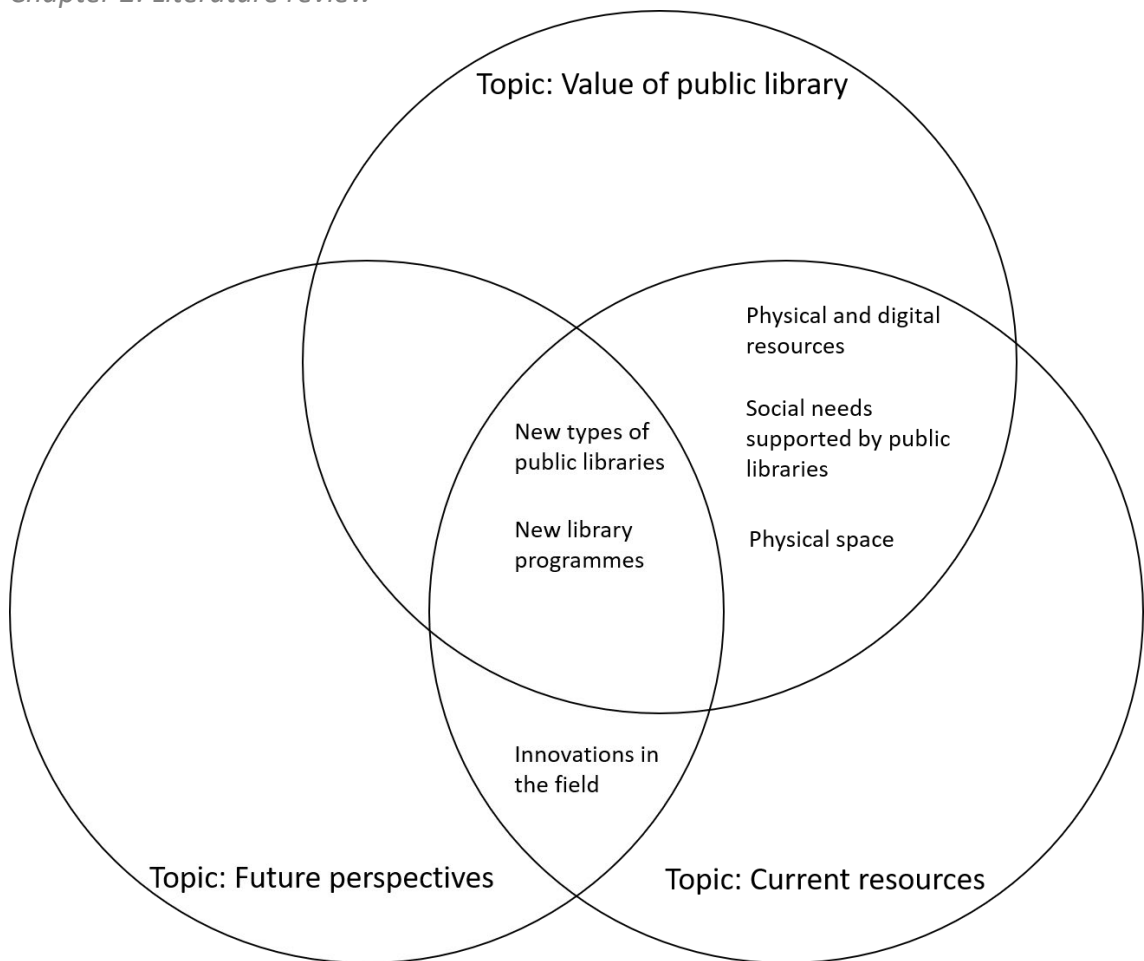


Figure 2.2 *Overlap in research topics in the literature on public library services*

2.3.2 Research theme: public library services

2.3.2.1 Current provision of public libraries

Within the theme of public library services, the topic of current provision has transformed the most over time. As public library definition and provision has changed, so too has the focus of the research (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 73). In the 19th century, the sparse research on public library services often dealt with the creation of specific public libraries and how public libraries served their communities (as seen in Singapore Institution Free School, 1837 cited by Han, 2009 p. 268).

Although reports on new public libraries and their provisions still occur (e.g., Freeman, 2014), as public libraries became more common, researchers began to focus more on the services public libraries provide (e.g., Guilfoile, 1921 p. 127; Walter, 2003 p. 575, 580). As the field of library science has matured, a section of the literature has been dedicated to reviewing the history of the public library (e.g., Davies, 1974; Degruyter, 1980). Some of the papers in this area include comparisons between historical services

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and current services, while others hold discussions on changes in the concept of the modern public library over the years (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 74, 75; Shera, 1961; 1986; Walter, 2003 pp. 572-574).

One aspect of the research on current service provision in public libraries has remained largely similar throughout the years: descriptions of current programmes and resources (e.g., Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2009 p. 133; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 758; Guilfoile, 1921; Johnston, 2016 p. 12; Lenstra *et al.*, 2022 p. 16; Xie & Jaeger, 2008). Throughout the history of public library research, case studies about programmes, such as story hours and book clubs, have been prevalent (e.g., Guilfoile, 1921; Hoffert, 2006). The most commonly discussed programmes are those for children younger than 10, for teenagers, or for older adults (e.g., Cavanagh & Robbins, 2012; Czarnecki, 2010; Goulding *et al.*, 2018; Lenstra *et al.*, 2022; Samtani, 2013; Walter, 2003; Xie & Jaeger, 2008). The research in this area is largely based on case studies and descriptions of programmes provided by specific libraries (e.g., Cavanagh & Robbins, 2012; Czarnecki, 2010; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 758; Johnson, 2010). Although the language used to discuss this research has changed with time, the methodologies and purpose have remained stable (e.g., Guilfoile, 1921; Samtani, 2013).

Research on current service provision has changed over the years in terms of technology (e.g., Walter, 2003 p. 572; Williams, 2013). As technological advances have altered the ways in which individuals interact with information, researchers have explored the ways those technologies influenced the public library (e.g., Lee, 1952; Magrath, 1989; Shera, 1967). In 1952, Lee discussed the importance of microfilm to the dissemination of information. Approximately a decade later Shera (1967) discussed technological advances such as the computer as a challenge for librarians to address within the library profession. More recently, researchers have reviewed the administrative technology being used in public libraries, e.g., online public access catalogues (OPACs), and the relationship of this technology to communities they served (e.g., Magrath, 1989). As mobile devices have become more prevalent, research on how information and communication technologies (ICTs) relate to public library use has increased (e.g., Chisita & Abdullahi, 2014). It is in this area of comparison that a second topic in the research emerges: future perspectives.

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2.3.2.2 Future perspectives for public library services

It is important to note that the topic of “future perspectives” is intertwined with the topic of current provision. The topic of investigations into future perspectives covers new types of public libraries, new programmes, and innovations in the field of library science itself (Plumb, 2007; Samtani, 2013; Xie & Jaeger, 2008; Zha *et al.*, 2014). For example, Dewey (1959 p. 36, 37), Magrath (1989 p. 533) and Williams (2013 p. 1) have each reviewed the present and future of cataloguing systems. However, the researchers have addressed the topic from different perspectives due to variations in available technology at the time of publication. Similarly, while programmes such as story hours are part of current services, their presentation may be considered innovative and an investigation into future perspectives (Samtani, 2013).

2.3.2.3 Public library value

The topic of value derived from public library resources has also been explored in different ways by researchers throughout the history of public library research (Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 755). During the early years of public library institutions in the 19th century, most published information on the value of public libraries came from government documents (e.g., U.K. Parliament, 1927). Indeed, it was not until the 1950s that the value of public libraries was first mentioned in research papers. Even then, the notion of “value” was rarely explicitly mentioned (e.g., Shera, 1953 p. 168). In these first research communications, the value of current resources was often discussed in relation to their cost to funders. Casper (1978 p. 232) stated “economic analysis of library behaviour is sparse”. Only recently have researchers begun to look at the economic return on investment (ROI) in public libraries.

Researchers who have considered the ROI of public library resources in recent years have discussed value in multiple ways. There is a robust tradition of quantitative studies conducted on the topic of public library value (e.g., Oliphant, 2014; Paberza, 2010; Sin & Vakkari, 2015; Stenstrom *et al.*, 2019; Sumsion *et al.*, 2002; Vakkari & Serola, 2012; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016). Many quantitative studies on the value of public libraries focus on the perceptions of library users (e.g., Paberza, 2010; Sin & Vakkari, 2015; Sumsion *et al.*, 2002; Vakkari & Serola, 2012; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016). In these studies, usage patterns and the perceived value of public libraries are of interest to researchers. For example, Sumsion *et al.* (2002) explored the perceived economic

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value of items borrowed from libraries by users. It was found that the public library provides users with “a distinct economic gain” over the four benefits of education, culture, information, and recreation (p. 666). The consideration of library non-users in discussions of value is less prevalent. However, Oliphant (2014) explores the value that both users and non-users place on public libraries, with results that mirror those of Sumsion *et al.* (2002) of one decade earlier. Additional stakeholders such as politicians, government officials, and library staff are also participants in explorations of perceived public library value (e.g., Sørensen, 2020; Stenstrom *et al.*, 2019).

Qualitative studies have also been used to explore the value of libraries (e.g., Appleton & Hall, 2022; Appleton *et al.*, 2018; Cole & Stenstrom, 2020; Huysmans & Oomes, 2013). Appleton *et al.* (2018) and Appleton and Hall (2022) discuss the perceptions of public library users with regards to the value of the public library. Here, there is less concern with the numbers associated with economic impact and more with the subjective value individuals place on the public library. Recently it has been found that participants place significant value on the epistemic function of the public library (Appleton *et al.*, 2018 p. 279). The collections of information sources (Appleton *et al.*, 2018 p. 279), space in which to study (Appleton & Hall, 2022 p. 7) and support of literacy (p. 7) are particularly valuable. Similarly, Cole and Stenstrom (2020) found that the provision of information and resources bring value to library users (p. 488). In addition, it is suggested that public libraries provide resources to support health and well-being, particularly for populations made vulnerable (Cole & Stenstrom, 2020 pp. 489-490). In a review of the literature, Sørensen (2021) found that public libraries are also considered to provide value through support of leisure activities (p. 4).

Some researchers review both economic value and the more subjective value of user perceptions in an attempt to discover the best methodology for research on the topic (Huysmans & Oomes, 2013 p. 169-170). Much of the discussion of value in the field includes positive reports on value derived from public libraries (e.g., Kranich, 2001), although there have been indications that some public libraries overspend (e.g., Wright, 2000 p. 64). The overall pattern reported in the literature, however, is that public libraries provide positive ROI for their communities.

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Researchers that write primarily about current resources may discuss the value that resources provide their communities, either in economic terms or in stakeholder perceptions (e.g., Huysmans & Oomes, 2013; Sørensen, 2020; Vårheim *et al.*, 2019). Other research is undertaken within the context of the social constructs supported by public libraries (e.g., Newman, 2007 p. 888). Many researchers explore the value of the library as:

- a public sphere institution, i.e., a physical space in which to undertake civic discourse (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 78; Vårheim *et al.*, 2019).
- a place where social capital and trust in civic institutions is built (e.g., Johnson 2010; 2012; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Kranich, 2001; Vårheim, 2011; 2014).
- a physical space in which users exist (e.g., Elmborg, 2011; Aabø and Audunson, 2012; Mandel, 2016)

Within the LIS literature on public libraries, there is often not a clear separation between each topic in the theme of services, as illustrated in figure 2.2. Therefore, although the topics can be discussed separately, the larger context may be important when results are interpreted.

2.3.3 Research theme: public library users

Public library research that falls under the theme of “users” covers two topics: provision of services to particular communities, and interactions with services (general).

2.3.3.1 Provision of services to particular communities

It should be noted that the bulk of research on public libraries centres on users, rather than non-users (Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015 p. 105). Additionally, non-users are often considered a single population, even though it has been shown that different segments of the community (e.g., older adults, teenagers, young parents, etc.) may be more likely to be non-users in different regions (Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015 p. 110).

Many different populations are targets of the research on public library users (e.g., Cavanagh & Robbins, 2012; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Walter, 2003). Common populations of interest are children or older adults (e.g., Lenstra *et al.*, 2022; Li & Mathis, 2022; Nove & Harisanty, 2019; Walter, 2003; Wang *et al.*, 2019; Xie & Jaeger, 2008). Families are

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also well represented (e.g., Harvard Family Research Project and PLA, 2016; Naidoo, 2013), and there is growing research on newcomers (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Kumaran & Salt, 2010).

2.3.3.2 Interactions with particular services

Research on public library users often involves research on public library services (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018). In many papers there are reviews of current library services, or future innovations, in the context of public library use by a particular population (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 758; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008 p. 30).

Some overlap, however, is found in the discussion of specific populations of public library users and the exhibition of distinct information behaviours (e.g., Burnett, 2015; Burnett *et al.*, 2014; Jaeger & Burnett, 2010; Pendleton & Chatman, 1998). The research in this area tends to be theoretically based, with researchers attempting to find the best theory to accurately describe the role of information in society, and to understand its impact on individuals and populations (e.g., Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 pp. 1, 4).

A selection of theories has been developed with the context of libraries in mind. One such theory is the *Theory of Information Worlds* developed by Jaeger and Burnett (2010). Others have been adapted from other fields to fit within the context of libraries, as in the case of the *Theory of Small Worlds* by Pendleton and Chatman (1998) or Habermas' *Theory of the Public Sphere* (Habermas, 1984). Researchers who deal with theories of information behaviours rarely discuss specific public library user populations, but are more likely to consider the broad factors which could influence information behaviours (e.g., Pendleton & Chatman, 1998 pp. 732-733; Yu, 2011). In non-theoretical research on the topic of information behaviours, however, varied populations are participants (e.g., Johnston, 2016 pp. 12-13; Peterson, 2014 p. 391; Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015 p. 104; Walters, 2003 pp. 575-576).

In research on the topic of user interactions with services (general), in the majority of non-theoretical research there is a focus on information behaviours. Research on information behaviours sometimes results in recommendations to public libraries on means of conducting research to determine information behaviours of community

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members (e.g., McKnight, 2009 p. 80; Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012 p. 2). However, much of the research has a focus on an exploration of information behaviours themselves. As the empirical work reported in this thesis is strongly influenced by this topic of research, the body of research on information behaviours in libraries, particularly public libraries, is discussed separately in [Chapter 2.4](#).

2.4 Information behaviour research related to public libraries

The information behaviours of the communities that public libraries serve can influence the provision of public library resources (McKnight, 2009 p. 79). Different populations within a community will have different information needs. These may drive different information behaviours and require public libraries to provide specific services to each population (McKnight, 2009 p. 80).

Within this section, the information behaviours of specific populations of public library users are explored. Here follows a discussion of the literature on information behaviours in public libraries which begins with a review of the term information behaviour, and an exploration of the fields in which information behaviour is studied. Then the presence of information behaviour research in the field of library science is examined, followed by a more in-depth consideration of information behaviour research in public libraries specifically. The information behaviour research on specific populations, i.e., youth, families, older adults, and newcomers, is characterised. In the conclusion of this section, it is proposed that while there is a tradition of research on the information behaviours of youth, families, and older adults, the research on the information behaviours of newcomers is less robust.

2.4.1 Information behaviour research

2.4.1.1 Scope of information behaviour research

Information behaviour can be understood to be the activities an individual undertakes in the search for, use of, and dissemination of information based on the discovery of a need (Wilson, 1999 p. 249). This definition encompasses multiple parts, each of which can be the focus of research e.g., information seeking behaviours (Kuhlthau, 1991; Spink *et al.*, 2002).

The term “information practices” has been used instead of information behaviours by certain researchers. This is because they feel that information practices encompasses

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those interactions with behaviours that are not driven by a specific need but by the habitual behaviours that individuals undertake (Savolainen, 2007 cited by González-Teruel, 2018 p. 485). Although the research reported in this thesis is more closely aligned with the concept of information practices (refer to [Chapter 1.3](#)), much of the extant literature uses the term information behaviour. Therefore, in this section the term “information behaviours” is used to encompass the general area of the literature that includes both information behaviours and information practices.

Individuals’ information behaviours have been a subject of research since the 1940s (Wilson, 1999 p. 250). Multiple fields are concerned with the ways in which individuals interact with information, including psychology, marketing, communications, computer science, and LIS (Wilson, 1997 p. 551). Although information behaviour research is tied back to the field of information science, the research dedicated to information behaviours is present in multiple contexts (e.g., Dervin, 1998; Njoku, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998). A large portion of this research is about information seeking behaviour (e.g., Hultgren, 2013; Kulthau, 1991; Ruthven, 2010; Sin & Kim, 2013; Spink *et al.*, 2002). The research on information behaviours is often framed around specific situations such as everyday life, as in Khoir *et al.*, (2015), adapting to a new environment, as discussed by Lingel (2011), or careers, as in Hultgren (2013). Within the research there may be a focus on the information needs of specific populations, as described by Njoku (2004) and Silvio (2006). Due to the nature of library service as it pertains to information, information behaviours are often studied within the context of libraries (Wilson, 1999 p. 250).

2.4.2 Information behaviour research and libraries (in general)

Within the context of libraries, information behaviour research takes place across many types of libraries (e.g., Pearson & Rossall, 2001; Ruthven, 2010; Zhang, 2015). Three broad categories of information behaviour research that can be found in the context of the multiple types of libraries: current information behaviours of users, strategies that library staff can employ to provide better service, and the most effective tools to support users. Examples of research in each of these categories for different types of libraries can be seen in Table 2.2.

Library Context	Information Behaviour Research on Current Library Users	Information Behaviour Research on Library Staff Strategies	Information Behaviour Research on Most Effective Tools	Notes
Academic libraries	University Students (e.g., Hyldegård, 2006; Rowlands & Nicholas, 2008) Faculty (e.g., Rowlands & Nicholas, 2008; Zhang, 2015) Researchers (e.g., Bracken <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Mahajan <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	Al-Shboul & Abrizah (2014)	Bracken <i>et al.</i> , (2014)	
Public libraries	Children (e.g., Lundh, 2016; Shenton & Hay-Gibson, 2011) Families (e.g., Barriage, 2015; Naidoo, 2013) Older Adults (e.g., Cavanagh & Robbins, 2012; Ezema & Ugwuanyi, 2014) Newcomers (e.g., Khoir <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Silvio, 2006) Etc.	McKnight (2008) Williment & Jones-Grant (2012)	Grogg & Fleming-May (2010) Hider <i>et al.</i> , (2014)	As McKnight (2008 p. 80) notes, public libraries serve a large number of different user populations, only a small set of examples is included here.
Special libraries	Lawyers (e.g., Evans & Price, 2017) Healthcare Professionals (e.g., Lappa, 2005; Pearson & Rossall, 2001) Managers (e.g., Choo, 2007; Yan & Davison, 2011) Musicians (e.g., Kostagiolas <i>et al.</i> , 2015) Etc.	Lappa (2005)	Yan and Davison (2011) Ellis <i>et al.</i> (2014)	Types of special libraries are varied, as a special library may be found in almost any type of organisation (e.g., reference needed). Only a small set of examples is included here.

Table 2.2 Information behaviour research completed in the contexts of different types of libraries

2.4.3 Information behaviour research in public libraries

The research on information behaviours in the context of public libraries is vast.

Investigations into the ways that specific public library resources are used by certain populations, as in Xie and Jaeger (2008), are prominent, as are the social implications of information behaviours on public libraries as entities (e.g., Buchanan & Tuckerman, 2016). Research participants in studies of information behaviour comprise public library users, non-users, and public library staff (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p.758; Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015 p. 104, 106; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008 p. 24; Wang *et al.*, 2019 p. 134). The majority of participants are public library users or public library staff (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 758; Johnston 2016 pp12-13; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008 p. 24). Non-user participants are not as prominent in the research, although Sbaffi and Rowley (2015 p. 104) cite the importance of research on non-users as well as users.

Discussions of information behaviour related to public library resources and the social implications of those behaviours may revolve around specific populations being studied, such as Walter (2003) who studied resources used by children, or Hassan and Wolfram (2019) who have investigated African immigrants in the United States. In some cases, public library staff are participants rather than the populations of interest. This is due to ethical concerns or accessibility (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 758; Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015 p. 106). In most of this research it is acknowledged that using library staff as participants rather than target populations is a limitation (Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 763). However, as library staff may have knowledge of target population opinions, work with them as participants is considered a better option than not completing the research at all (p. 763).

Information behaviour research in the context of public libraries can be focused on a number of different populations, some are more prominent in the literature than others. The most common distinct populations researched are youth, family, and older adults. There are also some populations that have experienced a surge in popularity, in terms of research focus, in recent years, such as newcomers (Lloyd, 2017a p. 38). Since this population is of particular interest to the research reported in this thesis, research on newcomer populations is presented separately in [Chapter 2.5](#).

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2.4.3.1 Information behaviour research on public libraries and young populations

Research on the information behaviours of children and young adults is prevalent in the literature, as people under the age of 18 are some of the most frequent public library users (Walter, 2003 p. 571). There is discussion of the validity of placing young adults in the same category as children, as the age range of people under the age of 18 encompasses an array of cognitive, emotional, and developmental abilities (Agosto, 2011). McKechnie (2000 p. 62) stated that research with young children must take different forms than research with adults or older children, as young children have different developmental abilities. Similarly, Meyers *et al.*, (2007 p. 313) discuss the unique developmental needs of preteens who are transitioning out of childhood into young adulthood. However, there are multiple studies where the word “youngster”, as in Shenton and Dixon (2004 p. 78), or “youth”, as in Dresang (2005 p. 178) are used to encompass young people from the age of 4 to the age of 18. For the purposes of this discussion, children and young adults under the age of 18 will be considered two subsets of the youth population. This is due to a lack of consensus on the age that a child becomes a young adult and the frequency with which children and young adults are studied together as in the literature.

One theme of information behaviour research centred on youth is their seeking and acquisition of resources (e.g., Detken *et al.*, 2009; Dresang, 2005; Kyoungsik *et al.*, 2021; Markwei & Rasmussen, 2015; Nove & Harisanty, 2019; Reuter, 2007; Shenton & Dixon, 2004). Multiple studies focus on the ways that children and teenagers find materials when visiting the public library (e.g., Detken *et al.*, 2009; Reuter, 2007; Shenton & Dixon, 2004). The primary materials discussed in these studies are physical books and interactions of children and teenagers with the caregivers who bring them to the library, the library staff, and the library catalogues used to access the materials (e.g., Detken *et al.*, 2009; Shenton & Dixon, 2004). Markwei & Rasmussen’s (2015) research on the everyday life information seeking behaviour of homeless youth also suggests that the use of physical materials is dominant in these populations. Some research is centred on specific tools in public libraries and their influence on the ways in which youth search for books, as in a study by Detken *et al.* (2009) about Online Open Access Catalogues (OPACs) and their use by children. Other researchers touch on the way youth search for books, but are focused on other aspects of information

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behaviour such as the decision to read certain books over others (Reuter, 2007), or seeking health information (Kyoungisk *et al.*, 2021).

In contrast to the research on the process of finding materials in the public library, some researchers, as reported in Dresang (2005), focus on the interaction between youth and digital resources at the public library. Research on digital information behaviours may be present in research on the process of finding materials at the public library, as in Detken *et al.* (2009), but it also involves behaviours that are not inherently tied to the public library. Research on such everyday information behaviours is also prominent in the literature (e.g., Buchanan & Tuckerman, 2015; Nielsen & Borlund, 2011 pp. 115-116; Shenton, 2007 pp. 4-6; Walter, 2003 pp. 577-580). Research on everyday information behaviours may also centre around the way youths utilise people in their information seeking and use (e.g., Shenton & Dixon, 2003). The way youths employ people in information behaviours also ties into the research on what influences information behaviours. Sin (2009) focuses on the factors influencing youth information behaviours in public libraries as they pertain to schoolwork, everyday life, and digital resources, while Spears and Mardis (2014) focus on how the specific factor of broadband access influences behaviours, and Barriage (2022) explores how interest drives information practices.

An additional theme within the literature is the ways researchers can most effectively study youth information behaviours (e.g., Barriage, 2016; Lundh, 2016; McKechnie, 2000; Meyers *et al.*, 2007; Shenton & Hay-Gibson, 2011). Some of this research includes discussion of the best models for youth information behaviours (e.g., Shenton & Hay-Gibson, 2011). Other research is centred on specific methodologies currently used in the field (e.g., Barriage, 2016; McKechnie, 2000; Meyers *et al.*, 2007; Wang *et al.*, 2019). There is an emphasis on child-centred methods in the papers that discuss current methodology (e.g., Barriage, 2016 p. 2; Meyers *et al.*, 2007 p. 311). Lundh (2016), in a discourse analysis on the field of youth in information behaviour research, notes that “there seems to be room in the field for creating alternate ways of doing research about and with children”. Ethnographic observation, as in McKechnie (2000), and laddering techniques, as in Wang *et al.* (2019), are examples of alternative

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methodologies when working with preschool age children, while Meyers *et al.* (2007) proposes activity-heavy participatory “Tween Days” as a methodology with preteens.

2.4.3.2 Information behaviour research on public libraries and families

Research on the information behaviours of youth is common in the literature. A related topic is the information behaviours of families. Research on families tends to centre on caregivers (not limited to biological parents) as participants (e.g., Gibson *et al.*, 2017; Gibson & Hanson-Baldauf, 2019; Gibson & Kaplan, 2017; Given *et al.*, 2016; Greyson *et al.*, 2017; Schmidt & Hamilton, 2017; Walker, 2009). There is some research in this area that uses household data instead: here the behaviours of all members living in the same residence are considered (e.g., Gilpin & Bekkerman, 2020; Sin & Kim, 2008).

A section of the literature centred on caregivers includes research on families with neuro-diverse or disabled individuals (e.g., Gibson *et al.*, 2017; Gibson & Hanson-Baldauf, 2019; Gibson & Kaplan, 2017; Hickey *et al.*, 2018; Prendergast, 2016). Of the papers published in this research there is an emphasis on families containing members with autism (e.g., Gibson *et al.*, 2017; Gibson & Hanson-Baldauf, 2019; Hickey *et al.*, 2018). Much of this research is based on public library programmes e.g., Gibson & Hanson-Baldauf (2019) discuss the use of story hours tailored to common needs of children with autism, while Hickey *et al.* (2018) discuss use of a less structured playtime geared towards “sensory-challenged children”. In addition to the research dedicated to families containing members with autism, there is research on families that include members with other mental disabilities and physical disabilities (e.g., Gibson & Kaplan, 2017; Prendergast, 2016). Papers centred on families that include members with disabilities other than autism are less likely to be framed around specific programmes, as in Gibson and Kaplan (2017) where the influence of public library space on information behaviours is discussed, and Prendergast (2016) where the public library experiences of families containing children with disabilities is explored.

There is also research on the information behaviours of families in public libraries that centres on caregivers of children (e.g., Greyson *et al.*, 2017; Walker, 2012). Research in this area include discussions of caregiver opinions of public library resources, as in

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Schmidt and Hamilton (2017), and the information behaviours of caregivers, as in Greyson *et al.* (2017) and Walker (2012). The research centred on caregivers is discussed in the context of the way that information behaviour is influenced by the role of being a caregiver (e.g., Greyson *et al.*, 2017). For example, Greyson *et al.* (2017) discuss the types of sources caregivers utilise when making health decisions for the children of the household, and these sources are found to differ from those that the caregivers would use for personal health decisions. In contrast to research that centres on caregivers, research that discusses the entire household is often framed more generally (e.g., Sin & Kim, 2008). However, even the more general topic of households tends to have an emphasis on the presence of children within the household (e.g., Gilpin & Bekkerman, 2020). The overall trend of research on the information behaviour of families in public libraries is that the presence of children, of any age, is integral to being a family.

2.4.3.3 Information behaviour research on public libraries and older adults

Older adults are also considered to be among the most frequent users of public library services, and are well represented in the literature (Xie & Jaeger, 2008 p. 53). The population of older adults is similar to that of the young, where there is not a clear consensus on the age range (Lenstra *et al.*, 2022 pp. 11-12; Williamson & Asla, 2009 p. 76). The most common age range cited in the literature for the population of older adults is over 65 years old (e.g., Lenstra, 2016; Stanziano, 2016; Uda *et al.*, 2018; Williamson & Asla, 2009). However, there are papers that consider older adults as any person older than 50 years (e.g., Manžuch & Januševičienė, 2015). For the current piece of work, all research referring to older adults or people older than 65 years old are considered relevant, although the majority of papers cited are based on adults older than 60 years of age (e.g., Choi, 2015; Lenstra, 2016; Lenstra *et al.*, 2022; Medlock *et al.*, 2015; Stanziano, 2016; Uda *et al.*, 2018; Williamson & Asla, 2009).

There are three broad topics covered in the literature on the information behaviours of older adults: information behaviours and health, information behaviours and digital resources, and information seeking behaviours. Each is outlined below.

Research on information behaviours of older adults and health often concerns digital resources, as in Medlock *et al.* (2015). However, as health information behaviours

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relating to digital resources is so prominent in the literature it can be considered a distinct topic. A proportion of the research on the health information behaviours of older adults is centred on the use of the Internet to access needed health information (e.g., Choi, 2015; Malone *et al.*, 2017; Medlock *et al.*, 2015; Rubenstein, 2016). In such research, the public library may be presented as tangential to the research, as in Medlock *et al.* (2015), as a place to access the internet, but not otherwise relevant to the information behaviours exhibited. Other research, however, is more clearly connected to public libraries through discussions of programmes and resources provided to strengthen the e-literacy skills of older adults (e.g., Malone *et al.*, 2017; Rubenstein, 2016).

The topic of information behaviours and digital resources covers many aspects of the information behaviours of older adults in public libraries. One area in this topic includes discussions of digital literacy, and the role of the public library in supporting the maintenance and growth of digital literacy in older adults (e.g., Lenstra, 2016; Xie & Jaeger, 2008). The discussion in this research tends to focus on the users of current programmes and resources provided by public libraries for older adults (e.g., Cavanagh & Robbins, 2012; Lenstra *et al.*, 2022; Xie & Jaeger, 2008). An exception to this trend is Manžuch and Januševičienė (2015) in their exploration into the reasons that some older adults do not use public library resources.

Information seeking behaviour in older adults is a third topic represented in the literature (e.g., Choi, 2015; Lenstra, 2017; Stanziano, 2016; Uda *et al.*, 2018). Research in this area centres on the specific aspect of information seeking, rather than information behaviours as a whole. Current research on information seeking in older adults is often framed as Internet-based information seeking (e.g., Choi, 2015, Lenstra, 2017; Uda *et al.*, 2018). Some of this research refers to internet provision in public libraries (e.g., Uda *et al.*, 2018; Lenstra, 2017). Uda *et al.*, (2018) discusses the information seeking behaviours of older adults in the context of searching for materials at the public library, while Lenstra (2017) discusses the effects ageism in technology support services has on older adults. In contrast, Stanziano (2016) explores the general information seeking behaviours of older adults, not limited to digital resources. More recently, Lund and Ma (2022) explore the information seeking

behaviours of rural older adults in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, making note that some resources such as public libraries are limited.

2.5 Information behaviour research related to newcomers

Newcomers are the target of multiple research projects in fields such as communication and media, sociology, library and information science, and immigrant and refugee studies (Caidi *et al.*, 2010 p. 494, 499). The continued growth of newcomer populations around the world has encouraged a large amount of research on them (Caidi *et al.*, 2010 p. 493). A main purpose of public libraries is to provide resources to enhance quality of life, whether in leisure or in work (e.g., ALA, 2016; CILIP, 2015) and a portion of public library research is dedicated to the information behaviours of newcomers in the context of public libraries.

Here, an overview of the research on the information behaviours of newcomers is given followed by an exploration of the literature on the use of newcomer sub-groups as participants. Then the research on information behaviours of newcomers outwith public libraries is considered. An in-depth review of the literature on the information behaviours of newcomers in the context of public libraries is presented and concludes with the proposal that while research on the information behaviours of newcomers in the context of public libraries is robust in some areas, there is a bias in the literature towards public libraries as service providers, and a gap in the consideration of why newcomers exhibit particular information behaviours in the context of public libraries.

2.5.1 Newcomer subpopulations

As with youth and older adults, the broad population of newcomers can be separated into sub-groups, i.e., migrant workers, international students, immigrants, and forced migrants (Lloyd, 2017a pp. 37-38; Marshall *et al.*, 2020 p. 850; Peterson, 2014 p. 392; Sin, 2015 p. 466). The most prominent newcomer sub-group discussed in the literature are immigrants (e.g., Adenkambi, 2019; Dali, 2012; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Hultgren, 2013; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Marshall *et al.*, 2020; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Shuva, 2020, 2022; Silvio, 2006; Sirikul & Dorner, 2016; Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007). Migrant workers may be included in this category, as in Fisher *et al.* (2004b), or may be considered on their own, as in Peterson (2014). Research on the sub-group of forced migrants is becoming more prevalent in the

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literature, although research in this area is still nascent (e.g., Bletscher, 2019; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Martzoukou, 2020; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018).

There is discussion in the literature over whether it is appropriate for each sub-group of newcomers to create a single population. This is because migrant workers, international students, immigrants, and forced migrants may have very different needs, behaviours, and backgrounds (Lloyd, 2017a p. 35; Marshal *et al.*, 2020 p. 850; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018 p. 1105). However, this discussion is a recent addition in the literature, and researchers often use different terms interchangeably (e.g., Johnston & Audunson, 2019) or the broad term newcomer (e.g., Shepherd *et al.*, 2018). For the purposes of this thesis, the term newcomer will be used to discuss the broad area of research on information behaviours in public libraries which consider migrant workers, international students, immigrants, and forced migrants. For discussion of specific sub-groups of newcomers, the appropriate population will be identified.

2.5.2 Information behaviour research and specific newcomer populations

There is a large amount of research relevant to the topic of information behaviours of newcomer populations (Caidi *et al.*, 2010 p. 494). Research on this topic ranges from research on everyday information behaviours, e.g., Khoir *et al.* (2015), to newcomer perceptions of resources, e.g., Van der Linden *et al.* (2014), to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), e.g., Borkert *et al.* (2018), to the strategies newcomers use to navigate the physical environment of their new locations, e.g., Lingel (2011). Research is found within a variety of fields outside of LIS, e.g., communications, psychology, sociology (Caidi *et al.*, 2010 p. 494, 499). Research may discuss information behaviours explicitly e.g., Nguyen *et al.* (2010), or implicitly e.g., Tse and Lee (1994). Within the field of library and information science, research on the information behaviours of newcomer populations is found both outwith the context of the public library, e.g., Hassan and Wolfram (2019), and within the context of the public library, e.g., Khoir *et al.* (2017).

Research on the information behaviours of newcomers outwith the context of public libraries is sometimes centred on specific newcomer sub-populations, such as international students (e.g., Hertzum & Hyldegård, 2019; Oh & Butler, 2019; Oh *et al.*,

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2014; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013). A large portion of the research on academic libraries is centred on the information seeking and use of international students in academic libraries (Oh & Butler, 2019 p. 1061). An exception to this is work by Salzano *et al.* (2020b), in which research with international students is focused on public library use. Research centred on academic libraries may be framed around general library use by international students, as in Mengxiong and Redfern (1997), or language barriers that international students may encounter, as in Amsberry (2008). A portion of the research with international students has a focus on everyday information behaviours (e.g., Hertzum & Hyldegård, 2019; Oh & Butler, 2019; Oh *et al.*, 2014; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013). Such research includes discussions of popular information sources (e.g., Sin, 2015 p. 471), navigation of the physical environment (e.g., Oh *et al.*, 2014 p. 2), and the use of social media (e.g., Sin & Kim, 2013 pp. 113-115). These themes are mirrored in research on other newcomer sub-groups outwith public libraries.

Immigrants are common participants in research on information behaviours of newcomers outwith public libraries (e.g., Marshall *et al.*, 2020). Forced migrants are another common sub-group of newcomers recruited as participants in research (e.g., Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013). Everyday information behaviours are often the topic of research, as with work by Hultgren (2013) on occupational information seeking by immigrants in Sweden and work by Hassan and Wolfram (2019) on the information behaviours of African refugees in the United States. Oduntan and Ruthven (2019) explored information needs to create an information needs matrix to help guide integration efforts. In particular, the information needs of forced migrants matched with stages of Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* (Maslow, 1943). Although Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* is rarely present in other research on the information behaviours of newcomers (Oh & Lee, 2019 note that Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* may be at play in the information behaviours of international students), it is a theory which complements the topic. The five levels of need posited by the hierarchy (Maslow, 1943) can be considered to align with information needed to establish oneself in a new community.

Caidi *et al.* (2010) present an overview of the state of research on information practices of immigrants, drawing from research in library and information science as

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well as other fields to discuss information needs, information seeking, and information use by immigrants. Refugees are mentioned as newcomers in Caidi *et al.* (2010), but are not considered separately in the discussion. In contrast, Fisher (2018) discusses the information worlds of refugees exclusively, including their information practices, with particular attention to the role ICTs play in their lives. The role of ICTs in the information behaviours in newcomer populations is a popular area of research, e.g., Bletscher (2019), Borkert *et al.* (2018), Pyati *et al.* (2008), and Srinivasan and Pyati (2007), and ICTs have been shown to be influential in the everyday lives of newcomers.

2.5.3 Information behaviour research related to newcomers and public libraries

Within public libraries, research on the information behaviours of newcomer populations discusses similar themes to research outwith public libraries (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Fisher *et al.*, 2004b; Khoir *et al.*, 2015). However, as with research in the context of academic libraries, the research within the public library context is often framed around the role that public libraries play in their communities (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Arns *et al.* 2012; 2013; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Khan, 2009; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Martzoukou, 2020; Peterson, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Shuva, 2022; Vårheim, 2011).

2.5.3.1 Findings from prior research on information behaviours of newcomers and public library provision

Newcomers to a community are a population that are often served by public libraries. However, research on newcomers in public libraries is still a developing topic in the literature (Lloyd, 2017a p. 35). In the context of public libraries, there is a lack of research on international students, as international students tend to use available academic libraries (Oh *et al.*, 2014).

The research on newcomer information behaviours in public libraries can be separated into three topics: current uses of public library resources, information behaviours or practices (including information seeking behaviours and information needs of

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newcomers), and discussions of appropriate methodologies in the research (see Table 2.3).

Current Use of Public Library Resources	Direct Mention of Information Behaviours or Practices	Appropriate Methodologies
Aabø & Audunson (2012); Audunson <i>et al.</i> (2011); Berger (2002); Burke (2008); Dali (2012); Johnston (2016), (2018); Johnston & Audunson (2019); Khoir <i>et al.</i> (2017); Shepherd <i>et al.</i> (2018); Shoham & Rabinovich (2008); Shuva (2022); Vårheim (2011), (2014)	Adekanmbi (2019); Borkert <i>et al.</i> (2018); Caidi <i>et al.</i> (2010); Fisher <i>et al.</i> (2004a); Fisher <i>et al.</i> (2004b); Hultgren (2013); Lloyd <i>et al.</i> (2013); Martzoukou (2020); Martzoukou & Burnett (2018); Matchet & Govender (2012); Peterson (2014); Shuva (2020); Silvio (2006); Sirikul & Dorner (2016)	Hicks & Lloyd (2018); Lloyd (2017a); Srinivasan & Pyati (2007); Williment & Jones-Grant (2012)

Table 2.3 Sections of research on broad information behaviours by newcomer populations

Much of this research is framed around current use of public library resources. Researchers may discuss current programmes provided by public libraries, as in Johnston (2016 ;2018) and Johnston & Audunson (2019), specific resources used by newcomer populations, as in Berger (2002), or the ways that public library use affects newcomers, as in Vårheim (2011; 2014). Research in which information behaviours are discussed may cover broad information behaviours, as in Caidi *et al.* (2010), examine information practices rather than behaviours, as in Lloyd *et al.* (2013), centre on the information seeking behaviours of newcomers, as in Silvio (2006), or explore the information needs of newcomers, as in Martzoukou and Burnett (2018). Research on the information needs of newcomers often overlaps with research on broad information behaviours, as in Borkert *et al.* (2018), or information seeking behaviours, as in Silvio (2006). In this research appropriate methodologies are also covered. This tends to focus on the actual methodologies of a study, as in the discussion of visual communication methods by Hicks and Lloyd (2018). An exception is Lloyd (2017) in a discussion on the implications of undertaking research with refugees, and Fisher (2022) in an introduction to a research framework for conducting research with refugees.

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As one of the main provisions of public libraries is access to physical, digital, and programme-based resources, much of the research on the information behaviours of newcomers within the context of public libraries is centred on the use of public library resources (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2009; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Dali, 2021; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Khan, 2009; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Peterson, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Shuva, 2022; Vårheim, 2011; 2014). In many papers, the most used resources are identified, as are most requested resources (e.g., Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2009; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Peterson, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Silvio, 2006). Usage is primarily considered through the use of quantitative data, such as borrowing statistics, and programme attendance numbers (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Huysmans & Oomes, 2013; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014). Qualitative measures may be deployed in this work, for example to provide a degree of understanding about newcomers' perceptions of public library services (Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shuva, 2022; Silvio, 2006; Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012). The resources and services with which newcomer populations engage most frequently are summarised in Table 2.4.

In public libraries newcomers use/engage with	Identified by	Notes
Print material	Berger (2002); Burke (2008); Dali (2012); Dali (2021); Fisher <i>et al.</i> , (2004a); Shepherd <i>et al.</i> , (2018); Shuva (2022);	With the exception of Berger (2002) and Dali (2021) all note that this usage is comparable to established communities. Shuva (2022) notes a gap in the literature on how “pre-migration” experiences with public libraries may influence engagement in host countries.
Computers	Berger (2002); Burke (2008); Dali (2021); Fisher <i>et al.</i> , (2004a); Shepherd <i>et al.</i> , (2018)	Audunson <i>et al.</i> (2011) and Serra and Revez (2023) mention the possibility that such experiences may influence newcomer engagement, but do not explore the possibility further.
Physical space for personal and professional tasks	Aabø & Audunson (2012); Audunson <i>et al.</i> , (2011); Berger (2002); Dali (2021); Shepherd <i>et al.</i> , (2018)	There is particularly high usage amongst female users from religiously conservative families (Audunson <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Berger, 2002; Shepherd <i>et al.</i> , 2018). It is intimated that this may be related to social norms of what spaces are appropriate for different members of society, (e.g., women, children, etc.) in specific cultures.
Resources to learn the language of host countries	Burke (2008); Fisher <i>et al.</i> , (2004a); Johnston (2016); Khoir <i>et al.</i> , (2017); Kumaran & Salt (2010); Van der Linden <i>et al.</i> , (2014); Shepherd <i>et al.</i> , (2018)	
Citizenship classes	Fisher <i>et al.</i> (2004a); Vårheim (2014)	
Native language resources	Al-Qallaf & Mika (2009); Audunson <i>et al.</i> , (2011); Burke (2008); Van der Linden <i>et al.</i> , (2014); Shoham & Rabinovich, (2008)	Provision is constrained by the budgets of ‘host’ public libraries (Van der Linden <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008)

Table 2.4 Public library resources and services most used by newcomers

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In the literature pertaining to current use of public library resources, the emphasis is on how public library resources are being used, and how the resources support newcomers. Language resources provided in public libraries are frequently discussed in the research (e.g., Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2009 pp. 142-143; Audunson *et al.*, 2011 p. 224; Burke, 2008 p. 35-36; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 721; Johnston, 2016 p. 13; Khoir *et al.*, 2017 p. 38; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014 p. 71; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018 pp. 590-591; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008 pp. 24-25). Native language resources are often requested by newcomer populations, as identified by Van der Linden *et al.* (2014 p. 71), but some researchers report that newcomers prefer resources in the language of the host country (e.g., Khoir *et al.*, 2017 p. 38). Audunson *et al.* (2011 p. 224) note that host country language resources may be used to enhance the language skills of newcomers in their study on the role of the public library as a meeting place for immigrant women. Many researchers discuss the importance of host country language resources provided through public library programmes to newcomer integration (Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016). Such programmes have been shown to not only support host country language skills in newcomers, as in Johnston (2016 p. 13), but also to increase their social networks and overall integration, as in Fisher *et al.* (2004a p. 721). Similarly, Johnston and Audunson (2019) identify the public library as playing a key role in the political integration of newcomers, particularly through the use of conversation-based programming.

The importance of public library resources to newcomer integration is a further theme found in research on current resource use (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012 p.148; Audunson *et al.*, 2011 p. 224; Caidi & Allard, 2005 p. 320; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 761; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019 p. 237; Khoir *et al.*, 2015 p. 96; Khoir *et al.*, 2017 p. 41-42; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018 p. 592; Vårheim, 2011 p. 17; 2014). Researchers often suggest that resources provided by public libraries can support newcomer integration (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 761; Johnston, 2016 p. 15). Citizenship classes are one such resource that some public libraries provide, as discussed by Fisher *et al.* (2004a p. 759) and Vårheim (2014 p. 63), which directly impacts newcomer integration. The concept of social capital i.e., the benefits derived from an individual's social connections, is also positively related to integration of

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newcomers (Vårheim, 2011 p. 18; 2014 p. 62). Johnston (2016 p. 15), Khoir *et al.* (2015 p. 96), Khoir *et al.* (2017 p. 41-42), and Vårheim (2011 p. 17-18; 2014 p. 62) indicate that programmes provided by the public library can increase the social capital of newcomers. Likewise, Audunson *et al.* (2011 pp. 224-226) found that the physical space of public libraries positively influences the integration of immigrants by increasing trust in the host society and providing a safe arena to develop relationships with other public library users. Berger (2002) notes that library spaces may be particularly valued by women from cultures in which social norms for women's movements are more restrictive than the social norms of the host country. The importance of the public library space is reiterated by Shuva (2022 p. 12), where participants are identified as using public library spaces for studying and learning about Canadian culture. A further finding by Shuva (2022 p. 8) is that public library use often decreases over time, as immigrants feel more comfortable in their new communities and finished learning programmes.

Although much of this research espouses the value that public libraries provide for newcomers, there are indications that public libraries are not their primary sources of information. Indeed Fisher *et al.* (2004a) found in a study of immigrant workers in New York that they placed heavy reliance on their personal networks for information, rather than other information sources. Sirikul and Dorner (2016) reported similar findings, with personal sources, media, and religious sources acting as primary information sources. Equally, in a later overview of research on the information behaviours of forced migrants, Fisher (2018, p. 86) reports the primacy of accessing information from people, attributing this in part to higher trust in sources that are not associated with official channels. Similarly, in their exploration of the use of ICTs by forced migrants in Europe, Borkert *et al.* (2018 p. 6) also found that libraries were rarely used due to a preference for accessing information from community members.

The focus in much of the work cited here is the more evident information behaviours rather than their less visible determinants. For example, apart from some discussion in Fisher (2018) of the trustworthiness of information sources, the reasons behind the tendency of immigrant populations to rely on community sources of information are

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not discussed in the three outputs cited above that identify this trait (Borkert *et al.*, 2018; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Fisher, 2018).

2.5.3.2 Recommendations on public library service provision for newcomers

A facet of the literature on the information behaviours of newcomers in the context of public libraries is the inclusion of recommendations on serving newcomers in public libraries (e.g., Allen, 2001; Berger, 2002; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Khan, 2009; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Peterson, 2014; Silvio, 2006; Vimercati & Pirola, 2011; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004; Vårheim, 2011; 2014; Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012; WTYL Steering Group, 2008). In some cases, recommendations are provided in the same papers as discussions of current resource use in newcomer populations (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Shuva, 2022; Silvio, 2006; Vårheim, 2011; 2014). In other papers, recommendations are offered based on practitioner experience e.g., Khan (2009), government recommendations e.g., U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (2004), or empirical research on best practices e.g., Peterson (2014). A number of papers in the area of service recommendation comes from practitioners in public libraries, rather than academic researchers (e.g., Allen, 2001; Khan, 2009; Vimercati & Pirola, 2011; WTYL Steering Group, 2008).

Service recommendations are often based on 'black box' case studies conducted in a specific type of public library or a specific geographic region (e.g., Berger, 2002; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Khan, 2009; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Peterson, 2014; Shuva, 2022; Silvio, 2006; US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004; Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012; WTYL Steering Group, 2008). In some case studies specific programmes provided by public libraries are reviewed, as in research by Fisher *et al.* (2004a) on how public library programmes can function as information grounds for immigrants in New York City. Similarly, Johnston (2016; 2018) and Johnston and Audunson (2019) discuss the importance of language-based public library programmes to newcomer integration in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The recommendations of research into the efficacy of public library programmes relates to the programmes themselves. Fisher *et al.* (2004a p. 764) recommend that decisions regarding service provision for newcomers be considered in

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the context of outcome evaluation and strive to incorporate social interaction into programmes. Johnston (2016 p. 16) notes the importance of language-based public library programmes to the strengthening the social networks of newcomers, and recommends that such programmes continue to be developed in public libraries, a recommendation reiterated in Johnston (2018 p. 138) and Johnston and Audunson (2019 p. 237). 0

Service recommendations based on practitioner experience may be in the form of a report on a programme provided at a specific public library e.g., Vimercati and Pirola (2011), or as a report on general best practices e.g., Allen (2001). The WTYL Steering Group (2008) and Vimercati and Pirola (2011) both report on library programmes that are in place to serve newcomer communities in London, UK, and Milan, Italy, respectively. Successful programmes that meet outcomes, such as “The Living Library” discussed by Vimercati and Pirola (2011 p. 391-392), may be framed as role models for replica programmes in the literature. In contrast, the report on the “Welcome to Your Library” series of events recommends the adoption of a collaborative learning framework in programme development (WTYL Steering Group, 2008 p. 20).

Discussions of success factors are also often found in practitioner papers reporting on general best practices (e.g., Allen, 2001; Khan, 2009), or government reports on standards (e.g., US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004). Khan (2009 p. 38) discusses best practices based on experiences with migrant workers in Warwickshire public libraries, and emphasises the importance of multi-lingual materials. Allen (2001 p. 17) also recommends multi-lingual materials based on a training course provided for library staff on how best to serve refugees. Best practice recommendations from training courses and practitioner workshops may also be reported by government bodies (e.g., US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004). The report by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (2004) is constructed from practitioner self-reports and contains recommendations similar to those found in papers written by practitioners. Although useful, the findings of much of this research may not be generalisable, and recommendations not transferable from one context to another.

Some researchers acknowledge the issue of generalisability as it pertains to their findings (e.g., Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 763). In addition to generalisability issues due to

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only a single public library or region being considered, there is a broader generalisability limitation in the literature. Papers containing recommendations follow the geographic pattern of the broad literature of published English language public library research, i.e., the majority of papers published in English are based on work in Australia, Nordic countries, North America, and the UK (e.g., Allen, 2001; Berger, 2002; Fisher *et al.*, 2004; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Khan, 2009; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Peterson, 2014; Silvio, 2006; US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004; Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012; WTYL Steering Group, 2008). There are few papers from other countries (e.g., Vimercati & Pirola, 2009). As a result, the consistency of recommendations, such as the importance of multi-lingual materials, may not be as consistent as it appears.

2.5.3.3 The perspective taken in research on information behaviours of newcomers and public libraries

In research on the information behaviours of newcomer populations in public libraries the perspective of service providers (Allen, 2001; Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Vårheim, 2011), and the resources they offer (Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Peterson, 2014; Silvio, 2006; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004), are privileged in contrast to newcomer perspectives. For example, in Allen's (2001) work, service recommendations are expressed in the context of the services that public libraries should provide, rather than the services that refugees need. Although such recommendations are made in response to "real needs" (p. 17), they are considered from the current capabilities and perspectives of public library services (Allen, 2001). A portion of the current research uses public library staff as participants rather than newcomers, resulting in conclusions that are biased towards the needs perceived by public library staff rather than expressed needs of newcomers (e.g., Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2009; Allen, 2001; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Peterson, 2014; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004; Vårheim, 2011; Williment & Jones-Grant, 2012; WTYL Steering Group 2008).

Within the literature there is also an emphasis on the current resources provided by public libraries (e.g., Berger, 2002; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Peterson, 2014; Silvio, 2006; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2004), and the benefits that newcomers

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gain from using public libraries (e.g., Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Shuva, 2022; Vårheim, 2011; 2014). In a paper discussing public library services for newcomers in Denmark, for example, Berger (2002) reported on the current library services such as physical materials, internet access, and the public library as a physical space to use. Similarly, Dali (2012) reports on reading practices of immigrants in Canada, with an emphasis on books, as supported by public libraries. Such discussions, while important to continued effective service, limit the conversation to existing services and can ignore possible future services.

Research that explores the effects public library use has on newcomer integration are often centred around current service provision, and are meant to showcase the important role public libraries play in their communities (e.g., Johnston, 2016; Vårheim, 2014). Vårheim (2014 p. 67) discusses the role public libraries play in increasing the trust of refugees in a Norwegian city, while Johnston (2016 p. 15) suggests that language-based programmes support newcomer integration. Although these results support the argument for continued public library funding, the emphasis is on the importance of the public library rather than the needs of newcomers.

On the basis of the literature on the information behaviours of newcomers in the context of public libraries, it can be concluded that current research has a greater emphasis on the types of public library resources that newcomers use than on the reasons for their use. A major limitation of these studies, however, is that they are often case studies with possible generalisability issues. In addition, the majority of research papers come out of a limited number of geographic reasons, namely Australia, Nordic countries, North America, and the UK (e.g., Allen, 2001; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Khoir *et al.*, 2015; Khoir *et al.*, 2017). This clustering of studies in specific geographic regions adds to the question of the generalisability of results. There is also a bias in the literature towards the perspective of public libraries as service providers rather than towards the perspectives of new-comers as service users. The research is often approached with questions about “how the public library is used”, rather than the question “why is the public library used in this way”. From the review of the literature, the opportunity for further research on the topic of why

newcomers exhibit particular information behaviours in the context of public libraries is evident.

2.6 Culture in academic research

The study of culture is found in many fields, and researchers have shown that an individual's culture may influence behaviours, including information behaviours (Kitayama & Uskul, 2011 p. 421; Koltko-Rivera, 2004 p. 23). In the field of library and information science, culture is often used to explore information behaviours, as noted by Caidi *et al.* (2010) in a literature review conducted to address the information behaviours of immigrants (p. 294).

Here, the concept of culture as it is used in research is considered. Particular attention is given to research on the information behaviours of newcomer populations. This is done to determine current knowledge about the cultural factors that may influence information behaviours of newcomers.

The text is arranged as follows: it begins with an introduction to the fields of study in which culture is well-known, and the ways culture is addressed in those fields. Then definitions of culture and the measures of types of culture are covered. In particular, those definitions and measures that are most well-known and best supported by research are addressed. Finally, the ways that the concept of culture is addressed in LIS research is explored, specifically with regards to the information behaviours of newcomers. In conclusion, the weakness of using different types of culture interchangeably is presented alongside the importance of defining the term "culture".

2.6.1 Definitions and dimensions of culture in academic research

There are multiple definitions of the term culture. As noted by Mu *et al.* (2018, p. 1090), there is no single definition of the concept "culture". For example, in the 1950s, researchers found 164 distinct definitions of culture in research (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952 cited by Taras *et al.*, 2009 p. 358) and since then further reviews indicate that the number of definitions has increased (Taras *et al.*, 2009 p. 358). The number of definitions given to culture is overwhelming, but similarities such as mentions of sharedness (e.g., Fischer & Schwartz, 2011 p. 1129; Schwartz, 2014 p. 144; Taras *et al.*, 2009 p. 145) and values (Fischer & Schwartz, 2011 p. 1128) indicate that aspects of

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many definitions can be consolidated. See Table 2.5 for a list of common traits in some definitions of culture. In Table 2.5 citations in bold are from the LIS literature.

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Aspects of Culture	Evident In	Sample Definition	Notes
Artefacts	Taras <i>et al.</i> (2009 p.359)	'Culture is a group's shared set of distinct basic assumptions, values, practices, and artifacts that are formed and retained over a long period of time.'	
Behaviours/ Practices	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018 p. 11406); Brown (1991) cited by Minkov <i>et al.</i> (2013 p. 1095); Kim (2013 p. 242); Kitayama & Uskul (2011 p. 421); Merriam-Webster (n.d.); Taras <i>et al.</i> (2009 p. 359); Yeh (2007)	'Culture is the socially acceptable patterns of behaving and thinking that are historically transmitted as patterns of meaning; these patterns of meaning are symbolic and allow individuals to develop and share attitudes toward and knowledge about life.'	
Norms	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018 p. 11405); Yeh (2007)	'Culture is patterns of behaviour, both explicit and implicit, that derive from a society's history. The values and norms of an individual produce actions that are reinforced by historical patterns driven by culture and further legitimise those behaviours.'	
Pattern	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018 p. 11405); Brown (1991) cited by Minkov <i>et al.</i> (2013 p. 1095); Kim (2013 p. 242); Merriam-Webster (n.d.)	'Culture can be defined as the thought patterns and behaviours passed down through generations.'	
Sharedness	Hofstede (1980 p. 43); Kim (2013 p. 242); Kitayama & Uskul (2011 p. 421); Merriam-Webster (n.d.); Reckwitz (2002 p. 246); Shoham & Rabinovich (2008 p. 22); Taras <i>et al.</i> (2009 p. 359); Yeh (2007);	Culture is a 'collective mental programming' that can be found on a national level.	Hofstede (1980 p. 43), Shoham & Rabinovich (2008) and Yeh (2007) do not use the word 'shared', but it is implied in their definitions of culture.
Symbolic	Kim (2013 p. 242); Reckwitz (2002 p. 246); Yeh (2007)	'Culture is the symbolic structures of knowledge which underpin a society which enables a society to have a 'shared way' of assigning meaning to the world.'	
Tradition	Shoham & Rabinovich (2008 p. 22); Yeh (2007)	'People are born and grow up in the symbolic community. How to behave to fit the social norm is taught and transmitted from generation to generation. It is tradition and tradition is culture.'	
Transmitted	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018 p. 11406); Brown (1991) cited by Minkov <i>et al.</i> (2013 p. 1095); Kim (2013 p. 242); Merriam-Webster (n.d.); Shoham & Rabinovich (2008 p. 22); Yeh (2007)	Culture is 'the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. It is the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time...the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.'	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018), Brown (1991) cited by Minkov <i>et al.</i> (2013 p. 1095), and Shoham & Rabinovich (2008) do not use the word 'transmitted', but it is implied in their definitions of culture.
Values	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018 p. 111406); Haywood (1995 p. 129) cited by Caidi & Allard (2005 p. 316); Kitayama & Uskul (2011 p. 421); Shoham & Rabinovich (2008 p. 22); Taras <i>et al.</i> (2009 p. 359)	'Culture can be defined as the values (general goal states) and practices that are collectively distributed and shared by a group of people.'	

Table 2.5 Aspects of culture evident in a selection of definitions

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Although many definitions of culture include the concept of 'values', research by Fischer and Schwartz (2011 p. 1140) indicates that values may be less related to culture than previous research suggests, especially as they pertain to cultural differences.

Just as there are many definitions of culture, there are multiple dimensions on which researchers measure different cultures. According to Taras *et al.* (2009 p. 360), the elements of culture described by Hofstede (1980) are some of the most enduring dimensions of culture throughout the literature.

The four initial dimensions of culture conceived by Hofstede (1980) are individualism versus collectivism, masculine versus feminine, power-distance (large or small), and uncertainty avoidance (high or low) (pp. 45-47). In subsequent work two additional dimensions were identified: long-term orientation versus short-term orientation (Hofstede, 2001 cited by Khosrowjerdi, 2020 p. 713) and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010).

Further well-known conceptualisations of culture include high versus low context (Hall, 1976 pp. 101-103), tightness versus looseness (Gelfand *et al.*, 2006 p. 1227), and Western versus non-Western (e.g., Johnston, 2018 p. 132; Lillard, 1998 p. 3; Suh, 2011 p. 1379). Table 2.6 summarises the dimensions of culture discussed above and the research in which they have been used. In Table 2.6 citations in bold are from the LIS literature.

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Type of Culture	Definition	Utilised in this Research	Notes
Individualism vs. Collectivism	Individualism describes a society where one expects to take care of themselves and immediate family with little consideration outside of it. Collectivism describes a tightly bound society separated into in-groups and out-groups where one expects that their in-group will take care of them in exchange for absolute loyalty.	Atwater <i>et al.</i> (2019); Hofstede (1980); Hofstede & Bond (1984); Huff & Kelley (2003); Kitayama & Uskul (2011); Koltko-Rivera (2004); Pattaratanakun & Mak (2015); Mu <i>et al.</i> (2018); Suh (2001); Tsai <i>et al.</i> (2006)	In some papers this dimension is used interchangeably with Western vs. non-Western (e.g., Medin & Bang, 2014; Pattaratanakun & Mak, 2015; Suh, 2001; Tsai <i>et al.</i> , 2006).
Masculinity vs. Femininity	Masculinity is the extent to which a society values 'masculine' attributes, such as assertiveness, acquisition of money and things, and <i>not</i> caring for others, quality of life, and the environment. Femininity is the extent to which a society values 'feminine' attributes such as the importance of quality of life, more fluid understanding of sex roles in society, and motivation driven by service.	Baptista & Oliveira (2015); Hofstede (1980); Hofstede & Bond (1984); Mu <i>et al.</i> (2018)	
Power Distance	Power distance is the extent to which society accepts unequal power distributions in organisations and institutions.	Atwater <i>et al.</i> (2019); Hofstede (1980); Hofstede & Bond (1984); Mu <i>et al.</i> (2018)	
Uncertainty Avoidance	Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations.	Atwater <i>et al.</i> (2019); Hofstede (1980); Hofstede & Bond (1984); Mu <i>et al.</i> (2018)	
Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation	Long-term orientation is the extent to which societies value individuals preparing for future rewards, particularly through perseverance and thrift. Short-term orientation is the extent to which societies value individuals considering the past or the current time most important, with an emphasis on respect for tradition, preservation of 'face', and fulfilling social obligations.	Hofstede <i>et al.</i> , (2010); Khosrowjerdi (2020) ; Minkov & Hofstede (2012); Mu <i>et al.</i> (2018)	
Indulgence vs. Restraint	Indulgence is the extent to which a society values an individual's pursuit of 'happiness' and personal fulfilment. Restraint is the extent to which a society values an individual's adherence to social norms and that personal desires and happiness are constrained by those norms.	Hofstede <i>et al.</i> (2010); Khosrowjerdi (2020) ; Mu <i>et al.</i> (2018)	
High vs. Low Context	High context is when information is communicated less through the explicit, transmitted part of a message and more through implicit and indirect messages. Low context is when the majority of information is transmitted through explicit and direct modes, such as speech.	Hall (1976); Hofstede <i>et al.</i> (2010); Kim (2013)	
Tightness vs. Looseness	Tightness is when a society has strong (large number and clear) social norms and a low tolerance for deviance from those norms. Looseness is when a society has less strong norms and a high tolerance for deviance from those norms.	Gelfand (2006); Minkov <i>et al.</i> (2013)	
Western vs. non-Western	Based on geographical regions, Western refers to North American, European, Australian, and New Zealand regions of the world, while non-Western refers to the remainder.	Brady <i>et al.</i> (2018); Hofstede <i>et al.</i> (2010); Johnston (2018) ; Keller (2013); Kitayama & Uskul (2011); Lillard (1998); Medin & Bang (2014); Miyamoto <i>et al.</i> (2018); Pattaratanakun & Mak (2015); Suh (2001); Tsai <i>et al.</i> (2006);	A number of researchers compare Western regions and East Asian regions, rather than Western vs. non-Western (e.g., Miyamoto <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Pattaratanakun & Mak, 2015; Suh, 2001). In some papers this is used interchangeably with individualism vs. collectivism (e.g., Medin & Bang, 2014; Pattaratanakun & Mak, 2015; Suh, 2001; Tsai <i>et al.</i> , 2006).

Table 2.6 Definitions of common terms for different cultures

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The dimensions of culture in Table 2.6 are those most commonly noted in the extant research. In research such as Kim (2013), multiple dimensions of culture may be considered, such as a combination of individualism versus collectivism and high versus low context to explore perception and recall of information. It is important to note that in some papers individualism versus collectivism is used interchangeably with Western versus non-Western (e.g., Medin & Bang, 2014; Pattaratanakun & Mak, 2015; Suh, 2001; Tsai *et al.*, 2006). This presents possible limitations as Western and non-Western are based on geographical regions while individualism and collectivism are based on values and behavioural patterns. The lack of clarity of what constitutes a difference between Western and non-Western in terms of culture indicates that caution should be taken when using these terms. Therefore, in this PhD the dimension of Western and non-Western will be used only in quotations from the literature or participants.

2.6.2 Academic fields which commonly use the concept of culture

The concept of culture is present in fields of studies ranging from anthropology (e.g., Brown, 2008; Fox *et al.*, 2017), to business (e.g., Atwater *et al.*, 2019; Gallivan & Srite, 2005; Hofstede, 1980; Huff & Kelley, 2003; Karahanna, 2005; Taras *et al.*, 2009), to computer science (e.g., Babtista & Oliveira, 2015; Striphas, 2015), to psychology (e.g., Fischer & Schwartz, 2011; Keller, 2013; Medin & Bang, 2014; Minkov *et al.*, 2013; Miyamoto *et al.*, 2018; Schwartz, 2014; Suh, 2002; Tsai *et al.*, 2006). The term is most prevalent in anthropology, psychology, and business (Taras *et al.*, 2009 p. 358).

As fields of study have priorities, the concept of culture is addressed differently in the individual fields. A discussion of culture as it pertains to organisational structure (e.g., Gallivan & Srite, 2005 p. 296) is more likely to be found in the field of business.

Whereas a discussion of a specific cultural ritual conducted by a society (e.g., Godelier, 2010) is more likely to be found in the field of anthropology. Below, the ways culture in which is addressed in the fields of anthropology, psychology, and business, as well as library and information science are explored.

2.6.2.1 Anthropology

Anthropology, which comprises the study of humans, human behaviour, and societies, is well-situated to undertake the study of culture. Indeed, anthropology is one of the

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original fields that considered culture (Mu *et al.*, 2018 p. 1089). Anthropological research on culture is largely concerned with what drives human behaviours of different social groups and the variances between social groups based on those behaviours. The concept of culture has been used in anthropology to differentiate separate societies since the 1800s (e.g., Jackson, 1868). The use of the concept of culture has undergone waves of disapproval and overzealousness in the field of anthropology, as discussed by Mazzarella (2004 p. 350). Much of the research on culture in anthropology is ethnographic (e.g., Brown, 2008; Godelier, 2010; Steinmüller, 2011). In Brown (2008), the ways that culture is treated by the U.S. military treats in times of war, with particular emphasis on the differences between military branches, is explored (p. 444). However, some researchers, such as Mazzarella (2004) and Fox *et al.* (2017), discuss culture through a theoretical approach. For example, Mazzarella (2004) reviews the impact of globalization on the treatment of culture in anthropology, and the role of both in studies of media. In the results it is indicated that the social dealings driven by media affect a society's culture (p. 360).

2.6.2.2 Psychology

As with anthropological research, psychology uses the concept of culture to discuss differences between groups of people, with special attention given to how behaviours and thought processes are affected. Psychological research on culture covers topics from emotion recognition (e.g., Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002) to human development (e.g., Keller, 2013). This research sometimes takes the form of ethnographies (e.g., Lillard, 1998) but a large amount of research is conducted with other methodologies (e.g., Miyamoto *et al.*, 2018; Pattaratanakun & Mak, 2015; Suh, 2002), or is theoretical (e.g., Bhugra, 2003; Kitayama & Uskul, 2011; Schwartz, 2014). For example, Pattaratanakun and Mak (2015) use behavioural experiments to investigate the ways collectivist cultures differ from individualist cultures during search-tasks; Kitayama and Uskul (2011) argue for a 'new model of neuro-cultural interaction' in psychology to take into account unconscious cultural practices. Other researchers address the state of the literature in the field in relation to culture. For example, Brady *et al.* (2018 p. 11408) argue that research itself overgeneralises by not accounting for culture. Similarly, Medin and Bang (2014 pp. 13625-13626) suggest that the methods of

communicating research in the field lack attendance to cultural differences between groups.

2.6.2.3 Business

As with anthropology and psychology, the concept of culture in business research is used to discuss differences between groups of people. Researchers in the field of business often consider culture at an organisational level (e.g., Huff & Kelley, 2003). A large amount of this research is based on responses to questionnaires deployed at organisations (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Huff & Kelley, 2003), although some are theoretical (e.g., Karahanna *et al.*, 2005), and others are systematic literature reviews (e.g., Gallivan & Srite, 2005; Mu *et al.*, 2018; Taras *et al.*, 2009). In a systematic literature review on innovation, Mu *et al.* (2018) found that 59% of the reviewed papers discussed culture at the organisational level. Researchers also consider culture at the national level, including Hofstede (1980), and others consider the interaction between national culture and organisational culture (e.g., Atwater *et al.*, 2019; Gallivan & Srite, 2005; Mu *et al.*, 2018; Taras *et al.*, 2009).

Work by Hofstede (1980) is perhaps the most well-known research on national culture in the field of business. This is because it produced four dimensions of culture (see section 2.4.2) that have been influential in multiple fields of study. For example, Huff and Kelley (2003) used the dimension of individualism-collectivism to discuss organisational trust and the ways this influences global business, and Karahanna *et al.* (2005) used Hofstede (1980) to discuss the layers of culture that may influence individual behaviour differently depending on specific situations. Although Hofstede's work is one of the most widely used conceptions of national culture, some researchers discuss the limitations in the theory and suggest future research consider more holistic views of cultural effects on behaviour (e.g., Gallivan & Srite, 2005 pp. 316-317; Taras *et al.*, 2009 p. 369).

2.6.3 The concept of culture in LIS research

2.6.3.1 Culture and LIS research in general

In the field of LIS, the concept of culture is most often used to differentiate user groups and discuss associated service provision. It is employed in one of two ways: as a discussion of the organisational culture within libraries (e.g., Farrell, 2018; Walters,

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2016) and as a discussion of user groups and resource provision (e.g., Caidi & Allard, 2005; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018). One reason for these two streams of research in library and information science is that the field is not solely dedicated to research related to people who use libraries, but also to the staff who run libraries as organisations (e.g., Farrell, 2018; Pors, 2007; Walters, 2016). The research on staff in the library mirrors the themes of research in the field of business, with organisational culture being considered more frequently than national culture (e.g., Farrell, 2018; Walters, 2016).

In contrast, the research concerned with user groups and resource provision may cover national culture (e.g., Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Khosrowjerdi, 2020), a regional or ethnic culture (e.g., Kelleher, 2019; Yeh, 2007), or developing a community-wide culture based around activities such as reading (e.g., Merga & Mason, 2019; Ahuja *et al.*, 2008). Discussions of regional or ethnic cultures are less common, as they may also encompass national cultures. Similarly, research on the creation of a culture in the community is not common, but is used to report on efforts to encourage community literacy (e.g., Ahuja *et al.*, 2008; Merga & Mason, 2019). Some research centred on national culture is concerned with newcomers to a country. An example is Khoir *et al.*'s (2017) investigation of the use of libraries by Asian immigrants in Australia. In contrast, Khosrowjerdi (2020) has conducted a cross-country comparison of the use of information sources using the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1980). Yeh (2007) considers regional and ethnic cultures in work on the information behaviours of two indigenous tribes in Taiwan.

In the LIS literature that considers culture, traditional research methods are widely used. Questionnaires and interviews are often employed, with a majority of work being conducted in libraries (e.g. Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Al-Qallaf & Mika, 2009; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Dali, 2012; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Khoir *et al.*, 2015; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Lingel, 2011; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Oh *et al.*, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Silvio, 2006; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013; Vårheim, 2011; 2014).

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2.6.3.2 Culture and LIS research related to newcomer populations

Many researchers in the library and information science field claim cultural factors influence information behaviours and use (e.g., Burke, 2008 p. 34; Burnett, 2015 p. 12; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a p. 758; Gaston *et al.*, 2015; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019 p. 3; Khoir *et al.*, 2015 p. 89; Lloyd, 2017a p. 39; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013 p. 139; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; Peterson, 2014 p. 395; Sin, 2015 p. 467; Yeh, 2007). However, some researchers note that in-depth analyses of cultural factors are limited in this research (e.g., Burke, 2008 p.34; Burnett, 2015 p. 13; Caidi & Komlodi, 2003 p. 2; Khosrowjerdi *et al.*, 2020 p. 712).

A further issue is that although the concept of culture is regularly considered an influential factor of information behaviour in LIS research, the term is rarely clearly defined. Exceptions are Caidi & Allard (2005 p. 316), Kim (2013 p. 242), Shoham and Rabinovich (2008 p. 22), and Yeh (2007) have clearly defined culture in their work (see Table 2.6). Khosrowjerdi *et al.* (2020 p. 711) also include a definition, having adopted that of Merriam-Webster (n.d.). However, a larger portion of the literature fails to define the term and definitions are not easy to infer through context (e.g. Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Berger, 2002; Burnett, 2015; Burnett *et al.*, 2014; Caidi & Komlodi, 2003; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Johnston, 2016; Khan, 2009; Khoir *et al.*, 2015; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Lloyd, 2017a; Oh & Butler, 2019; Oh *et al.*, 2014; Pyati *et al.*, 2008; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Silvio, 2006; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013; Vårheim, 2011; 2014; Vimercati & Pirola, 2011; WTYL Steering Group, 2008; Yi, 2007). The lack of definition of the concept is a limitation of the research since it results in an inability to discern the target of measurement.

Research on culture in library and information science is often framed around user groups and user information behaviours, a portion of which focusses on newcomer user groups of the public library (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Burnett *et al.*, 2014; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Caidi & Komlodi, 2003; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Johnston, 2016; 2018; Khan, 2009; Khoir *et al.*, 2015; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Kim, 2013; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; Oh *et al.*, 2014; Peterson, 2014; Pyati *et al.*, 2008; Salzano *et al.*, 2020a; Salzano *et al.*, 2022a in

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press; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Silvio, 2006; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013; Vårheim, 2011; 2014; Vimercati & Pirola, 2011; WTYL Steering Group, 2008; Yi, 2007). Here, culture is used in two different ways. First, it allows for the differentiation of distinct user groups (e.g. Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Burnett *et al.*, 2014; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Caidi & Komlodi, 2003; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Johnston, 2018; Khan, 2009; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Kumaran & Salt, 2010; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; Oh *et al.*, 2014; Peterson, 2014; Pyati *et al.*, 2008; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Silvio, 2006; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013; Vårheim, 2011; 2014; Vimercati & Pirola, 2011; WTYL Steering Group, 2008; Yi, 2007). Differentiation is often accomplished with reference to social norms and the values systems related to culture. For example, in Peterson (2014) the value of self-sufficiency is seen to contribute to an unwillingness to ask for help (p. 395); in Yeh (2007) the social norm is that information can be found in an act of doing.

The use of culture as a differentiator is also used to compare host user groups to newcomer user groups (e.g., Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Berger, 2002; Burke, 2008; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Khan, 2009; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; Peterson, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018; Silvio, 2006; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013; Vårheim, 2014; Yi, 2007). For example, Fisher *et al.* (2004a) finds that culture may account for differences in the way immigrant populations in the United States use public library resources, concluding that library programmes can help to bridge the gap between host culture and culture of origin (p. 759). Similarly, multiple researchers compare the usage patterns of newcomer library users to that of host-country library users (e.g., Berger, 2002 p. 82; Burke, 2008 p. 39; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018 p. 590). In most cases, the frequency of public library resource use by newcomer populations has been found to be comparable to that of host-country users (e.g., Burke, 2008; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018). However, Berger (2002) found that newcomer populations exhibited higher use rates for certain library resources (e.g., library as space).

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Although frequency of public library resource use may be comparable in newcomer populations, the types of resources used may vary (Burke, 2008 pp. 36 – 39; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008 p. 30). Berger (2002 p. 82) found that newcomer populations use some public library resources (e.g., library as space) more than their counterparts in the host country. Additionally, Audunson *et al.* (2011 p. 224) found that newcomer use of public library resources changes over time.

The cultural background of newcomers is sometimes cited as a significant underlying reason for resource use in this body of work. For example: Lloyd *et al.* (2013) and Martzoukou and Burnett (2018), acknowledge the importance of appropriate information formats for newcomers, and identify that illiteracy and different cultural practices for the communication of information (such as story-telling) influence the usefulness of information resources; prior work has established that trust in the public library system leads to higher use (e.g., Vårheim, 2014 p. 65); and Caidi and Allard (2005 p. 320) consider the relevance of resources provision. Although culture may be cited as a factor, there has been no research to date dedicated to the influence culture may exert on usage patterns, whether changing or stable. There is also no research dedicated to whether culture influences the types of library resources used.

The second way in which culture is used in the LIS literature is to draw attention to the question of integration (e.g., Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Johnston, 2018; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Sin & Kim, 2013; Vårheim, 2014). For example, Johnston (2018) explores the conversation-based programming for immigrant women at public libraries in four separate Nordic countries. The goal of the programmes is to provide an arena for meaningful interactions between immigrants and host-country citizens, countering segregation and increasing the likelihood of successful integration (Johnston, 2018 p. 138). Vårheim (2014) explores the ways public libraries in Norway support refugee integration by enhancing trust through library programmes. These results indicate that immigrants who attended the library programmes showed increased trust in public libraries and public library users, indicating that public library programmes may help ease integration (Vårheim, 2014 p. 66). However, the trust did not extend to Norwegian citizens in general, prompting a call for further research.

On the basis of the examination of the literature on culture in LIS, it can be concluded that the concept is often used without rigorous analysis. There are two key weaknesses in the literature: the lack of clarity surrounding the definition of culture, and the depth of analysis of how culture relates to the public library. Culture is treated as an easily understood concept, yet meta-analyses have revealed that at least 164 distinct definitions for culture exist (Taras *et al.*, 2009 p. 358). Without a definition to contextualize its meaning, “culture” is not a useful explanatory variable of information behaviour. Nor can studies that (at least at on the surface) appear to be comparable, generalisable, and repeatable be genuinely considered such. In addition, there are no articles centred on the nature of the relationship between culture and public library use. Khosrowjerdi *et al.* (2020 p. 712) states that while there is evidence of a relationship between use of information resources and culture, most research is based on comparisons of information resource use by two different cultures. Extant research does not explore the cultural factors that drive the differences in resource use. These observations surface an opportunity for LIS research to generate a deeper understanding of the relationship between culture and information behaviours of newcomer populations in general.

2.7 Conclusion of chapter 2

On the basis of the literature reviewed above it can be concluded that there are opportunities for more targeted research on the information behaviours of newcomer populations. While much of the research on the information behaviours of newcomer populations focusses on current use patterns (e.g., Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Berger, 2002; Shepherd *et al.*, 2018). Caidi *et al.* (2010), Martzoukou and Burnett (2018), and Silvio (2006) look more deeply at specific aspects of information behaviour, such as information seeking, in newcomer populations. However, such research remains centred on the behaviours themselves, rather than exploring the factors that may influence the behaviours.

There is a tendency to treat newcomers as a single group, rather than acknowledging the differences between subpopulations (Lloyd, 2017a p. 35; Marshall *et al.*, 2020 p. 850). The treatment of newcomers as a single population in the research may result in inappropriate generalisation in research findings. If a broad population of newcomers

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is part of the research, results may be biased towards the capabilities of one sub-population, for example international students who may have stronger host-country language skills, and neglect unique challenges faced by forced migrants.

Of the literature that considers a specific sub-group, most centre on immigrants as a population (e.g., Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Burke, 2008; Caidi *et al.*, 2010; Dali, 2012; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Johnston, 2016; Khoir *et al.*, 2015; Khoir *et al.*, 2017; Van der Linden *et al.*, 2014; Marshall *et al.*, 2020; Machet & Govender, 2012; Peterson, 2014; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Shuva, 2022; Vårheim, 2011; Vimercati & Pirola, 2011). Some centre on international students (e.g., Kim, 2013; Mengxiong & Redfern, 2007; Oh & Butler, 2019; Oh *et al.*, 2014; Sin, 2015; Sin & Kim, 2013; Yi, 2007). A small proportion of this research centres on forced migrants (e.g., Bletscher, 2019; Borkert *et al.*, 2018; Fisher, 2018; Hassan & Wolfram, 2019; Lloyd, 2017a; Lloyd *et al.*, 2013; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018). In addition, the emphasis of prior work on newcomer populations tends to favour the perspective of libraries as service providers rather than the populations themselves (e.g., Allen, 2001; Sbaffi & Rowley, 2015; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Vårheim, 2011).

The literature also reveals a need for research that delves more deeply into the nature of the relationship between culture and public library resource use (Caidi & Komlodi, 2003 p. 2; Khosrowjerdi, 2020 p. 712). In the LIS literature, the concept of culture is rarely explored as a part of the context surrounding information practices. Rather, culture is primarily used as a way to differentiate between public library user populations. Despite attention on the connection between information behaviour and culture, (e.g., Audunson *et al.*, 2011; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Peterson *et al.*, 2014), no researchers have focused on the relationship between cultural factors and public library resource use. There is therefore an opportunity for further research on the nature of the relationship between culture and public library resource use.

To summarise, four main gaps have been identified in the literature:

1. There is a need for research on information behaviour in public libraries centred on the factors that may influence information behaviour.

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2. There is a need for research dedicated to each sub-population of newcomers, particularly forced migrants.
3. There is a need for research in which perspectives outside of libraries are investigated.
4. There is a need for research in which the nature of the relationship between culture and public library resource use is explored.

Given the lack of knowledge on the impact of culture on the use of public library services by forced migrants, the current PhD study was designed to answer the following research questions:

Research question 1: How do people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services?

Research question 2: What is the nature of the cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by people who support forced migrants?

Research question 2a: What impact does the relationship between culture and public library use have on the use of specific public library resources, as perceived by the people who support forced migrants?

Due to the unforeseen circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic (see [Chapter 4.2.1.1](#) for in-depth discussion) the initial design, which would have included data collected from forced migrants in the main empirical study, required revision. There remained a need for a focus on the forced migrant experience, the de-centring of the public library, and an investigation into the relationship between culture and use of the public library. However, available participants took the form of gatekeepers, the people who support forced migrants, rather than individuals with lived experience of forced migration. As such early research questions devised before the pandemic lockdown were adapted into the research questions listed above. (The earlier research questions can be found in [Appendix A](#)).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction to chapter 3

In this chapter of the thesis, the research paradigm adopted for the research is discussed, as is the adopted methodology, that were assessed to address the research questions generated from the literature review. The chapter concludes with an exploration of the underlying theory which guided the research and the justification for its adoption.

3.2 Research paradigm

The research paradigm adopted for a research project has an impact on the decisions for its implementation (Khaldi, 2017 p. 16; Musa, 2014 p. 41; Pickard, 2013 pp. 5-6; Powell & Connaway, p. 19). It is important to explore the paradigm underpinning a research project in order to ensure that decisions on methodology, analysis, and interpretation match the purpose of the research (Khaldi, 2017 p. 16).

Research paradigms can be defined by two questions: the ontological question and the epistemological question (Musa, 2014 p. 40; Pickard, 2013 p. 6). The ontological question addresses the nature of reality, and the epistemological question addresses how that reality can be known (Pickard, 2013 p. 6). The answers to these questions form the basis for research paradigms. In the field of LIS, there are four major paradigms that research is based on: positivism, postpositivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Kankam, 2019 p. 86), each of which is considered below.

As the research questions discussed in [Chapter 2.7](#) indicate, a main purpose of the research was to explore the cultural factors that have an impact on the library use of forced migrant populations in Scotland. This purpose deals with understanding the meaning behind the practices of individuals, and the multiple contexts in which individuals live. Discovering the nature of the relationship between cultural factors and public library use involves a level of transferability to additional contexts, and so generalisability of findings was a secondary goal. A positivist paradigm would address only the generalisability of the proposed doctoral study, as measurement can only be conducted on the observable practices of participants in a positivist paradigm (Holden & Lynch, 2004 p. 405).

A postpositivist paradigm, in contrast, includes the perspective that there is meaning in non-measurable practices, and supports the investigation of such meaning (Pickard, 2013 p. 7). Additionally, postpositivism also allows for large generalisations, as there is still a belief in an objective reality (Pickard, 2013 p. 7). In this case, adoption of a postpositivist paradigm could address the secondary goal of generalisability. In addition, it would maintain the ability to explore the nature of a relationship.

Interpretivism forwards the belief that there is no objective reality, and that context drives practices (Mula, 2004 p. 42). It is a perspective that is often considered most relevant to explorations of relationships between variables. Interpretivism does not allow for generalisation in the traditional sense (Pickard, 2013 p. 13). However, the concept of inferential generalisation still works with the interpretivist paradigm (Ritchie & Lewis, 2014 p. 268). Inferential generalisation relies on a 'thick description' of the data, that is, sufficient detail for others to determine that the original environment is similar enough to a new environment for the data to be relevant (Pickard, 2013 p. 13; Ritchie & Lewis, 2014 p. 268). Therefore, although traditional generalisability would not be achievable with an interpretivist paradigm, inferential generalisation is achievable in the doctoral research with adoption of the interpretivist paradigm.

There are arguments that the fourth research paradigm, "pragmatism", is a necessary bridge between postpositivism and interpretivism (Holden & Lynch, 2004 p. 408). The argument put forth by Holden and Lynch (2004 p. 409) is that focussing on a single philosophy may be limiting for researchers, and it may be better to approach a project from the methodology that best suits the questions, rather than from a philosophical standpoint. Pickard (2013, p. 5) suggests, however, that much of the philosophical argument for pragmatism can be considered under the realm of postpositivism. As such, while using the best methods appropriate for a particular project should be encouraged, a pragmatic approach is not supported as a separate research paradigm (Pickard, 2013 p. 5).

Since the doctoral research reported in this thesis is based on the perspective that context is important to information practices and public library resource use, it lends

itself to an interpretivist paradigm. The generalisability of results is, however, a potential issue, due to the difficulty in accepting generalisation within interpretivism. To address this, there are strategies to mitigate the issues of generalisability in both method of the empirical work, such as use of multiple research techniques, and data analysis, such as member checking of transcripts (Pickard, 2013 pp. 107-108) and constant comparative analysis (Pickard, 2013 pp. 271-272). These strategies are considered in depth in [Chapter 4.2.2](#).

An interpretivist research paradigm suggests that the context of the researcher, as well as that of the research participants, is important to the way the research is interpreted (Pickard, 2013 p. 13). As the context of the researcher is considered a part of the results, in this doctoral research a theoretical framework was adopted to help explain the context of the researcher. This is the *Theory of information worlds* (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010), to be discussed in more detail in [Chapter 3.4.1](#).

3.3 Methodology

The term methodology is often used interchangeably with the term methods (McGregor & Murnane, 2010 p. 419), when in fact, the two terms refer to separate, although related, concepts. For this reason, in this report of the doctoral project, the adopted methodology is discussed separately from the methods (i.e., techniques and approaches to empirical work and data analysis (McGregor & Murnane, 2010 p. 420). Following Pickard (2013 p. xviii), who states that the theoretical perspective of a piece of research (methodology) can be separated into the two fundamental categories of quantitative and qualitative, the research reported in this thesis follows a singular methodological perspective. Methodology determines the angle from which a question is approached. Certain methodologies are not compatible with particular research paradigms (Pickard, 2013 p. xviii). The assumptions of a qualitative methodology align most closely with an interpretivist paradigm because, it is claimed, reality is socially constructed and it is not possible to conduct completely objective research (Gorman & Clayton, 2005 p. 4). For the doctoral research, the view that a methodology (distinct from methods) can be incompatible with a research paradigm on the basis of methodological assumptions is upheld, and a single methodology was chosen.

A qualitative methodology was undertaken for the doctoral research as it aligns with the interpretive research paradigm and assumptions adopted by said paradigm.

Certain aspects of the doctoral research reflect practices that are often attributed to a quantitative research design (e.g., definitions of variables (Pickard, 2013 p. 18)). Other aspects of the doctoral research reflect practices that are often attributed to a qualitative research design (e.g., use of a theoretical framework as signposts in analysis [see [Chapter 3.4](#)] (Pickard, 2013 p. 14). Such a combination of quantitative and qualitative design decisions can result in a mixed methods research approach.

However, though multiple methods were utilised in the empirical research, the use of multiple methods is only indicative of a multi-method design, not a mixed methods design (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017 p. 108). As discussed by Cosgrove (2020 p. 2), a mixed methods approach is not a “simple merger of words and numbers”. Rather, mixed methods research requires the adoption of an underlying philosophy that attempts to balance or combine opposing paradigms (Cosgrove, 2020 p. 2). The philosophy underpinning the research questions in the doctoral research match a qualitative methodology, and therefore a qualitative methodology was adopted.

The data gathered in the empirical work described in this thesis takes the form of a narrative in words, images, or videos that are not reduced to numerical values. Such data is identified by Braun and Clarke (2013 p. 20) to be indicative of a qualitative research design. In addition, although patterns emerged during data analysis, a consensus of normality was not sought. Rather, the focus of the doctoral research is on the meaning that participants derive from the context in which the research takes place (e.g., Gorman & Clayton, 2005 p. 7). Therefore, the assumption in qualitative methodology that there is not a single objective reality (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 21) is maintained in this doctoral research.

The definition of culture was established to ensure that researchers who refer to this doctoral study can discern the relevance of the concept of culture as used here to their work. The definition depicts general factors that combine to reflect the concept of culture, which allows the work to maintain a qualitative methodology. As will be discussed in [Chapter 3.4](#), the theoretical framework of the doctoral research acts as a

lens through which the results are viewed, rather than as a predictor of results. Therefore, a qualitative methodology is maintained for the doctoral research.

3.4 Theoretical framework

Pinfield *et al.* (2020 pp. 44-45) maintain that there are different conceptualisations of theory which may differ between disciplines and populations. Definitions of the term have been divided into at least three categories by Pinfield *et al.* (2020 p. 43):

1. the abstracting of reality into basic principles;
2. a statement explaining or aiding understanding;
3. and a statement that guides practice.

In academic disciplines, theory may take the form of "rigorous mathematical laws", "explanatory models", "descriptions of causal processes", "an abstract account of something", "conceptual artefacts", and more (Pinfield *et al.*, 2020 pp. 45-48). In the field of LIS, the discussion of theory is often cited as lacking (e.g., Lor, 2014 p. 30). A main criticism is that, in this domain, data and patterns are collected and observed without theory to ground them (Lor, 2014 p. 26). Pettigrew & McKechnie (2001) offer an explanation for this: in fields such as LIS, when there are no theories developed specifically for that field, then there is no way to create clear disciplinary boundaries (e.g., it is impossible to tell whether a piece of research falls into the field of LIS or elsewhere – in this case, in the field of migration). In their research, it was found that use of theory is increasingly present in the LIS literature, but it is unclear how large a role theory plays in the research (Pettigrew & McKechnie, 2001 p. 70).

Pinfield *et al.* (2020 pp. 52-53) suggest that the lack of attention to theory, as identified by Pettigrew and McKechnie (2001) and Lor (2014), may be due to the usefulness (or otherwise) of theory in the practical work of the LIS field. Unlike fields such as nursing and religious studies, there is not a significant amount of "practice theory" in the LIS literature (Pinfield *et al.*, 2020 p. 53). Lloyd (2017b p. 93) also notes a gap between conceptual research focused on theory and research focused on appropriate practice. In research on citation practices in the LIS literature, Pettigrew and McKechnie (2001 p. 69) found that although practitioner researchers recognise the importance of theory, they are unaware of the most appropriate ways to apply theory to research. Indeed,

Pinfield *et al.* (2020 p. 57) suggest that rather than grand theories which incorporate the majority of knowledge in a field, the most useful application of theory in LIS is the use of mid-range theories which incorporate models or frameworks related to specific situations, structures, and entities, found in the field.

In the doctoral research reported in this thesis, the perceived information behaviours of a specific population are addressed, and differences in use arising from the cultural contexts of public library users are investigated. At the outset, it was anticipated that the results of this research will provide information to better help practitioners serve their communities. This pointed to the use of a mid-range theory, as suggested by Pinfield *et al.* (2020), as the theoretical framework of the doctoral work. An additional mid-range theory was applied as a moderator to the chosen theoretical framework. The inclusion of the second theory was based on participant responses in the empirical work of this project. In the following two sections these theories are discussed with reference to the doctoral research.

3.4.1 Theory of information worlds

There are many theories relevant to the topic of information behaviours and information practices (e.g., Dervin, 1998; Pettigrew, 1998; Wilson, 1997). The *Theory of information worlds* developed by Jaeger and Burnett (2010), is one that considers the context of individuals as determinants of information behaviour through five societal elements:

- Social norms – a world’s shared sense of appropriate behaviours and practices,
- Social types – the different roles individuals may hold within a world,
- Information value – a world’s shared perception of the value of information,
- Information behaviour – the entire range of behaviours and practices related to available information in the world,
- Boundaries – the places where different information worlds come into contact and where information can be transferred from one to another (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 8).

It is important to note that the *Theory of information worlds* uses the term information behaviours, rather than information practices. However, as discussed in Chapter 1.3 (p.

2), the term information practices most closely aligns with the aim of the doctoral research. Therefore, information behaviour as a term is used here in the context of the original work by Jaeger & Burnett (2010).

The *Theory of information worlds* pulls from multiple disciplines related to social theories, but is most influenced by previous theoretical work by Habermas and Chatman (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 8). The theoretical work by Habermas and Chatman is complimentary; Habermas is concerned with the largest social structures e.g., countries and regions, and Chatman with the smallest social units (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 8).

Habermas' theoretical work on the "public sphere" and the concept of "lifeworld" contribute to the *Theory of information worlds* (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 26). The "public sphere" is considered to be an arena where information can be freely shared and commented on without interference from the state or corporations (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 25). The "lifeworld" is considered to be represented by a set of interpretive patterns transmitted through the culture and language of a society (Habermas, 2005 p. 229). It is the "collective information and social environment" that encompasses the available resources and broad perspectives of a particular society in regards to information (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 26). The entire range of communication options in a society is included in the "lifeworld" e.g., letters, face-to-face, e-mail, phone calls, television, radio, etc. (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 27). In terms of the larger theory of the public sphere, the lifeworld influences the creation and sustainability of public spheres (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 29). Jaeger and Burnett (2010 p. 29) apply the concept of the lifeworld to the *Theory of information worlds* as a way to conceptualise the role that information plays across general social and political landscapes.

The concept of "small worlds", as described in Chatman's theory of normative behaviour, focuses on the immediate social environment of individuals (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 22). As discussed by Pendleton and Chatman (1998 p. 733), the word 'small' does not imply unimportant, but rather the size of a particular social space. For example, a small world may be marked by a lack of access to information, as in

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Chatman's work with female prisoners in the United States (Chatman, 1999).

Alternatively, it may be marked by a small number of individuals who fit a particular niche, as in Chatman's work with feminist booksellers (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 21).

Burnett *et al.*, (2001 p. 546) describe small worlds as the social settings in the lives and work of individuals linked by similarities in any and all of the following: background, interests, economic status, and geographic proximity. Within these social settings, four concepts are considered to influence the flow of information: social norms, social types, worldview, and information behaviour (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 22). These four concepts are the basis for the five elements listed in the *Theory of information worlds* (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 32).

The *Theory of information worlds* builds on the lifeworld from Habermas and the small worlds of Chatman to address the limitations of each (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 32). Although the concept of small worlds addresses the multiple contexts in which an individual lives, it does not consider the influence of larger society on those small worlds (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 32). Similarly, while the concept of the lifeworld is concerned with the broad societal factors that influence information practices, the multiple contexts in which an individual exists are neglected (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 32). The *Theory of information worlds* includes the premise that small worlds exist, one individual may be part of multiple small worlds, and the lifeworld acts on every small world in a given society (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 31). The theory posits that the information practices of an individual depend on the context provided by the five elements in a small world, the influence of information from the lifeworld on that small world, and intermediate worlds in the form of organisations (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 31). The *Theory of information worlds* has been used in research on the information practices on new-comers in the literature (e.g., Arns *et al.*, 2012; Arns *et al.*, 2013; Peterson, 2014). This precedent, as well as the emphasis on context in information practice (Burnett *et al.*, 2014), matches both the adopted interpretivist research paradigm and purpose of the doctoral research. As such, the *Theory of information worlds* is used as a theoretical framework for the research.

The five societal elements of the *Theory of information worlds* (listed above) correspond to cultural factors encompassed in the employed definition of culture (e.g.,

behaviours and practices, understandings of appropriate roles an individual may hold, and shared perceptions of value). In particular, the societal elements of social norms and information value are relevant to the research questions. Social norms have previously been highlighted as important aspects of individuals' "ways of knowing" (Lloyd *et al.*, 2013 p. 123), and the means by which newcomers reconcile the social norms of their countries of origin with the social norms of the countries in which they settle is an important element of resettlement. The notion of information value applies not only to the content of information (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 2), but also other elements such as its presentation (p. 42), and provenance (p. 44). For example, taking into account the *Theory of information worlds*, when the format or origin of a piece of information is distrusted, it will be assigned low information value and is unlikely to be used. In the doctoral research the societal elements of social norms and information value provide a lens through which the analysis and conclusions of the empirical work are viewed.

3.4.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

As well as the *Theory of information worlds* from LIS, a well-established theory of motivation from psychology is important to the research discussed in this thesis. Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* (Maslow, 1943) is a theory from the field of psychology. In the theory it is posited that that humans have five levels of need, each of which must be satisfied needs at subsequent levels will be pursued. The levels of the hierarchy are as follows:

1. Physiological needs (e.g., air, water, food, sleep, and clothing);
2. Safety needs (e.g., personal security, employment, health, resources);
3. Love and belonging (e.g., family, friendship, sense of connection);
4. Esteem (e.g., respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, freedom);
5. Self-actualisation (e.g., desire to reach one's full potential).

The *Hierarchy of needs* was initially developed to address studies on motivation (Maslow, 1943 p. 370), but it has been applied to subjects within LIS such as public library services (e.g., Anderson, 2004), information literacy (e.g., Francis 2010), and information behaviours (e.g., Markwei & Rasmussen, 2015; Oduntan & Ruthven, 2019;

Oh & Butler, 2019). Particularly relevant to the research reported in this doctoral thesis is that of Oduntan and Ruthven (2019) and Oh and Butler (2019). In this work, Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* is connected to the information seeking behaviours of newcomers.

In the case of Oduntan and Ruthven (2019), the case is made that the information sought by forced migrants is dependent on the level of the hierarchy they currently inhabit (e.g., if a forced migrant's physiological needs are not being met, their information seeking behaviour will be focussed on meeting those needs). Oh and Butler (2019) utilise the generality of needs mentioned in Maslow (1943 p. 370) to contextualise their research finding that the type of information sought by international students matches that of more local students, even though search strategies may differ. In the concept of "generality of needs" it is acknowledged that there are multiple paths to achieve a goal, and that different cultures may use different paths, and therefore basic needs may remain the same despite different cultural backgrounds. In relation to the *Theory of information worlds*, Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* may help provide context for differences in the information practices of individuals in the same 'information world'. Therefore, in the doctoral research reported in this thesis, Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* was considered when applying the five societal elements of the *Theory of information worlds* to the collected data.

3.5 Conclusion of chapter 3

The research paradigm, research methodology, and theoretical framework discussed in this chapter give an overview of the angle from which the doctoral research was approached. An interpretivist paradigm was adopted, as it aligns with the perspective that context is important to the understanding of information practices. A qualitative methodology was undertaken, as the underlying assumptions of this methodology are most appropriate for an interpretivist paradigm. Although theoretical frameworks are not often used in an interpretivist approach, the *Theory of information worlds* was chosen to provide a guide for conclusions. A secondary theory, Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* was also applied to the research based on participant responses in the empirical work. The following chapter ([Chapter 4](#)) details the methods of data collection and

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analysis chosen for the doctoral research. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the deployment of these methods is also addressed.

Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Introduction to chapter 4

Discussed in this chapter are the range of methods assessed to address the research questions generated in the literature review. Justifications for the final adopted methods in the empirical study (i.e., government document analysis and interviews) and methods of data analysis are also presented. The protocols of the methods adopted for recruitment, data collection, and analysis are described. The impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on the data collection methods is also considered.

4.2 Data collection methods

Any data collection method can be used in conjunction with any methodology (Pickard, 2013 p. 191). However, there are some data collection methods that are more commonly associated with the qualitative methodology undertaken in this doctoral research. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are examples of traditional methods commonly used in the field of LIS: interviews; focus groups; questionnaires; diaries; secondary sources; and ethnographies (Pickard, 2013). Here, the procedures and tools of each of these methods will be discussed in relation to its appropriateness to address the research questions of the doctoral research.

4.2.1 Methods selected for the empirical study

The methods of the doctoral research were chosen to match the type of data required to answer the research questions identified in [Chapter 2](#), namely:

Research question 1: How do people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services?

Research question 2: What is the nature of the cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by people who support forced migrants?

Research question 2a: What impact does the relationship between culture and public library use have on the use of specific public library resources, as perceived by the people who support forced migrants?

To address the research questions on library use and the relationship between culture and perceptions of public libraries, data collected for this type of study should reflect the lived experiences of forced migrants and offer opportunities for depth of analysis that extends beyond that of frequency measures. Questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, diaries, secondary sources, and ethnographies are all appropriate methods to retrieve this type of data. However, they are not all appropriate for potential participants, as will be demonstrated in Chapters [4.2.2](#), [4.2.3](#), and [4.2.4](#). Following are descriptions and justifications for the three empirical methods completed for during the project, each of which is elaborated more fully below: government policy analysis, gatekeeper interviews, and community validation interviews. Table 4.1 summarises the data collection methods considered and adopted for each exercise.

Data collected	By questionnaire	By interviews	From secondary data	Through ethnographic approach	By diaries	By focus groups
Exercise 1: Policy	Not considered	Not considered	Adopted	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered
Exercise 2: Gatekeepers	Considered + rejected	Adopted	Not considered	Considered + rejected	Considered + rejected	Considered + rejected
Exercise 3: Community Validation	Not considered	Adopted	Not considered	Not considered	Not considered	Considered + rejected

Table 4.1 Summary of data collection methods considered and adopted for each exercise

4.2.1.1 *The impact of COVID-19 on methods selection*

The timing of data collection for this study coincided with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Initially the research questions for the study were focused on *actual use* of public library services by forced migrants, rather than service provider perceptions of use (see [Appendix A](#)). However, the nature of COVID-19 restrictions presented challenges to this initial plan, as illustrated below. As a result, it was necessary to shift the focus of the research questions.

To interview forced migrants directly at this time risked adding to their anxiety of living through the experience of forced migration while also coping with the further stresses of life under the UK lockdown restrictions. Initial plans for data collection had involved

a combination of online questionnaires and online interviews with forced migrants, rather than face-to-face methods. This is because meeting in person with forced migrants was discouraged by governmental guidelines (Fair Work, Employability and Skills, 2020). Recruitment was meant to take place through social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as through connections with gatekeepers. However, when this strategy was first implemented, it soon became apparent that the call for recruitment was not reaching potential participants in a way that inspired participation. Whatever the reasons for this, e.g., digital access, digital literacy, literacy, research fatigue, competing priorities, etc., the overall result was a lack of participation. Therefore, the decision was taken to target an alternative group as interview candidates for the main element of the empirical work.

Following Spacey *et al.* (2021 p. 434), who have identified that gatekeepers are often used in research with communities considered vulnerable, staff and volunteers who work with forced migrants in the UK were targeted as study participants. Furthermore, it was decided that an additional source of data would help provide a holistic view of the ways that public libraries fit into the forced migrant integration landscape. Therefore, a review of formal documentation from Scottish local governments as an additional data source was undertaken. It was expected that this analysis would allow the information practices of forced migrants identified in the interviews to be connected to government policy. The decision to include Scottish local governments specifically, rather than local governments from the whole of the UK, was made to account for the time needed to analyse the documents.

4.2.2 Data collection exercise 1: government policy analysis

To answer the research question ‘how do people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public libraries’, information on policies in Scotland which relate to the integration of forced migrants were explored. Public policies are meant to reflect the needs of the communities to which they apply. Therefore, policies regarding the integration of forced migrants were expected to provide insight into the ways that gatekeepers perceive public libraries to be used by forced migrants. Although the legislation surrounding the provision of asylum is a

matter reserved for the UK government, the services through which this legislation is enacted are the responsibility of local governments in Scotland.

Three traditional data collection methods could have been relevant to gaining information on government policies: questionnaires, interviews, and secondary sources. The suitability of the chosen data collection method, secondary sources, is explored below.

4.2.2.1 Secondary sources: the chosen method for policy analysis purposes

As policy information is often contained in formal documentation held by local governments, it was expected that data relevant to address the research questions covered in this empirical work could be accessed through its review. Secondary sources are often used in conjunction with other methods, because it can provide additional context to results (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 154). As it was expected that the analysis of government documents would provide additional context on the formal role of libraries in forced migrant integration in the UK, the use of secondary sources was considered to align with the purpose of the method. Although secondary sources of this nature may be difficult to access (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 155), once secondary sources are accessed a large number of documents can be reviewed. Investigator bias is reduced when secondary sources are used, as is the likelihood of partial- and non-responses (Burns, 2000 p. 155).

As the use of secondary sources reduced bias and would allow comprehensive review of policy, it was decided that formal documentation of policies from local government in Scotland would be the most appropriate method for the analysis of government policies on integration.

4.2.3 Data collection exercise 2: gatekeeper opinions

In the second part of the empirical work, data was required to explore the perspectives of gatekeepers on the ways that forced migrants use public libraries, and the relationship between culture and this use. Five traditional data collection methods could have been relevant to gather information from gatekeepers: ethnography, diaries, questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. The suitability of the chosen data collection method, interviews, is explored below.

4.2.3.1 Interviews: the chosen method to gather data on gatekeeper opinions

Interviews can generate a large amount of detailed data from a small sample size compared to methods such as questionnaires (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80). As it was anticipated that there would be low numbers of potential participants for the doctoral research, the generation of substantial data from a small sample was considered advantageous to this study. In this respect, a questionnaire that might result in lower response rates and diminished response quality was deemed inappropriate for this empirical phase of the of this doctoral study. Depth in the data from a potentially small sample could have also been achieved through focus groups (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 107), an ethnographic method (Pickard, 2013 p. 136), and potentially diaries (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 148). However, there are major disadvantages of both ethnographic research and diary methods that negate the benefits of generating in-depth data.

The intensive nature of ethnographic research is a disadvantage, particularly when researchers are unable to embed themselves into the community in question (Pickard, 2013 p. 138). In the case of the doctoral research reported in this thesis, though ethnographic research would produce extensive data on gatekeeper communities, the data collected may not have generated data of value to answer the research questions about forced migrant practices. Similar to ethnographic research, for a diary method not only are participants expected to spend time completing a diary entry, they must also remember to make entries regularly and pay attention to aspects of their lives related to the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 148). The research questions of the doctoral research relate to experiences of the people whom the gatekeepers serve. It is possible that it will be difficult for gatekeepers to remember their observations of forced migrant practices. Due to the risk of generating irrelevant data, and the time commitments required, ethnographic research and diary research were deemed inefficient compared to interviews and focus groups.

An advantage of semi-structured and unstructured interviews is that they allow for unplanned questions to be asked should the need arise (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80). As concepts of interest to the research questions, such as culture, are not easily articulated, it is useful if researcher and participants are able to clarify topics for discussion. The flexibility afforded by interviews is an advantage shared by focus

groups (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 110). However, there is a potential disadvantage of focus groups, as some participants may dominate the conversation (Pickard, 2013 p. 246) and some participants, or their perspectives, may be inadvertently excluded (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 113). In a focus group, there may be pressure on participants to not ask a 'stupid question', and therefore clarifying questions may not be asked. In contrast, an interview may not have the same level of social pressure. Interviews are also versatile in that they can be conducted in-person, via telephone, via email, or via video-conferencing software such as Microsoft Teams (Pickard, 2013 p. 200). Though focus groups can also be conducted via video-conferencing software, the management required for this method decreases its effectiveness outside of in-person contexts (p. 246).

Interviews are well-suited for research on sensitive issues, as the researcher can build a stronger rapport with participants than can be achieved by other methods (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80). This good rapport was desired in the doctoral research, as forced migration is a sensitive topic and gatekeepers may initially be uncomfortable sharing their perspectives. Focus groups can also be advantageous for sensitive topics, as comfort of participating in research as a group of people 'like them' may result in richer data (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 110), the lack of anonymity is a disadvantage. In a focus group participants are known not only to the researcher but also to other participants (p. 113). An additional facet of this limitation is that participants may disclose more information than they mean to, and this may result in distress (p. 113). In the case of this doctoral research, gatekeepers could inadvertently disclose sensitive information about individuals not present in the focus group. This could result in increased vulnerability for a forced migrant, as well as a breach of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and confidentiality. Though not as significant as in a focus group, participants in an interview are never fully anonymous to the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80). While non-anonymity can result in greater trust and willingness to disclose sensitive information, it can also have the opposite effect. In comparison to focus groups, however, interviews pose less risk to anonymity.

Interviews are a time-intensive method of data collection. In addition to the time required to prepare, conduct, and transcribe an interview, a well-designed interview

will often take at least one hour to complete (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80). The time commitment expected of both researcher and participant may decrease the number of interviews and result in the generation of a limited amount of data. In instances where participant numbers may already be low, as in this doctoral research, this is a risk. However, focus groups are often more time-intensive for both researchers and participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 113) and interviews may offer more flexibility for scheduling.

Due to the constraints of COVID-19, the ability to include unplanned questions, and the lowered risk to anonymity compared to focus groups, interviews were deemed the most appropriate method for this portion of the empirical work. Semi-structured interviews were chosen, as they allow a schedule of questions to be prepared while still offering the flexibility to ask follow-up questions and allow for additional explanation.

4.2.4 Data collection exercise 3: community validation

A notable gap in the LIS literature on forced migrants is the tendency for research to rely on perspectives from library staff on the provision currently available, rather than that of forced migrants themselves. The gatekeeper interviews partially addressed this gap by including participants not employed by, or volunteering in, public libraries. To further address the gap in the extant literature in the third data collection exercise for this study, the results of the gatekeeper interviews were validated by individuals with lived experience of forced migration. This element of the empirical work, as will be seen in [Chapter 7](#), exposed possible gaps in gatekeeper perspectives compared with the lived experience of forced migrants. Two traditional data collection methods were considered to complete this portion of the empirical work: focus groups and interviews. The suitability of the chosen data collection method, interviews, is explored below.

4.2.4.1 Interviews: the chosen method for community validation

As the purpose of the validation was to generate rich data from a select group of participants, either an interview method (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80), or a focus group method (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 109) would have been well suited for the task. The major barrier to the use of a focus group method for this study was time. Not only

would participants have needed to coordinate schedules with the researcher, but also with each other. Given the geographic range of participants sought (i.e., forced migrants from across the UK), and their responsibilities (e.g., family), organising a time for a focus group would have been difficult. The geographical range of participants was also a disadvantage, as it can be difficult to successfully conduct focus groups via video-conferencing platforms (Pickard, 2013 p. 247). Interviews are more easily conducted both in-person, and via video-conferencing software (Pickard, 2013 p. 200). As participants were to be recruited from across the UK, the flexibility to conduct interviews via Microsoft Teams was beneficial to scheduling the interviews.

The opportunity to build trust with participants is an advantage of an interview method. Potential participants were forced migrants speaking of their own experiences, a sensitive topic. The rapport developed in the interview increased the likelihood that participants would feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 80). In addition, focus groups tend to last longer than interviews as multiple people answer each question (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 113). The possibility that some participants will dominate the conversation more than others (Pickard, 2013 p. 246) is an additional concern. This was particularly relevant in this element of the empirical research, as participants with stronger English language skills would have felt more comfortable speaking. Even if an interpreter is present, participants may feel embarrassed to rely on an interpreter, especially if others appear not to need this support.

A major disadvantage of using either an interview method or a focus group method was the potential need for translators. As discussed by Squires *et al.* (2019 p. 709), the use of interpreters in research can influence the accuracy of collected data. In an interview the role of an interpreter may be functional (i.e., they interpret exactly what is said) or more interactive (i.e., they consider cultural nuances and adjust interpretation as needed) (Im *et al.*, 2017 p. 150). It was expected that some potential participants would need an interpreter. Dependent upon the interpreter's comfort in providing a functional or interactive translation, meaningful data could be lost on both sides of the conversation. This is something to consider during analysis and the report of findings.

In addition, the risk of investigator effects (Lewis-Beck *et al.*, 2004) may be exacerbated as potential participants have interactions with both the researcher and the interpreter. The disadvantage of a lengthy time commitment is intensified in interviews and focus groups with interpreters. As is the case with a focus group, there is a positive relationship between the number of people in the conversation and the time needed to complete the conversation. In a focus group other focus group members may have been able to act as interpreters, but this is not a guarantee. And if another focus group member was able to act as an interpreter, the risk of that participant's voice superseding that of other participants would also increase.

While a focus group was initially the planned method for this element of the empirical work, due to time constraints, it became clear that scheduling was insurmountable in the context of research deadlines. Therefore, an alternative method for the community validation was sought. The advantages of scheduling ease and opportunities for rapport outweighed the disadvantages of interviews as compared to focus groups. Therefore, interviews, with the option for an interpreter dependent on participant comfort, were deemed most appropriate for this portion of the empirical work.

4.3 Data analysis methods

Each data collection method generates data that can be analysed in multiple ways. The type of data gathered (e.g., Likert scale data from a questionnaire or descriptive transcripts from an interview or focus group) will affect whether an analysis method is appropriate. In addition, data analysis methods should match the adopted research paradigm to ensure that the conclusions of the research are accurate. In this section appropriate methods of analysis for the data collection protocols are discussed. The adopted analysis methods for each method are then presented. Table 4.2 summarises the data analysis methods considered and adopted for each data collection exercise.

Data collected from	Discourse analysis	Content analysis	Thematic analysis
Exercise 1: Policy	Considered + rejected	Considered + rejected	Adopted
Exercise 2: Gatekeepers	Considered + rejected	Considered + rejected	Adopted
Exercise 3: Community Validation	Considered + rejected	Not considered	Adopted

Table 4.2 Summary of data analysis methods considered and adopted for each method of data collection

4.3.1 Government policy analysis

The analysis of documents required patterns in the data set to be discovered and interpreted. Three analytic approaches were deemed relevant to the government policy analysis method: discourse analysis, content analysis, and thematic analysis.

4.3.1.1 *Thematic analysis: the chosen method for government policy analysis*

Sometimes used interchangeably with content analysis (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013 p. 399), thematic analysis is a distinct analytic technique used to discover and interpret patterns in a dataset (Clarke & Braun, 2017 p. 297). Thematic analysis allows for rich detail to be interpreted from identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p. 79). This is advantageous, as one of the other analytic methods for secondary data, content analysis, result in less depth of detail (Drisko & Maschi, 2015 p. 24). The focus in content analysis is to explore the explicit qualities of the words used in the data (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2014 p. 400). Of relevance to the government policy analysis undertaken in this study, content analysis is often conducted on secondary sources (Weber, 1990 p. 10). However, due to the lower interpretative power in content analysis, it was deemed inappropriate as an analytic method for this study.

Thematic analysis allows for both an analysis of the qualities of the words used in the data and the meaning of those words (Braun & Clarke 2013 p. 175). This is in contrast to discourse analysis, in which the focus is on how the language used in the data shapes reality (Pickard, 2013 p. 269). According to Braun and Clarke (2013 p. 192), discourse analysis allows for in-depth understanding about social contexts and the less perceptible ways language patterns are used to create reality. In discourse analysis,

patterns related to the ways information is communicated are identified (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 188). From these patterns interpretations about the social context can be made. While the focus on the ways information is communicated is particularly relevant for the government policy analysis, it is not fully aligned with the goal of the method. Thematic analysis is more appropriate for the goal of the method, as the focus should be the *content* of what is being communicated rather than the *way* that content is communicated.

A further advantage of thematic analysis is that it does not require all data to be gathered prior to analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 204). This was deemed beneficial during the analysis of government policies as it was expected that policies would not all be made available at the same time. In addition, results of thematic analyses are often more accessible to a wider audience, making it easier to communicate findings outwith the academy (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 180). In contrast, the results of discourse analysis are often difficult to transfer into application outside the academy (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 192). It was anticipated that the results of the research would provide information for practitioners to incorporate into their work. Therefore, it was advantageous to choose an analytic method that produces easily communicated findings.

Although thematic analysis is considered a simple approach to utilise, there can be a lack of interpretive power if there is no theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 180). As a theoretical framework is being used for the doctoral research reported in this thesis, this disadvantage is mitigated.

Due to the ease of application and the detail possible with thematic analysis, this was deemed the most appropriate method for the analysis of government policies.

4.3.2 Analysis: gatekeeper interview data

4.3.2.1 Thematic analysis: the chosen method for gatekeeper interview data analysis

Similar to the goal of the government document analysis, it was determined that the chosen method of analysis for the gatekeeper interview data would need a focus on content more so than the way content is communicated. As has been noted above, thematic analysis allows for both an analysis of the qualities of the words used in the

data and the meaning of those words (Braun & Clarke 2013 p. 175). As a result, the use of thematic analysis could provide greater depth to the collected data. In the case of the gatekeeper interviews, the use of thematic analysis could identify themes related to the words gatekeepers use in the interviews. At the same time, themes related to the practices of forced migrants could be developed. Though discourse analysis would provide information about the ways *gatekeepers* construct their reality through language (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 192), it would not provide information to answer the research questions about the ways in which *forced migrants* construct their reality. Discourse analysis is therefore not fully aligned with the data gathered in gatekeeper interviews and was deemed inappropriate as a method of analysis. Similarly, content analysis is also focused on the qualities of the words used in the data (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 400). This weakens its alignment with the goals of the interview method.

The iterative process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2013 pp. 202-203) was also beneficial to the interview method, as analysis could begin directly after an interview was completed. Thematic analysis is considered a simple approach to utilise, though there can be a lack of interpretive power if there is no theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 180). As a theoretical framework is being used for the doctoral research reported in this thesis, this disadvantage is mitigated. Due to the use of a theoretical framework, content analysis was a relevant analytic method. This is because interpretation of content analysis is heavily dependent on extant theory (Drisko & Maschi, 2015 pp. 21-22). However, with the adoption of an interpretivist paradigm, the theoretical framework was not relied on to the extent required in content analysis. As content analysis would not fully address the research questions and would rely too heavily on the theoretical framework, it was deemed inappropriate as an analytic method.

There was a risk that thematic analysis would result in descriptions of what participants said, rather than interpretations of opinion. However, thematic analysis aligned most closely with the research questions, and was deemed the most appropriate method of analysis.

4.3.3 Analysis: community validation interview data

4.3.3.1 Thematic analysis as a possible method for community validation data analysis

As the community validation method was conducted with forced migrants as participants, discourse analysis would align with the research questions. Unlike with gatekeeper interviews, the ways the language used shapes participant realities (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) would relate to the realities of forced migrants themselves. However, the purpose of community validation was not to explore the research questions directly. The community validation was used to also determine whether or not gatekeeper perspectives aligned with the lived experience of forced migrants. The use of thematic analysis for the community validation method would allow themes to be developed related to the qualities of the words in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 175). As a result, the ways that language patterns are used to create the reality of forced migrants can be found. In addition, themes could be developed to determine the gaps in gatekeeper perceptions of forced migrants' lived experiences. An analysis focused only on the ways language patterns are used to create reality, such as discourse analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 192) was considered insufficient. The flexibility of thematic analysis and the ease of application (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 180) resulted in its adoption as the method of analysis for the community validation method.

4.4 Implementation of methods selected for each exercise

4.4.1 Implementation of government policy analysis

4.4.1.1 Data collection for the government policy analysis

Scotland is divided into 32 areas of local government, each with an elected council referred to as a local authority (Mygov.scot, 2020). A local authority is tasked with the provision of public services (e.g., education, care, health, integration of forced migrants) to the communities in their area. The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 allows individuals to request access to any recorded information from a Scottish public authority, including local authorities, via a Freedom of Information Request (Scottish Information Commissioner, 2018). In order to access documents relating to the integration of forced migrants in Scotland, all 32 local authorities of Scotland were approached with the following Freedom of Information request. The wording of the

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Freedom of Information requests did not use the term forced migrants to reduce potential confusion of individuals who may be unfamiliar with the academic term.

I am requesting documents which have information about the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into [local authority name]. This includes, but is not limited to, the Syrian Vulnerable People Resettlement Scheme and the UK Resettlement Scheme. I will be using this information for my PhD research. Textual analysis will be used to help provide a clear picture about how local authorities serve refugees and asylum seekers, and what specific services are mentioned. This will help to provide context for interviews of individuals who provide services for refugees and asylum seekers. If clarification on my request is needed, please contact [REDACTED]

Of the 32 local authorities in Scotland, there were 27 responses returned from the Freedom of Information requests (see table 4.3). Fifteen responses were returned within the 20-day deadline set by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Twelve responses were returned within two months, the delay attributed to decreased availability of staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. A final response was returned while data collection was in process, 5 months after the request was made. This response was included in data collection, and the date of its receipt was set as the cut-off for any further responses.

In five of the returned responses, it was indicated that the requested information had already been published with a link to the appropriate repository. These repositories were then searched for the relevant files. In three of the returned responses, it was indicated that the requested information was not held by those local authorities. In one of the returned responses, the information was withheld on the grounds of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 exemption: Section 38(1)(b). Files with information about the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into their communities were obtained from a total of 23 local authorities in Scotland.

149 files were returned from the Freedom of Information requests. This number was not equally distributed across the 23 local authorities. The number of files returned from local authorities ranged from 1 to 32 (see table 4.3). In addition to the files

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returned from the Freedom of Information requests, two files related to national and global policies regarding the integration of forced migrants were discovered, one from the UK and one from the UNHCR, resulting in a total of 151 files returned. After initial review of the files returned, 10 were discovered to be duplicates of other files and were discarded. A total of 141 files remained for analysis.

Local Authority	Date Response Returned	Result of Request	Number of Documents Returned
Authority 1	1/7/2021	Documents Returned	1
Authority 2	24/6/2021	Signposted to local authority publication website	1
Authority 3	8/6/2021	Documents Returned	3
Authority 4	15/6/2021	Documents Returned	5
Authority 5	9/6/2021	Does not hold requested information	0
Authority 6	5/7/2021	Does not hold requested information	0
Authority 7	6/7/2021	Signposted to local authority publication website	3
Authority 8	10/6/2021	Signposted to local authority publication website	5
Authority 9	12/7/2021	Documents Returned	3
Authority 10	24/6/2021	Documents Returned	1
Authority 11		No Response	0
Authority 12	29/6/2021	Documents Returned	20
Authority 13	19/7/2021	Documents Returned	13
Authority 14	17/6/2021	Signposted to local authority publication website	3
Authority 15	8/7/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 16	5/7/2021	Does not hold requested information, reference to national documents	1
Authority 17	17/11/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 18		No Response	0
Authority 19	10/6/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 20	6/7/2021	Documents Returned	4
Authority 21	15/6/2021	Documents Returned	10
Authority 22	25/6/2021	Does not hold requested information	0
Authority 23	6/7/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 24	10/6/2021	Signposted to national Scottish strategy	1
Authority 25	29/6/2021	Documents Returned	6
Authority 26	2/7/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 27	23/6/2021	Signposted to local authority publication website	23
Authority 28	6/7/2021	Information Withheld	0
Authority 29	10/6/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 30		No Response	0
Authority 31	10/6/2021	Documents Returned	2
Authority 32	5/7/2021	Documents Returned	32
National Documents			2

Table 4.3: Results of the Freedom of Information requests

4.4.1.2 Data analysis of policy documents

Inductive thematic analysis was conducted with the 141 files returned by local authorities. Codes were data-derived (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 207), as the research focused on the semantic meaning in the formal documentation. Complete coding (e.g., every time a document referenced refugees or asylum seekers the instance was coded) was utilised in order to address the broad nature of the research questions.

Before files were examined in detail, codes were developed for each file to indicate the subject of the document (see table 4.4).

Document Subject Code	Number of Files
Related to conferences	2
Documents FOR forced migrants	14
Education	3
FOI request responses	4
Guidance documents	8
Housing	5
Integration	6
Legal document	4
Meeting Minutes	12
Policy	3
Report	76
Risk Management	4

Table 4.4: File subject codes for documents returned from Freedom of Information requests

Four of the returned files were documents responding to the Freedom of Information request, two of which included relevant information to the policies. Only three files were officially recorded policies, with the majority of the files being reports about the current provision of a local authority. 14 files were documents that the local authority disseminates to forced migrants (e.g., privacy notices, consent forms, maps of the local area) rather than documents guiding provision. Two files were documents related to a conference hosted by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA): one a presentation about the provision of a class to improve digital literacy; one an agenda that showed presentations about the reform of policies on forced migrant integration. The agenda was included in the total number of files returned, as it was not a duplicate, but did not provide enough detail for further analysis.

A total of 47 codes (44 main codes and three sub-codes see [Appendix B](#)) were derived from 140 files via manual coding in NVivo. These codes were developed while the data was being examined, and files were revisited during the analysis process to ensure that new codes were applied across the dataset. Multiple files included documentation that did not explicitly reference forced migrants, but could be relevant (e.g., the most vulnerable in our community, black and ethnic minority backgrounds, victims of bias or hate crime, migrants). In the majority of cases, if the words asylum seeker, refugee, unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), or UASC were not explicitly stated an instance was not coded. The only exception was when migrants was used, a word which encompasses forced migrants, economic migrants, and international students. These instances were coded into an additional code labelled not explicit.

After the initial review of the data, the codes were consolidated into a total of 44 codes, with two sub-codes and one main code merging into other codes and one sub-code becoming a main code (see [Appendix C](#)). Consolidated codes were revisited and patterns within and between codes were explored in order to develop themes. The hierarchy chart tool in NVivo was used to identify patterns between codes related to frequency. Patterns between codes were also detected through the use of the NVivo tool to view all codes assigned to a piece of data. Within codes, word frequency queries were used to identify patterns.

Six candidate themes were developed initially and further revision was conducted to ensure the themes related to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 234). After further revision, four of the candidate themes were confirmed. To determine the four confirmed themes, a mind map was created relating the codes to the candidate themes (see [Appendix D](#) for the mind map of the confirmed themes). Themes with an abundance of mapped codes were retained. One theme with a single mapped code was retained. This was because it was the only theme explicitly related to the research questions.

4.4.2 Implementation of gatekeeper interviews

4.4.2.1 Implementation of data collection for the gatekeeper interviews

A purposive, snowball sampling method was utilised to recruit participants for gatekeeper interviews. Purposive sampling, consistent with the qualitative

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methodology (Pickard, 2013 p. 60), allowed individuals who matched criteria for participation to be pursued for recruitment. Criterion for participation was set as individuals who work with and/or support forced migrants in the UK in either a paid or voluntary capacity. The criterion was developed to encompass a wide range of roles, including roles outwith the sphere of public libraries. In order to maximise information yield, snowball sampling was employed (Pickard, 2013 p. 65). With a closely connected community of potential participants, snowball sampling allowed for the recruitment of participants outside of the researcher's own social networks.

Recruitment of 30 interviewees was achieved following a campaign to publicise the study in various ways, including: accessing members of the research team's own social networks with requests to share news of the study; calls on social media tagged with relevant names of organisations and individuals to increase visibility; promotion of the study by relevant professional bodies (e.g. the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), and CILIP Scotland) and groups connected to migration and integration in the UK (e.g. City of Sanctuary, and The Welcoming), in both their open and 'closed' (member only) communications; and cold-calling combined with follow-up emails to UK public library services known to offer specific provision for forced migrants (see [Appendix E](#) for recruitment calls and [Appendix F](#) for full list of organisations). These efforts resulted in 30 participants from England and Scotland who agreed to undertake an interview between May 2021 to February 2022, and confirmed that their data could be used in the final data set for analysis (see [Appendix G](#) for an example of the consent forms signed by participants). One further interviewee withdrew their participation post-interview. An overview of the participants and the nature of their work with forced migrants is given in table 4.5.

Nature of participant work with forced migrants	Organisation/sector	No.
Paid	Local government (including 4 resettlement officers)	7
	Public library	7
	Third	6
Voluntary	Formal body (e.g., funded national initiative or charity)	4
	Local group (e.g., unfunded befriending group)	6
Total		30

Table 4.5. Overview of participants of gatekeeper interviews

As can be seen in the table, the majority of interviewees were not public library staff. This is in contrast to many of the prior studies cited in the literature review of [Chapter 2](#). Gatekeepers from beyond public libraries were desirable as research participants to help generate a more complete understanding of the research topic under investigation. Although not deliberately sought during the recruitment campaign, four of the participants who came forward for interview also offered lived experience as forced migrants themselves: one a local government resettlement officer, two third sector workers, and the fourth a volunteer in a formal body. Their experience added an extra valuable dimension to the interviews and – to an extent – addressed the study’s limitation of lack of involvement of “current” forced migrants as participants in the research.

A further point to note in respect of the sample selected for interview is that two versions of the interview schedule were used in data collection (see [Appendix H](#) and [Appendix I](#)). For all interviewees, the schedule comprised an initial list of questions that covered the study themes of forced migrants, public libraries and culture, contextualized to the detail of the organisation/group in which the interviewee worked/volunteered (e.g., background information on the forced migrants who use the service, partnerships with other organisations, organisational communication strategies, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on services provision). However, the

questions were presented in a slightly different way depending on whether or not the interviewee in question worked in a public library. For example, for non-library gatekeepers, questions were posed on forced migrants' use of two forms of services provision, i.e., that offered by their own (and, where relevant) partner organisations, and that by the public library service.

In 28 cases, the interviews were conducted entirely via Microsoft Teams. Telephone and email each served as backup in two separate cases due to connectivity issues on Microsoft Teams. The Teams interviews were recorded and transcribed using the application's transcription software, then reviewed for inaccuracies and corrected manually. The telephone interview was recorded via a portable voice recorder and transcribed manually (and the email 'interview' did not require transcription). The average interview length ranged between 30 and 95 minutes, with an average of 57 minutes.

4.4.2.2 Data analysis: gatekeeper interviews

NVivo 20 was used to manually code the data from 30 interview transcripts. Inductive thematic analysis, an analysis generated from the data up (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 175) was conducted. Codes were data-derived in order to capture participant perspectives in a more realist manner, rather than relying on codes based only on theoretical lenses (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 207). Complete coding, where every instance relevant to answering the research questions is coded, was conducted to allow for deep analysis (an example of coded text can be seen in [Appendix J](#)). 96 initial codes were developed, (78 main codes and 18 child codes see [Appendix K](#)). These codes were established as the data was examined and retroactively applied when appropriate. Further review resulted in a total of 86 codes (68 main codes and 18 child codes see [Appendix L](#)). Initially, eleven candidate themes were developed during review of the finalized codes. Hierarchy charts were completed to compare the codes in each theme to each other (see [Appendix M](#) for an example). Candidate themes with few codes, or that had a large number of codes overlap with other themes were removed. After this additional assessment, seven candidate themes were confirmed as relevant to the research questions.

4.4.3 Implementation of community validation

4.4.3.1 Data collection for the community validation exercise

Similar to the gatekeeper interviews, a purposive, snowball sampling method was utilised to recruit participants for community validation. Criterion for participation was set as individuals who self-identified as either refugees or people seeking asylum who had arrived in the UK in the last ten years. In order to maximise information yield, snowball sampling was employed (Pickard, 2013 p. 65). With a closely connected community of potential participants, snowball sampling allowed for the recruitment of participants outside of the researcher's own social networks.

Recruitment of six forced migrant interviewees was achieved following targeted recruitment of forced migrants. Potential participants were identified through the researcher's own social networks with requests to participate or share news of the study. These efforts resulted in the six participants resident in England and Scotland. They agreed to undertake an interview between July 12, 2022 to August 28, 2022, and confirmed that their data could be used in the final data set for analysis (see [Appendix N](#) for an example information sheet and consent form). Two further interviewees withdrew their participation post-interview.

The interview schedule (see [Appendix O](#)) began with a section that comprised questions that covered the study theme of public libraries and culture. The second section comprised the themes developed from the gatekeeper interviews. Each theme took the form of a sentence. Participants were asked to reflect on each sentence and respond with their thoughts. Before the sentences were shared with participants, the researcher explained that this section of the interview was based on the results of interviews conducted with different people in 2021. An opportunity to ask questions was given to participants before the interview continued. This was done to ensure participants were comfortable with the change, as this was a significant shift in technique from the interview format to that point.

Four interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams, and the remaining two were conducted in-person. The two interviews conducted in person took place in coffee shops. The participants were advised of privacy and ethical considerations of interviews in a public space, and chose an interview location in which they felt most

comfortable. The average interview length ranged between 17 and 67 minutes, with an average length of 50 minutes. Three interviews included interpreters.

4.4.3.2 Data analysis: community validation

The data were manually coded using paper notes and copies of interview transcripts. As the interviews were conducted in a short period of time, interview recordings were used to augment the transcripts and notes, particularly when tone was deemed important to the results. Inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 175) was conducted. Codes were data-derived in order to capture participant perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 207). Complete coding was conducted to allow for deep analysis. For the community validation complete coding was not based on relevance to the research questions. Instead, all data relevant to the confirmed themes of the gatekeeper interviews were coded.

Thirty-three initial codes were developed (26 main codes and seven child codes). After review, four codes (two main codes and two child codes) were determined to be repetitive and 27 codes remained. Thus, a total of 24 codes were used to establish themes from the community validation that related to the results of the gatekeeper interviews. The remaining three codes were used to establish additional themes related to the research question on the relationship between culture and use of public libraries.

Initially 24 candidate themes were developed: 21 related to the results of the gatekeeper interviews, and three related to the research question on the relationship between culture and use of public libraries. The candidate themes were further reviewed by comparing the codes assigned to each theme. Those themes that had high similarity with other themes or only had codes from a single participant were rejected. Following further evaluation 17 themes were confirmed: 15 themes related to the results of the gatekeeper interviews, and two themes related to the research question on the relationship between culture and use of public libraries.

4.5 Methodological contribution to library and information science research

Member checks (Thomas, 2017) and triangulation (Flick, 2018) are both methods of validation commonly deployed in qualitative and mixed methods research. LIS research

on public library use often includes member checks or triangulation as methods of validation. Triangulation in particular is frequently used (e.g., Dali, 2012; Fisher, 2018; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Greyson *et al.*, 2017; Johnston, 2016; Rene, 2022), though member checking is also present in the literature (e.g. Bodaghi *et al.*, 2016; Detlor *et al.*, 2022; Niteck & Abels, 2013). The purpose of member checks (also known as member checking, member validation, and transformational validation) is to ensure credibility of researcher conclusions by utilising participant feedback (Thomas, 2017 pp. 23-24). Member checks can be conducted at multiple stages in a research design, though they occur most often in the analysis stage (Thomas, 2017 p. 27). Triangulation, in contrast, is the use of multiple methods to explore the same research question in order to gain a more complete understanding of phenomena (Flick, 2018). According to Flick (2018), triangulation can occur at many points of the research, including:

- the data collection, either as separate methods or the same method with different populations;
- data analysis, through the use of multiple analysis methods or independent analysis by multiple researchers;
- even the theoretical underpinning of the research.

The community validation method undertaken in the empirical work reported in this thesis includes components of both member checking and triangulation. Members of the community of interest were approached to determine accuracy of researcher conclusions, multiple methods (i.e., government document analysis and two sets of semi-structures interviews) and multiple participant populations (i.e., gatekeepers *and* forced migrants) were targeted in order to address the research questions. Due to constraints on the research (see [Chapters 1.4](#) and [4.2.1.1](#)), the population of interest was not directly targeted for the initial research methods. Rather, the participants from the population of interest were recruited at a later stage of the research to comment on the findings of the interviews with gatekeepers. The use of these not-yet-participants to determine the accuracy of researcher conclusions is a combination of both member checks and triangulation. This combination is not found in extant LIS research, nor in the broader qualitative literature and provides a different form of credibility of the results. The community validation method can therefore be

considered a methodological contribution to the field of LIS and the academy as a whole.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The empirical work undertaken in this PhD related to a sensitive topic. The nature of forced migration is such that special consideration was needed to protect the interests of gatekeepers and forced migrants. This consideration was included in the ethical approval sought prior to completion of the study. Ethical approval was sought through following the procedures explicit in the Edinburgh Napier University Code of Practice on Research Integrity (Edinburgh Napier University, 2022). The topics addressed in the ethical application include: data generation and storage (of participant details and research data), anonymisation of participants during the data analysis stage, and ensuring the suitability of the researcher to work with vulnerable groups (e.g., PVG clearance). Participants remained anonymous throughout the data analysis stage and the presentation of the findings, although characteristics of individual participants was retained in order to contextualise the results.

4.7 Conclusion of chapter 4

In this chapter, the data collection methods relevant to the doctoral research project were evaluated. Three data collection techniques were determined appropriate for the research:

1. Government document analysis with secondary sources;
2. Gatekeeper interviews;
3. Community validation interviews.

The data analysis methods relevant to the doctoral research were also evaluated in this chapter. Thematic analysis was deemed the most appropriate method of analysis for all sets of data. Implementation of all methods were then described. In the following chapters ([Chapter 5](#), [Chapter 6](#), and [Chapter 7](#)) three sets of research findings are presented.

Chapter 5: Findings of government document analysis

5.1 Introduction to chapter 5

In this chapter, the findings and analysis of the government document analysis are presented. An overview of the national policies of the UK as they relate to forced migration is provided. This is followed by an initial description of the findings. The findings are then organised by theme, with each section detailing one of the themes developed from the analysis. These descriptions are included to provide context for the findings of gatekeeper interviews presented in [Chapter 6](#), the findings of community validation in [Chapter 7](#), and [Chapter 8](#) in which the findings are presented as they relate to the research questions.

5.2 National policies in the UK and library integration

As discussed in the literature review ([Chapter 2](#)) public libraries have been shown to play a role in forced migrant integration, particularly in the development of social capital language skills, and literacy. Given that the literature furnishes evidence that public libraries provide a range of services that can be accessed by forced migrants to support their integration, it follows that documented local government policies would be expected to reflect this in the Scottish context. As integration policies are indicative of the perceptions of the individuals in the local governments, the analysis of said documentation addresses the research question of how people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services.

5.3 Themes identified through analysis of the documents

Thematic analysis of the official documents (as described in [Chapter 4.4.1.2](#) p. 93) resulted in four confirmed themes, of which three relate to the ways in which integration is approached by local government:

1. Roles
2. Identification of need
3. Characteristics of forced migrants

The fourth theme – libraries and integration – relates to the inclusion of public libraries in the local authority documentation on the integration of forced migrants in Scotland. Findings on the fourth theme were expected to foreground gatekeeper perceptions of

public library use by forced migrants, as government policies are intended to be built upon the needs of the communities to which they apply.

All four themes are considered in this chapter, as insights from the first three themes provide context for the findings of the remaining two methods. Most notably, the legal obligations of the UK to forced migrants of different status and the importance of language learning support relate directly to findings from interviews with gatekeepers and forced migrants.

5.3.1 Findings in the theme “roles”

The theme of “Roles” encompasses the various roles of different entities listed in the data. Content related to the asylum process, resource provision, named organisations, and UK legislation all fell under this theme. The theme of “Roles” contains the broadest spectrum of codes derived from the data. Codes were grouped into topic areas (see table 5.1) which provided a visual of the concepts contained in the theme.

Topic	Codes within the topic
Asylum process	Asylum process
	Region of origin
	Family reunification
	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Future	Adjustments to current provision
	Adjustments to current provision - COVID-19 specific
	Feedback measures
Listed organisations	Listed organisations
Provision by local authorities	Criminal justice support
	Diet
	Education
	Employment
	Family services
	Finances
	Further education
	Health
	Housing
	Integration
	Language
	Leisure
	Social Services
	Transportation
	Volunteering
Welcoming	
Resettlement area	Resettlement area
UK law	Law-UK
	Asylum Process
	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Table 5.1: Topics and codes within the theme of “Roles”

The code most often applied to the data is “Law-UK”, a topic itself. There are high levels of co-occurrence between the code “Law-UK” and codes related to the topic provision by local authorities. There is often discussion of actions taken to support integration in the context of requirements of legislation in the UK. For example, the

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extract “there was a requirement that individuals over 18 years would receive a minimum of 8 hours of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tuition per week” describes the English classes provided by a local authority which are required by UK legislation. In the data, legislation that direct the asylum process indicate what services must be provided, but the focus is on the description of services themselves, e.g., “Support for Syrian Refugee families is provided in schools by teaching staff trained in English as an Additional Language along with translated teaching resources”. The exceptions to this are in the few legal documents, in which legislation about a topic (e.g., *English for speakers of other languages provision*) is stated alone rather than discussed further.

The legal requirement of local authorities to ensure that the integration needs of forced migrants are addressed is evident in the code most frequently applied to the whole data set: Law-UK. Legal obligations include, for example, educational provision such as at least eight hours per week of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tuition for those over 18, and dedicated school support materials, such as translated teaching resources, for children. Since UK Law determines the asylum process, and the provision of services to forced migrants differs according to their status (refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children), it should be noted that local authority responses to integration needs are not the same for every forced migrant. Key to this is the question of region of origin. In the documents accessed, region of origin is often offered as an explanation for an individual’s stage of the asylum process.

Much of the documentation analysed focuses on one particular population: those from Syria who have come to Scotland as part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme (adopted in 2015 as an expansion of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme). Indeed, the number of references to these ‘Syrian New Scots’ in the data set is approximately four times that for forced migrants from other regions of origin. Since the legal route to settlement in the UK for Syrians is not the same as others, services for this population of forced migrants must take account of this. The large amount of attention paid to one subset of the forced migrant community in Scotland indicates that there may be a lack of balance in integration efforts for forced migrants from

other regions of origin. Insufficient guidance to local authority staff on meeting the integration needs of forced migrants from regions other than Syria may risk unserved or underserved communities.

Within the theme “Roles”, the topic *future* has a focus on the evolution of provision by local authorities. The codes in this topic primarily relate to provision strategies to be implemented at later dates. As the reviewed documents range from 2013 to 2021, some strategies are no longer relevant. However, there was evidence that local authorities sought continuous improvement. The strategies listed comprise learning provision, including, but not limited to, language and literacy, social services, expansion of provision through partnerships with third sector organisations, adjustments to staff numbers, elicitation of feedback from forced migrants, and participation in additional resettlement schemes. Documents from 2020 and 2021 often include provision changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Extensions of support, delays or cancellations of classes and programmes, and increased digital offerings have been common adjustments made to account for the pandemic. At the time of analysis, the pandemic continued to have a large impact on provision as local restrictions remained in place. On the basis of the content of the documents analysed, it is unclear whether changes such as increased digital offerings continued beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key finding from this analysis is that the public library is rarely mentioned in the theme roles, and any mentions are primarily contained within the topic *provision by local authority*. Mentions of public libraries in the documents include their listing as a local resource for orientation, or as a leisure activity in a personal integration plan, even though some of the legal requirements cover services that could – and indeed are – provided by public libraries.

5.3.2 Findings in the theme “identification of need”

The theme “Identification of need” is a single topic that shares many of the codes related to the topic *responsibilities of local authorities* in the theme roles. The main difference between the codes contained in each theme lie in whether the code focuses on provision by a local authority (e.g., “the families are supported by specialist officers

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from the Refugee Resettlement Team within Housing”) or the reasons that forced migrants have need of certain provision (e.g., “two families are considering leaving the island and several others are looking for new accommodation on the island”). Excerpts which describe forced migrant needs for certain provision are distinct from those which describe provision.

Further, there are co-occurrences of codes in the topics of the *asylum process* and *UK law*. It was found that codes within the topics *UK law* and *asylum process* often include information on how needs of forced migrants can be met by a local authority. The ability of a local authority to meet these needs is dependent on the stage of the asylum process. For example, when unaccompanied asylum seeking children reach the age of 18 without being granted leave to remain in the UK, and the maximum number of appeals have been made, “the Immigration Act 2016 requires local authorities to withdraw any support as the young person will have no recourse to public funds”. In these situations, it is expected that the person seeking asylum will still need to access public funds, but UK law dictates that these needs cannot be met by local authorities.

Related to UK legislation is the identified need for criminal justice support. As stated in one document, “Adjusting to life in a new country can be an anxious and confusing experience and guidance on the customs and laws of the land is not always easily available”. In the documentation, identified differences between social norms of forced migrants’ cultures and social norms of Scottish culture (e.g., women holding tenancies, definitions of domestic violence, education requirements, age of marriage) result in training provision to ensure forced migrants are aware of legal obligations in Scotland. In addition, it is noted in the documentation that forced migrants may need support from police if they experience hate crimes.

The analysis of the data shows that local authorities have an expectation that the integration needs of forced migrants relate primarily to housing, education, and health (including physical and mental needs that result from experiences of war). This is apparent in the following two examples. One example pertains to individuals seeking asylum, and the other to individuals who are part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

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An asylum seeker would not be eligible for Housing Benefit during the process where they are applying to the Home Secretary to be considered as a refugee.

Refugees who are resettled under the Scheme will...have immigration status which allows them to access mainstream benefits, including housing benefits, and they will have full employment rights.

The importance of education and health is further underlined in the frequency with these codes were allocated to the data set: both terms were in the top five for the topic of *Provision by local authority*. Less frequently mentioned in the data set but also important, are needs related to employment, and diet. Forced migrants' expectations of the provision that can be offered by the receiving country is also an integration need. For example, one document states: "The model of health care in the UK is very different to that experienced by our families in Syria...Developing an understanding and managing the expectations of the health service in the UK has been a key issue". It is worth noting that information needs are not explicitly discussed in the documentation, although they are implied in some text, particularly in respect of education, language, health, and literacy.

The count of references for public services (table 5.2) is indicative of bodies expected to meet these integration needs.

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Service	Number of references to the service	Types of references
Housing	376	Current provision Information FOR forced migrants Orientation Required provision Resettlement area
Health	250	Current provision Differences between region of origin and Scotland Information FOR forced migrants Orientation Required provision
Social Services	235	Benefits rights Current provision Orientation Required provision
Employability support	187	Connection to integration Current provision Employed forced migrant statistics Information FOR forced migrants Required provision Training Volunteer
Education	174 ESOL 84; school 47; further/higher 43	Advice for service providers Connection to integration Current provision Differences between region of origin and Scotland Funding Information FOR forced migrants Orientation Required provision Team members
Libraries	11	Leisure Orientation Volunteer

Table 5.2: Reference to public services

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According to the analysis, the key integration need related to the education of forced migrants is competence in English. References to the differing levels of English language attributed to forced migrants regularly co-occur in the data set with identified needs of language support, education, employment, and health. For example, one extract reads: “the skills and experience that our families bring are transferable and it is hoped that improving English language skills will enable many to be able to find work opportunities”. Discussions of modes of language training acknowledge that extent of this educational need. For example, in one document it is noted “...some Syrian refugees may not be literate in their own first language and may benefit from picture-based information”. This indicates the importance of literacy to integration.

A further artefact of the data set is the expression of negative opinion of UK legislation related to the forced migrants. The majority of language used in the documents is neutral. However, in documents authored in conjunction with charities there are at times expressions of negative opinions of the UK asylum process and the need for legislative improvement. For example, one excerpt reads:

Under successive pieces of UK legislation, basic rights and entitlements to public services have been restricted for people with insecure immigration status...This approach...is at odds with the Scottish Government and Local Government's aims, including to eradicate child poverty and create a fairer Scotland.

The inclusion of documents with these views indicates a willingness to address the needs of forced migrants as comprehensively as possible. As Mulvey (2018) argues, differing welfare outlooks of Holyrood compared to Westminster has allowed the Scottish government to adopt a more compassionate approach. This push of comprehensive support can also be seen in the links between roles, identification of need, and characteristics of forced migrants.

5.3.3 Findings in the theme “characteristics of forced migrants”

The overlap of the theme “roles” and the theme “identification of needs” on descriptions of provision by local authorities and identified needs of forced migrants is driven by the theme characteristics of forced migrants. The majority of overlap with

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roles and identification of needs relates to identified characteristics of forced migrants (some of which differentiate them from established communities): country of origin, language, education, experiences of war affecting their physical and mental health, expectations of provision, and diet.

Experiences which affect physical and mental health are the most common characteristics attributed to forced migrants, with war and deprivation the most commonly cited roots. Words such as “trauma”, “victims”, and “vulnerable”, are often used in the documents when describing forced migrants. Being a forced migrant, and thus needing accommodation in a settlement area, is the next most common characteristic present in the documents. War and deprivation are once again considered root causes of this characteristic.

Outwith war and deprivation, cultural factors were also identified in the analysis as characteristics of forced migrants. These cultural factors are often closely tied to the theme of identified needs. For example, experiences in cultures where smoking is a social activity, as with many Syrians, is mentioned in documents in relation to the physical health support that should be offered. Culturally appropriate diets are also cited as characteristics that affect need. This is often specifically mentioned in documentation from local authorities in which large supermarkets or “ethnic shops” are less accessible. In many cases, the documents report welcome packs with culturally appropriate foods being presented to newly arrived forced migrants. However, it should be noted that this is only mentioned in relation to those who are resettled under the Syrian Resettlement Scheme.

Another experience mentioned explicitly in the documents is that of “large, close knit, extended families” and communities, which need to be accounted for when placing forced migrants in a resettlement area. It is also noted that such family dynamics may result in large numbers of family reunification requests, for which local governments will need to be prepared. Family dynamics are also noted in the documentation as affecting relationships between forced migrants and their new communities. For example, one authority reports in its documentation that forced migrants perceive

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media attention as a potential threat to communities in countries of origin. This influences the willingness of forced migrants to be approached by any organisation.

Language, education, and health are the primary codes linked to previous themes. This indicates that these three areas are essential in the process of forced migrant integration. Indeed, in terms of codes for provision and needs, language, education and health are in the top five most often coded (see table 5.2). Differing English language levels attributed to forced migrants (e.g., “They have all increased their spoken English by one level in a matter of months, a process that normally takes up to a year to achieve”) regularly co-occur with identified needs of language support, education, employment, and health. There are additional connections between mentions of low literacy exhibited by many forced migrants and the importance of language training (e.g., “One to one support is given to those who have difficulties with literacy in their own language and are struggling to learn”). Although literacy is not mentioned in the documentation as often as language, the high percentage of co-occurrence also indicates the importance of literacy to integration. Digital literacy is included in a selection of the documents. However, this is not to the same extent as traditional literacy.

There is no mention of public libraries in relation to characteristics of forced migrants, and there are no co-occurrences between this theme and the theme libraries and integration.

5.3.4 Findings in the theme “libraries and integration”

The theme of “Libraries and integration” is the most limited theme in terms of complexity and quantity of data. There are 11 instances where public libraries are explicitly mentioned in the data. These mentions fall across 10 documents and five local authorities. Of the five local authorities that explicitly include public libraries in their documentation, only three reference public libraries in the context of orientation. Of the remaining two local authorities, one indicates the public library as an example of a leisure activity on a personal integration plan, and one notes that a local forced migrant volunteered at a public library. All documents that mention the public library do so in the context of forced migrants arriving through the Syrian Resettlement

Scheme. One document listed libraries specifically as places where integration activities may take place, with the suggestion that a library could be chosen as a venue for these activities. A separate document includes libraries as part of a list of organisations where refugee support workers may need to assist in initial registrations. None of the documents connect library registration or attendance with language learning or literacy. The lack of reference to public libraries in documentation about integration is surprising when compared to the emphasis on language and literacy in previous themes.

Due to the limited quantity of data, the theme “libraries and integration” is not well connected to the other themes. Excerpts co-occurred with codes for integration, language, education, and community. However, close review exposed these co-occurring codes came from excerpts in the form of tables. In these lists, the other codes were semantically separate from the code related to libraries. The overall theme is lacking in both data from the documentation and links to the other confirmed themes. Indeed, were it not for the research question of how people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services, the theme libraries and integration would not have been confirmed in this research.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the analysis of government documentation are discussed. Four themes were developed from the data, with the first three providing context for how the integration of forced migrants is approached in the documentation. The final theme relates to Research Question 1, as it is expected that inclusion of libraries in government documentation is indicative of how gatekeepers will perceive libraries to be used by forced migrants. The content of the documentation could be organised into the first three themes: roles, identified needs of forced migrants, and characteristics of forced migrants. The fourth theme of libraries and integration demonstrates the lack of public library inclusion in the documentation. This is an unexpected result based on previous research and the emphasis on language and literacy in the other three themes.

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The results of other methods are discussed in subsequent chapters. The findings of gatekeeper interviews are examined in [Chapter 6](#), followed by a review of the results of community validation in [Chapter 7](#). The connection between documentation and perspectives of gatekeepers can be seen in [Chapter 8](#), where findings are synthesised with each other and the literature.

Chapter 6: Findings of gatekeeper interviews

6.1 Introduction to chapter 6

In this chapter, the findings and analysis of the data collected in interviews with gatekeepers are presented. An overview of the themes developed from the data is provided, including information about the roles and backgrounds of participants. This is followed by an initial description of the findings. The findings are organised by theme, with each section detailing one of the themes developed from the analysis. These descriptions are included to provide context for the findings of community validation presented in Chapter 7 and the subsequent chapter in which the findings are presented as they relate to the research questions.

6.2 The themes developed from thematic analysis

Thematic analysis of the gatekeeper interviews resulted in seven confirmed themes related to the research questions (see [Chapter 4.4.2.2](#)). The seven confirmed themes can be articulated in statements as follows:

1. Public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time.
2. Public libraries hold information but they are not a main source of information for forced migrants.
3. Public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants don’t trust the system.
4. Public libraries are meant to serve all members of a community but forced migrants do not have confidence that they can use the library.
5. Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting.
6. Public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces
7. Public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community.

Below each of the statements is elaborated with reference to the data that led to their formation. The sources of data from which the results are drawn are indicated by a participant number with the participant’s profile. For example, “GK25 (volunteer local group)” was the 25th gatekeeper interviewee and a volunteer in a local group that

supports forced migrants (see [table 4.5](#) for an overview of participant profiles). It is also important to note that the views related below derive from discussions with individuals who work (whether as employees or in a voluntary capacity) as gatekeepers to services for forced migrants, and that the majority (26) do not have lived experiences as forced migrants themselves.

6.3 Public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time

In their interviews, gatekeepers often connected public libraries with the leisure departments of local authorities and applying the words “leisure”, and “luxury” to them. Whether in the form of leisurely activities related to physical provision (e.g., books) or the space of a public library (e.g., where someone goes to spend time away from work), the public library is perceived as an institution for leisure rather than an institution with resources related to survival. While the public library was mentioned as a resource for ESOL support, there was an emphasis on the public library providing books that could be used as ESOL support, rather than the public library as a primary source of ESOL provision.

A sentiment repeated by four participants, of library and non-library gatekeeper roles, related to Maslow’s *Hierarchy of needs* (Maslow, 1943). As stated by a volunteer:

They’re not looking for intellectual stimulation and portals into another world. They’re wondering where their next meal is coming from. – GK27 volunteer local group

A similar statement was made by a gatekeeper from a library management position:

In terms of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, those [housing, education, National Health Service (NHS)] are our key providers...if people were articulating the gaps, I’d anticipate they’re more about the additional things that give a greater sense of well-being. – GK12 local government

A third of the participants within and outwith library settings perceive that libraries are not used because the priority of forced migrants is “survival”. Gatekeeper 18 (volunteer formal body) said:

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I've heard a lot of refugees saying like we really want to learn the language, we want to engage with all of this lovely cultural stuff, but we can't do it now. We're just too exhausted with trying to get through everything and process everything that happened to us.... And then that might actually mean that some of those services and uptake takes a little bit longer 'cause people lack the ability to do it.

Despite the perception that forced migrants view public libraries as institutions for leisure, the gatekeepers indicated public library provision includes resources that support needs for food, shelter, and safety. The following list encompasses examples of provision known to gatekeepers:

- Support dealing with benefits – GK25 volunteer local group,
- ESOL skills for life section – GK26 library staff,
- Bus passes and other transportation cards – GK9 volunteer local group,
- Free sanitary products – GK12 local government,
- Hearing aids – GK12,
- Lateral flow testing kits (during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic) – GK12.

Public libraries being seen as primarily arenas of leisure, therefore, is not based on current public library provision in the UK.

Gatekeepers largely attributed the perception of public libraries as arenas of leisure to cultural background and experience with public libraries in countries of origin. In some countries, public libraries are viewed as a place for those of a higher socio-economic standing:

I mean the whole idea of any cultural institution is almost alien to many parts of the world in the forms that are semi-funded by public bodies, largely for an elite class. – GK18 volunteer formal body

Alternatively, the understanding of the public library as a communal resource may be different in some countries. As described by Gatekeeper 6 (volunteer local group), the concept of a public space related to the government is unusual in certain cultures. One

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participant with lived experience connected the perception of libraries for leisure with the specific resource of books:

I come from similar backgrounds...So reading for adults for example is- it's not something they do. – GK3 local government

The perception that forced migrants may see libraries as a resource primarily for the benefit of children is supported by other participants. For example, when speaking of the story-hours and rhyme-times the public library provides Gatekeeper 16 (library staff) stated:

I think they like that sort of service 'cause they see that as something valuable for their children. Often, they use the library to borrow books for their children. Not necessarily read themselves, but they will encourage their children.

Due to the perception that adult forced migrants will not use library resources themselves, two library staff reported specific library programmes have been developed to encourage reading in adults as well as children:

We also provide something called reading ahead, which is a scheme that's reading for pleasure...And we sort of challenge them to read six books and then sort of come together to talk about it. – GK16 library staff

However, even for these types of programmes the emphasis is on using the library for leisure.

It is unclear whether the perception of the public library as an institution for leisure is a perception held by forced migrants coming to the UK, or an explanation of usage patterns based on the culture of service providers. This is due to the reliance on gatekeepers as participants, the majority of whom do not have lived experience of forced migration. Eight gatekeepers, with and without lived experience of forced migration, often referred to the public library as a place of leisure from their own perspective – “We're more of like additional service for leisure” (GK26 library staff) – in addition to their thoughts on forced migrant perspectives. Indeed, one participant reflected deeply on the role gatekeepers play in shaping the perspective of forced

migrants, and the influence of this on the way that forced migrants interact with resources.

And because I think we shaped what their life should be...the Somalians, for example...they were also brought here and just dumped here in the UK with no help or information or anything. So, they made their own way. I think that's why maybe the cultural differences, their use of the library...they look at the culture before they look at any other learning sources. But with the Syrians, they came here and the help was there for them. – GK3 local government

It is possible that the gatekeeper perspective that forced migrants view the public library as a place of leisure is strongly influenced by gatekeepers' own views of what public libraries can provide. One participant specifically mentioned that their own perspective of resources provided by public libraries affected whether they are suggested as a resource for forced migrants:

I guess our perception of a library is somewhere you go to get books to read and they're not really at that stage at the moment of being able to read books. – GK11 local government

6.4 Public libraries hold information but they are not the main source of information for forced migrants

A further finding derived from the analysis of the empirical data is the view that while public libraries hold information, they are not a main source for forced migrants. Members of their own communities are relied on to provide needed information, rather than public libraries. Of note, no gatekeepers in positions at libraries provided information on this theme, perhaps because the forced migrants with whom they work *do* use the public library as a main source of information. Gatekeeper 9 (volunteer formal body) spoke from their lived experience as a forced migrant about other places that are more usual sources of information:

What I see is happening is the community centres. For instance, it could be a restaurant in the city, an Eritrean restaurant, where people could go and try to ask for information. These are their libraries for the moment.

A volunteer in a local group expressed a similar perception:

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I think they would rely on their immediate community...I see here in the UK they are relying a lot on their mates, on their community based, on the network that's already existing. – GK15

Gatekeeper 28 (local government) suggested that part of this reliance may be due to the way the asylum system resettles forced migrants, particularly those who are part of a resettlement programme:

And the nature of the locations where a lot of New Scots families are living here is that they would have other community spaces where they would go to or they would, maybe again because they're part of a managed resettlement programme, they're able to access information and advice more readily than maybe if it was somebody coming through an asylum process where they would need to go somewhere to find that advice.

There are three main reasons for seeking information from community members rather than the public library: (1) trust in the source of information, (2) availability of information in a format that is accessible, and (3) relevance of the information at the public library to individual needs. These three reasons connect closely to a third theme explored in this research, but are considered distinct as they address specifically where information is found by forced migrant communities.

The gatekeepers with lived experience of migration and those closely connected with forced migrant communities often stated at interview that trust in a source of information is important. As one participant with lived experience noted:

These stories are available in their own communities, and with the people they trust. – GK9 volunteer formal body

A volunteer from a local group suggested that “institutionalised racism and intolerance” (GK27) drive forced migrants to avoid integration and instead form communities that consist primarily of other migrants. This sentiment is supported by an observation from a participant with lived experience:

We signpost each other to services and service providers in the region – GK22
volunteer formal body

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This reliance on information from the community relates to an observation from gatekeeper 22 about the prevalence of forced migrants frequenting cafés rather than libraries:

So sometimes the library, as big and important as visibility is, becomes invisible symbolically in terms of people engaging with it. So you have Nero or you go to Costa for example, it's just full of people. And we saw a tendency, especially in some specific Costas, it's just a group of migrants, for example, occupying the Costa. But it's also really great to see Costa offering those safe spaces. It is why people are, I think, flocking to them, coming and engaging. So I think maybe we need to see the visibility of the library in that context as well.

From this gatekeeper's perspective, Costa Cafés are a more trusted space to gather and share information than public libraries.

The availability of information in an accessible format was also mentioned in interviews as a reason for forced migrants to turn to their communities for information. In many cases, this relates to language:

If you have someone who wants to do some reading in their own language, for example...the library does not have those resources. Any Arabic books for example...I don't expect libraries to have those books but, from a personal point of view, then why do I need to go to the library? – GK22 volunteer formal body

A volunteer from a local group also suggested a reliance on communities in which others speak the same language as a forced migrant:

But I think they would rely on their immediate community, so on the community speaking their own language where they can find information. – GK15

A further finding related to language came from a participant who works in two third-sector organisations. Gatekeeper 13 (third sector) indicated that illiteracy in the mother tongue (as well as English) means that forced migrants may miss information that is written in digital or analogue formats because they rely on word-of-mouth

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within their communities. In addition to language, accessibility of a format is also related to how information is imparted. The format in which information is communicated is closely connected to cultural background. GK6 (volunteer formal body), who has lived experience of migration, noted that in their culture information is not necessarily tied to the written word. They went on to suggest at interview that written material, therefore, may not be accessible to many people with a similar background. The accessibility of the format is also tied to trust. One researcher (Gatekeeper 18) pointed out that when pamphlets are a source of propaganda in the country of origin, they will be avoided, and therefore are not an accessible format.

Whether or not the public library contains relevant information is the third explanation for Forced migrants to rely heavily on their own communities for information. As a resettlement officer stated:

As there's more community information, and resilience, and knowledge, amongst the new Scots families, the less that they would rely on public buildings like libraries or library staff...the need for that has been replaced by social connections elsewhere – GK28 local government

Two participants with lived experience of migration indicated at interview that public library resources often are not seen as relevant to them:

On a more critical note, aside from being an important building, what does the library offer to me? What kind of resources are there in the library? – GK22 volunteer formal body

I would prefer to go to, for instance, like museums...because these are open space where you see images and pictures and artefacts. And you can have your own interpretations of them – GK9 volunteer formal body

It was perceived by Gatekeeper 9 that the resources present in the library, particularly traditional resources such as books, often contain versions of history that are contrary to those that forced migrants know, rendering the information less relevant.

Gatekeeper 9 described this type of encounter with library resources:

One of the barriers for me was in trying to read all this Western thinking, all this Western knowledge that I find are deeply colonial. That I did not find my story or my own perceptions, or the perceptions or the stories of my own people represented in there...This creates a sense of a kind of scepticism when I try to understand why am I not understood in certain ways here [in the UK]? My own subjectivity is completely objectified and becomes something to be understood in certain ways rather than the real way that I would explain myself.

Cultural norms on the location of relevant information were also discussed by a participant with lived experience:

There is a cultural thing, from my perspective...that we do tend to do things together a bit more. We tend to kind of consult others...Like a challenge for one of use is something to be discussed with everyone to get everyone's perspectives on things. – GK6 volunteer formal body

Here, the relevant information to make life decisions is not held in a library, but in other members of the community.

6.5 Public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants do not trust the system

The third theme developed from the data is that the system in the UK, including the public libraries, is not beneficial for forced migrants. The system in the current research, refers to both the asylum system of the UK specifically, and the broader governmental and societal systems that encompass everyday life. Examples of the “system” from the data included local authorities, police, government related services, voluntary organisations, the public library, and the media. The following description of the distrust of the system came from a researcher who holds many roles working with forced migrants:

He's a white man in a suit. These are the guys who lock you up in the UK – GK18 volunteer formal body

According to many interviewed gatekeepers, the system in the UK is not deemed trustworthy by forced migrants.

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The distrust of the system is attributed to both lived experiences of the UK asylum process and experiences in countries of origin. Believing that the asylum system in the UK is not built to grant you asylum and will, in fact, attempt to deny you asylum was often mentioned, as seen in the following four quotations.

For a lot of people, everybody is Home Office, and anybody who from even a voluntary organisation is Home Office. We're all part of the same thing. – GK21 local government

For someone who has been through very, very difficult journey navigating the asylum system...which is brutal, which will brutalize people. And then associating maybe the library with authority, I don't know if there might be a slight element of apprehension in using the library. – GK22 volunteer formal body

They don't want to engage with local authorities...and all of this government related kind of service providers because they do not have trust in them. – GK9 volunteer formal body

Forced migrants also often distrust systems because of migration journeys, particularly when it comes to the type of information that is trusted, "If you come from a country...where any leaflet was propaganda, this is a really stupid way of trying to make information public – GK18 volunteer formal body

The view of the gatekeepers is that forced migrants are reluctant to become members of the public library. This is due to their experiences along their migration journey. According to Gatekeeper 7 (library staff) this is because most libraries request personally identifying information in order to become a member. Some forced migrants may be reluctant to give information about their date of birth or address (GK10 library staff). Others avoid using specific services, such as the computers, for fear of their actions being monitored (GK2 and GK16 library staff). As Gatekeeper 2 stated:

They had had texts or emails, intercepted [in their country of origin] and they had basically been persecuted because of that. They were very worried about if

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they were potentially being tracked through using the internet and things like that.

The following statement from a participant with lived experience expresses the extent of distrust forced migrants often have drawing on their experiences during migration:

Most of the people that I speak to and the people that I have been working with, they don't want to engage with local authorities and the police and all of this government related kind of service providers because they do not have trust in them. Because they have lost their trust through these bureaucratic systems of asylum and the way they have been treated by all of that...Because we don't trust them, we don't want [to] call them. They will put us in prison or in detention centre or in asylum accommodation where they will set some curfews for them and that kind of stuff – GK9 volunteer formal body

An additional layer of distrust of the system as related to public library use is whether forced migrants see themselves in the public library. As discussed by two participants with lived experience, this may manifest as the presence of materials in mother tongues:

I struggle to find books in Arabic – GK6 volunteer formal body

and in the information available:

One of the barriers for me was in trying to read all this Western knowledge that I find are deeply colonial – GK9 volunteer formal body

As one participant with lived experience stated:

What is in the library for me? Do I see myself in the library? ...Do I see as an African, for example, do I see any resources for my children? What, aside from being an important building, what does the library offer to me? – GK22 volunteer formal body

One participant emphasised at interview the importance of language in the creation of trust and feeling a part of a community, particularly with forced migrants:

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Language makes all the difference and I hear it again and again and I hear people being more confident about saying that. But if you speak to someone in a tongue they associate with their mother or their father, or their community, or their home, or a place where good things have happened or bad things have happened, it shifts how people respond radically and their level of trust. – GK18 volunteer formal body

Distrust of the system was mentioned at interviews as a cultural norm that was built from living in an area of conflict.

Particularly if you have come from a place where you've always being told you don't belong or where you're at risk of being asked for your ID or...where there's a risk that if you kind of hang around too long in one place the police will want to see your ID card and you know you're at risk of being detained – GK21 local government

One participant with lived experience suggested that multiple cultural aspects relate to the trust of the system and use of the public library.

I think it's a combination of how we see the library. So being a migrant coming from a different context...But also from a political cultural context as well and from a reading culture context – GK22 volunteer formal body

This cultural norm of distrust is also perceived to be related to the power differential identified as being an inherent aspect of being a forced migrant. According to Gatekeeper 6 (volunteer formal body) who has lived experience of migration:

Forced migrants report having low agency when it comes to providing data about themselves to access services. So you can also imagine that if there is that element of providing positive feedback as this is a service that they're reliant on, that they don't want to jeopardize having access to it.

This viewpoint is similar to that of an interview with a public library staff member, although in this case the focus is on integrating into the community:

So they've had to flee their own country, they're in this country now, and presumably you don't necessarily want to criticise or have a negative opinion because they desperately possibly want to fit in. – GK16 library staff

Here, there is a perception that power differentials affect levels of trust in the system which will impact the feedback given about the usefulness of current resources.

6.6 Public libraries are meant to serve all members of the community but forced migrants do not have the confidence that they can use the public library

The confidence of forced migrants has an impact on public library use. The term "confidence" here refers not only to the abilities of forced migrants, but also their perception of availability of access to public library resources by community members.

The gatekeepers who participated in the interviews often connected language and literacy to forced migrants' confidence in their own abilities to use public library resources:

And to just turn up and join something when you don't speak good English and you don't really know what it is, I think it's probably a bit too much for them to take on – GK14 volunteer local group

Level of proficiency in English language and literacy are perceived to influence confidence related to use of public library resources, as can be seen in the following three quotations:

People not knowing what books they'll be able to read. That in terms of getting a book that you then get out and think, "Oh, I don't understand any of this". So there's less incentive to go, I suppose. – GK20 volunteer local group

Libraries might not be thought [of] as accessible, maybe because of the language barrier. – GK15 volunteer local group

That can be quite common that people who are more well off and educated speak English. And they feel, you know, more at ease kind of putting themselves forward for things and more confident. – GK17 third sector

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The gatekeepers interviewed also notice that proficiency and literacy in English is related to whether forced migrants understand *how* public libraries can be used. Gatekeeper 26 (library staff) observed that non-library-users of the established community usually still know the way to meet their needs at a public library. However, forced migrants may lack this knowledge and therefore do not even attempt to use the resources provided.

A similar observation was made by GK25 (volunteer local group):

They would be brought to the library as a whole class and introduced that way. And they may be a little reluctant at the beginning but just because they didn't have the vocabulary really.

This understanding of the ways public libraries can be used is also connected to confidence when interacting with library staff:

So the more they speak the language, the more they stay in the area, the more they create some kind of interactions or contact with these people who are providing the services in the library. – GK9 volunteer formal body

In addition to a connection with language and literacy, the gatekeepers interviewed link confidence interacting with library staff to previous experience with public libraries. Such experience may have been gained in:

1. Countries of origin, e.g., "if you were brought up to use the library, you're likely to know how to use a library, so you won't have any threshold anxiety." – GK18 volunteer formal body
2. During their migration journey, e.g. "I suppose these are people who have been displaced in another country for a while and have had to access libraries...they were kind of used to that and maybe given a bit more confidence". – GK21 local government
3. Or in the UK, e.g. "Once they build up a relation with staff at the library they're going to get that confidence and kind of build up relations with regular users of the library". – GK21

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The gatekeepers interviewed link two specific actions with previous experience with libraries. These are: the confidence to approach staff stationed behind a service desk (GK7 library staff), and speaking to staff without an intermediary (GK21 local government). They observed at interview that forced migrants with less experience with libraries, or poor experiences in libraries, have lower confidence to interact with library staff.

There is also a perception among gatekeepers that previous experiences with public libraries affects whether or not forced migrants believe they are allowed to use the resources in the library. Gatekeeper 26 (library staff) reported an instance where a forced migrant was “timid”, asking whether he and his child were allowed in the public library. When told anyone could use the public library and become a member, including children, he said that they did not have anything “like that” in their country of origin. Similarly, the gatekeepers recounted that if forced migrants have a previous experience of not being allowed to use a public library, they have less confidence using the public library in the UK. It was suggested that countries of origin may have no infrastructure for public libraries (GK18 volunteer formal body), countries of origin may only have public libraries available for the elite (GK18), and that countries through which forced migrants travel may make forced migrants feel that public libraries are not a resource they are allowed to use (GK21 local government). According to GK21:

They had got so used to their kind of the ‘I’m a refugee. I’m a second-class citizen. This is not a resource for me’. They kind of almost had sought permission to use a service and really had to be encouraged [to] understand that you have every right to access as any other member of the community... So once you’ve kind of got that trust in, you know, what your rights are and you’ve got the confidence to speak up and you understand that you have the right to access these services.

Gatekeeper 21 also noted that some forced migrants attempt to use the public library through intermediaries, perhaps because they feel that an intermediary is more acceptable as a public library user.

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The confidence that public library resources are available to forced migrants is related to the finding that public libraries are part of the system. As a gatekeeper interviewee with lived experience of migration stated:

And with the political efficacy, confidence of people changing in terms of how they see the system, but also how they see themselves in the system. – GK22
volunteer formal body

According to Gatekeeper 22, when forced migrants see themselves as having rights within the system, they have more confidence that they can use resources without negative repercussions.

The gatekeepers interviewed also suggest that confidence to use public libraries is affected by the structure and design of library buildings. Descriptions such as “imposing” (GK7 library staff), “[an] authority” (GK7), “modern...it’s got that feeling when you go in, ‘What’s your business’” (GK28 local government), “big” (GK21 local government), “intimidating” (GK21), “old” (GK21), and “quiet” (GK21), were used at interview when the effect of library buildings on confidence was discussed. The perception is that library buildings are often designed in ways that seem intimidating, or give the impression that people will wonder whether a forced migrant belongs in that space. Gatekeepers observe that such an impression decreases the likelihood that forced migrants will use the public library. GK16 (library staff) notes that:

Because they come up as a group and they’re quite happy with that...But coming up to the library individually was a bit more difficult.

Similarly, GK21 (local government) suggested that it is difficult for forced migrants to overcome the hurdle of intimidating spaces within a public library, particularly when families go there with children.

An important aspect of the theme on confidence is that confidence levels are perceived to change over time. According to the majority of interviewed gatekeepers, an increased length of stay in the UK corresponds with increased confidence when forced migrants used public library resources. At times this was connected to increased

English language ability. An example of this was expressed by Gatekeeper 25 (volunteer local group):

And they may be a little reluctant at the beginning but just because they didn't have the vocabulary really. So then their participation would increase as time went by.

Confidence interacting with library staff and other library users is noted to increase over time:

Once they build up a relation with staff at the library, they're going to get that confidence and kind of build up relations with regular users of the library. – GK21 local government

In the same vein, comfort with library spaces is perceived to increase with time:

Got them used to the library [building]. And that would be over a few days more than just one session. – GK16 library staff

6.7 Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting

The findings from the analysis demonstrate that the bureaucratic processes involved in becoming a member of the public library may influence public library use. Bureaucracy is a general barrier for all resources, but specific bureaucratic processes in public libraries are identified as barriers to use of the library. Gatekeeper 24 (local government) suggested at interview that there is a "form filling culture" found in the UK that may not be familiar to forced migrants. This difference in culture, they suggest, makes the bureaucratic processes in public libraries less accessible.

Gatekeepers interviewed identify language as an important factor here. Gatekeeper 16 (library staff) noted:

I think sometimes the library systems can be quite bureaucratic in terms of what we need to see. And I think sometimes they find all that a bit confusing...the language barrier that tends to be the problem.

Similar viewpoints were expressed by Gatekeeper 12 (local government), Gatekeeper 24 (local government), and Gatekeeper 13 (third sector). All three mentioned at

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interview the prominence of forms in English which may make signing up for a library membership difficult for many forced migrants. It was noted by Gatekeeper 12 that many processes are confusing even when English is the mother tongue, and they become even more so for those whose mother tongue is different. The perception of the three gatekeepers above is that the reliance on forms in the English language increases the vulnerability already experienced by forced migrants.

Bureaucratic processes as barriers can be tied to previous experiences of forced migrants. In some cases, the perception is that some forced migrants have countries of origin which do not have the same bureaucracy as they might find in the UK. For example, Gatekeeper 27 (volunteer local group) shared:

I think so many people come to this country having lived in places where there is very little, and perhaps even no, public infrastructure. Our first ever guest didn't know his date of birth because his birth was never registered. They don't have the infrastructure to record births...We live in a world, our world in Little Britain, where we take for granted all these things. And some people simply have no comprehension of a library.

Gatekeeper 27, cited above, works with forced migrants who have no experience of the type of bureaucratic processes that are common in the UK, nor of public libraries. In contrast, Gatekeeper 18 (volunteer formal body) stated:

Many of the Northern Arab nations have an elite level of education...the majority, therefore know how to access a bureaucratic society. Or how to be creative in accessing a bureaucratic society. They know how to think around in circles.

The implication here is that forced migrants who do not have a high level of education, or are unfamiliar with bureaucratic processes in public libraries, find bureaucracy in public libraries more difficult to navigate.

Another barrier to forced migrant use of public libraries identified by the gatekeepers interviewed is the amount of materials required to complete forms. The perception of gatekeepers is that the request for documentation and identification documents (ID) in

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order to use specific library resources results in wariness. As explained by one participant with lived experience of migration:

There is an element of basically, if your whole life experience has been that of under the microscope, of kind of going through form and form and subjected to evaluations of who you are as a person, that amplifies the pressure, the stress, the anxiety when it comes to filling out any form whatsoever. – GK6 volunteer formal body

This aspect of bureaucratic barriers may be connected to the findings related above on trust in the system. Previous experience with systems meant to cause harm may make forced migrants unwilling to engage with bureaucratic processes. Although library staff may attempt to reduce discomfort during bureaucratic processes, forced migrants may still avoid library membership after the initial forms are provided. As GK7 (library staff) recounts:

We can make up a date of birth. We can make up an address. But sometimes there is worry that we're asking these questions. And it's difficult for us to get across that 'Don't worry about it.' We can fill the rest in or we can make something up.

In addition to distrust of the information requested in the forms, gatekeepers observed at interview that forced migrants may not have access to the ID required to become a member of the public library, or to accessing certain resources. Two library staff members noticed that forced migrants do not often have the "proof of address" (GK7 and GK26), "photo ID" (GK26), "two methods of identification" (GK7). Four participants who are library staff mentioned at interview recent changes to public library policies to waive these requirements for forced migrants. However, this was not consistent across all public libraries. A commonality among the public libraries these four gatekeepers worked for was their status as a Library of Sanctuary from the UK organisation City of Sanctuary.

6.8 Public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces

One perception of the gatekeepers interviewed is that the physical space provided by public libraries is in some ways more important than resources such as books and computers:

For many asylum seekers, the libraries are absolutely vital because they provide Internet access and warmth. So, you know, whether or not there are books are may of secondary importance. – GK18 volunteer local body

The reasoning behind this opinion is, in part, the dominance of English language resources that forced migrants may not find accessible and the lack of resources in the mother tongues of forced migrants. However, regardless of whether forced migrants make use of traditional public library resources, many do so in conjunction with using public library space, as noted by Gatekeeper 26 (library staff), “it’s just part of their routine now, using the space and reading”.

Public libraries are perceived by the gatekeepers interviewed as providing a meeting place for many forced migrants, particularly when they have just arrived to an area. Gatekeeper 28 (local government) stated that when their local area first welcomed families from the Syrian Resettlement Scheme:

They would use the library space or the local community centre as somewhere where they would go and would have a drop-in or they would come in and have a cup of tea and a chat.

The use of public library space as a space to build community was also noted at interview by an interviewee who is library staff,

And that’s what the importance of the library is...it’s a great place for people like that to meet. – GK4

And an interviewee from a third sector organisation said:

They might use the library services more due to having a place to hang about. – GK19

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Public library spaces are also used by forced migrants to host religious gatherings, as Gatekeeper 4 (library staff) has experienced. According to Gatekeeper 17 (volunteer local group):

I think that a lot of people would probably go to libraries just to get out the house and just be there for the duration of the day.

The majority of gatekeepers (17) noted that forced migrants use the public library spaces, whether they also use other resources or not.

It was reported that some public libraries provide spaces specifically to accommodate forced migrants. For example, Gatekeeper 12 (local government) commented:

People will choose to gather and say, 'OK, we don't need a tutor 'cause you can't give us one on an ongoing basis. But do you have a space where eight of us can still come in?' and so we do that.

Indeed, some public libraries have dedicated spaces at certain times to organisations that are first contacts for forced migrants or provide services such as counselling, (GK7 library staff). In addition to forced migrants using the space to meet with others leisurely, some forced migrants use the space provided by public libraries as business areas. Both Gatekeeper 13 (third sector) and Gatekeeper 10 (library staff) noticed forced migrants using the public library as a space to hold language learning classes, for English and other languages. One resettlement officer reported that they began to use the public library as a meeting space for their own work with forced migrants:

We use libraries as a meeting point. So quite often, rather than meeting somebody onsite I will meet them in the library...Initial meetings were often what will be in the library, so trying to kind of encourage the use of a library as a community space rather than as a library. – GK21 local government

In addition to being arenas for leisure and business meetings, an additional benefit of public library spaces is the perception of gatekeepers that forced migrants regard them as safe places. In some cases, the view is that other public spaces may be considered by forced migrants as inappropriate for certain community members, as noticed by Gatekeeper 16 (library staff):

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The majority who come to the library, I think, are ladies. And that is deemed as a safe place, an okay place to go.

More generally, however, public libraries are seen as safe spaces for all forced migrants:

Areas where there was maybe higher levels of disadvantage the library was seen as being almost that kind of safe place where you could go. – GK28 local government

Upon first arrival, public library spaces may not be known to all forced migrants as a public space open to everyone. As Gatekeeper 6 (volunteer formal body, lived experience of migration) explained:

Sometimes the notion of public spaces isn't [known]. 'Cause our spaces, our communal spaces are sometimes tied to our families, they're tied to our villages. And so the notion of public in relation to the government different.

However, knowledge of public library spaces may increase over time, as suggested by Gatekeeper 18 (volunteer formal body).

Not only are public libraries safe places, but they were also mentioned in interviews as places where forced migrants are able to shelter from the elements. For example, Gatekeeper 10 (library staff) stated:

So they're walking round, you can't go and sit in a park in the pouring rain, or sit on a bench in the road. You've got to find some shelter or you find the library.

For forced migrants who have a choice between being outside in cold and wet weather, or inside a building, the public library provides a "quiet and safe and secure and warm [place]" (GK25, volunteer local group). The public library was identified by many participants as one of the few places where forced migrants can go to keep warm or cool without an expectation of purchasing an item:

It's warm, it's cosy, it's friendly, and it's somewhere you can spend all day if you want to. – GK10 library staff

The public library in this case, is valuable as a place that is safe, protected from the elements, and for meeting with others.

6.9 Public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community

The importance of the library space as a meeting place is related to the final main finding: forced migrant use of library resources to connect with communities in the UK, and in their countries of origin. The resources mentioned here include resources traditionally attributed to public libraries, such as books and computers, as well as resources not traditionally attributed to libraries, such as programmes (e.g., story hours, or movie nights), physical spaces, and maker spaces.

As was discussed in [Chapter 6.4](#), there is a perception that forced migrants will maintain communities with other migrants from their home countries while in the UK. Gatekeeper 22 (volunteer formal body, lived experience of migration) stated in their interview:

For new arrivals it's about new community connections, specifically if they have their own community, for example. So it's about signposting them and them wanting information about places frequented by migrants, for example.

Public libraries have supported this with their spaces, as described by Gatekeeper 4 (library staff), "quite a few came into the library to see me and said, 'We want to have a Russian society so we can get it somewhere to get together'". As Gatekeeper 13 (local government) described the process:

You don't have the community that you've grown up with, and the community links you've developed in your home country, or wherever you lived...So you've got to form new ones. And kind of going into any kind of community space is one way of getting yourself linked up to circles again.

In particular, Gatekeeper 7 (library staff) notes that some women who attend a language café in the public library do so primarily to connect with others who have a similar background and speak their language. However, the use of public libraries to create these connections with other forced migrants may be lower in areas where

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there are large populations of forced migrants with similar backgrounds. Gatekeeper 28 (local government) explained:

At the beginning we put a big emphasis on public libraries, again because there was maybe just a few families in a community and it was a place where people could go along to and see other people.

However, as more families settled in the area, Gatekeeper 28 noticed fewer forced migrants utilising public library resources to make those connections.

In addition to finding a community with a similar background to themselves, gatekeepers perceive forced migrants to use the public library to connect with the communities in which they are settling. As Gatekeeper 16 (library staff) stated:

I think they want to be part of their community, a part of the community in which they've arrived into.

The resources identified as being used to connect to new communities are English language learning resources, including books and language cafés, volunteering opportunities, and programmes such as networking groups and film clubs. Practising English and meeting members of the established community are perceived to be part of the motivation for forced migrants to use the public library:

The services that are really popular are things where we have groups meeting so it's supporting them socialising, practicing English, meeting other people. – GK7 library staff

Mothers in particular were described by the gatekeepers interviewed as wanting and needing to build new community connections, as they may face additional isolation in their role as a caregiver:

I came to the UK with a one-year-old and didn't know anybody...There was [a] library two minutes walk from my house. I was there every day with my child because I didn't know anybody. – GK13 third sector (speaking from experience as a migrant)

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While connections with established communities forced migrants are perceived by gatekeepers to be important, it was also noted that forced migrants use public library resources to maintain community in countries of origin. PressReader and other online news sources were mentioned specifically.

I think because they can actually get publications in their own language and from their home country as well. – GK2 library staff

In addition to staying connected through official news sources, forced migrants are observed by gatekeepers interviewed to use both the Wi-Fi and digital devices at public libraries to maintain ties to communities. Gatekeeper 4 (library staff) recounted a story of a forced migrant using the public library computers to see family members they had never met before:

One person found the first picture of their grandchild on the Internet. You know, that was from wherever they come from.

Similarly, Gatekeeper 11 (local government) mentioned that the Wi-Fi in libraries and access to computers in public libraries allow forced migrants without access to their own devices to connect with family in home countries. Library maker space resources are also perceived to be of interest to forced migrants who might create items to send back to family in their home country:

One thing they did engage with really well was the 3D scanner because you could have your face 3D scanned. And a lot of them got those, got them 3D scanned so that they could send them back to people. – GK2 library staff

Library resources are perceived as being instrumental to forced migrants who wanted to maintain relationships in their home countries.

6.10 Conclusion of chapter 6

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis of gatekeeper interviews have been discussed. Seven main findings have been developed from the analysis of interview data. The first five relating to Research Question 2: what is the nature of the cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by people who support forced migrants. The final two relate to Research Question 1: how do

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people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services.

The perception of gatekeepers is that the public library is seen as a place of leisure, for which forced migrants do not have time, as well as part of a system that forced migrants do not trust. Consequently, forced migrants are perceived to not use the public library as a primary source of information. In addition, confidence in using the public library and the bureaucracy involved in becoming a library member are perceived to be barriers to use. For those forced migrants who use the public library, the perception is that library spaces are an important resource used for meeting others and for protection from the elements. Resources which support connection with community, in the settlement area and in countries of origin, are also perceived to be important resources used by forced migrants.

The community validation of the themes explored here follow in [Chapter 7](#). A discussion of the findings as they relate to the research questions and the literature is then presented in [Chapter 8](#).

Chapter 7: Findings of community validation

7.1 Introduction to chapter 7

In this chapter, the findings of the community validation interviews are presented. Demographic information of participants is provided to give context to the lived experiences present in the sample. Participant perceptions of the influence culture may have on public library use is included. This is followed by an initial description of the findings, which are organised by the themes developed from the interviews with gatekeepers. The descriptions of the findings are included to provide context for the subsequent two chapters in which the findings are discussed as they relate to the research questions and the literature.

7.2 Participant information

Those who participated in the community validation exercise belonged to two categories of forced migrant. There were four individuals seeking asylum in the UK and two individuals on the Syrian resettlement programme. In the UK, legislation differentiates between individuals who seek asylum and those who have been granted refugee status (see [Chapter 1.4.1](#) p. 7). This may result in different experiences with resources provided by local authorities such as public libraries. Table 7.1 provides an overview of participant backgrounds as they relate to path of migration, countries of origin, and current status in the asylum process.

Participant ID	Migration pathway	Country of origin	Current immigration status	Resettlement Area	Library user
FM1	Person seeking asylum	Niger	Refugee	England	Yes
FM2	Syrian Resettlement Scheme	Syria	Permanent settled status	Scotland	No
FM3	Person seeking asylum	Iran	Asylum seeker	England	Yes
FM4	Syrian Resettlement Scheme	Syria	Refugee	Scotland	Yes
FM5	Person seeking asylum	Sudan	Asylum seeker	England	Yes
FM6	Person seeking asylum	Iran	Refugee	Scotland	Yes

Table 7.1: Community validation participant information

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It is important to note that this is a small sample of forced migrants and generalisations based on the participant backgrounds are not appropriate. However, the findings expanded on here do provide insight into the perspectives of those with specific migration pathways or statuses in the migration system. The results are indicative of potential patterns which should be explored in future research on the topic. Table 7.2 summarises the themes developed from data analysis (as described in [Chapter 4.4.3.2](#) p. 94).

Gatekeeper Theme	Theme from Community Validation
Not based on a gatekeeper theme	Public library use has a relationship with the educational system of a country.
Not based on a gatekeeper theme	Accessibility of public libraries influences their use.
Public libraries are for leisure, but forced migrants do not have leisure time. (Chapter 6.3)	Public libraries are not for leisure, but to improve oneself.
	Forced migrants have the time to go to the public library.
Public libraries hold information but they are not the main source of information for forced migrants. (Chapter 6.4)	Public libraries are not a main source of information for forced migrants.
	Public libraries are a main source of information for forced migrants.
Public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants do not trust the system. (Chapter 6.5)	The “system” is trusted.
	The “system” is not trusted.
Public libraries are meant to serve all members of the community but forced migrants do not have the confidence that they can use the public library. (Chapter 6.6)	Confidence to use the public library is related to discrimination.
	Confidence to use the public library is related to knowledge about provision.
	Confidence to use the public library is related to English language skill.
Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting. (Chapter 6.7)	Bureaucracy is not a barrier to forced migrants using the public library.
	Bureaucracy is a barrier to forced migrants using the public library.
Public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces. (Chapter 6.8)	Public library buildings are used as a resource in conjunction with other resources.
	Using public library buildings alone as a resource is not always appropriate.
Public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community. (Chapter 6.9)	The public library is rarely used to connect with communities.
	The public library is used to connect with communities.

Table 7.2 Themes developed from community validation method.

7.3 Reaction to the theme public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time

At interviews, forced migrants were asked to reflect on the accuracy of the following statement based on their experience as a forced migrant in the UK: Public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time. The purpose of this reflection was to determine if there were differences between the lived experience of forced migrants and the perceptions of gatekeepers.

7.3.1 Suggestion that public libraries are not for leisure, but to improve oneself.

All six participants objected to the characterisation that forced migrants perceive the primary purpose of public libraries to be for leisure. As FM6 stated, "I do not think it [the library] is for fun". Similarly, FM1 said, "I agree with that to a degree...Us, when we go to the library, the first thing is to educate yourself. When we go there, we have to learn". This sentiment was reiterated by other participants, such as FM4 who mentioned that the "atmosphere" of the library lent itself to study, rather than leisure. In their words, "As soon as we step into the library, the kids grab a book...If I'm alone [at the library] I will grab a book to learn."

Upon hearing the statement on which to reflect, most participants expressed surprise. This surprise stemmed from two sources: (1) the belief that forced migrants were provided with sufficient support to not worry about how much time they had for leisure activities, and (2) the belief that forced migrants do not view the public library as a place of leisure. FM2 and FM4, whose migration pathways were through a resettlement programme, stated that forced migrants in the UK have all the support they need, so lack of leisure time was not a concern. It was suggested by FM1 that perhaps the perspective stemmed from the views that gatekeepers themselves had of public libraries:

Maybe it's a commodity for them, it's a leisure, it's a commodity, for them. But for us it's a necessity...It's to fight for our lives. It's to depend on our outcome in the UK rather than a leisure thing...You can always pick up a book that you like to read but for some people going to get a book and read it is also educational.

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Here, FM1 suggests that the culture in the UK leads to public libraries being used primarily for leisure, which may be why gatekeepers focus on the lack of leisure time as a reason for non-use. A further suggestion from FM1 is that perception of the types of resources a public library contains may influence whether forced migrants see them as places for leisure. An example provided was that of an art gallery compared to a public library:

Because for us a library, like I said, can also have art things. Here in the UK, most of the libraries, they only have books, and computers. The thing is, it's hard to find art or paintings and things like that. You go to the gallery if you want to find that. When people said 'Oh, I'm going to the library for leisure, rather than I'm going to the library to borrow a book and then do a research or things like that. – FM1

If the public library is seen as a place for books, computers, and research or school, it is not considered a place for leisure even if it is used as such. This perspective was also held by FM3, who mentioned that their understanding of the public library is shaped by their experience in Iran where public libraries are thought of as “just a shelf for books”.

The consensus from participants was that public libraries provide forced migrants with resources essential to navigating the asylum process. In addition, public libraries provide resources that support general education. This was unanimous among all forced migrants interviewed, including those who are not library users. FM3 depended on public library resources upon arrival to their resettlement area:

I was living using the library because I didn't have any Internet. I went there for reading, for writing, and for using the Wi-Fi.

One caveat made about the use of public library resources for survival, however, was English language skills. As suggested by FM2, public libraries may not be used by forced migrants because of a language barrier. This possibility is supported by FM5 who used an example of their own struggles with the English language:

Now I'm reading a book about the asylum system, but because of my level of English it goes slowly.

The importance of language skills echoes the findings of government document analysis ([Chapter 5](#)), and findings from gatekeeper interviews ([Chapter 6](#)).

7.3.2 Suggestion that forced migrants have the time to go to the public library.

That forced migrants do not have time to use the public library, as claimed by the gatekeepers, was considered relevant by three forced migrants. This was considered true even when the leisure aspect was dismissed. All three participants whose migration pathway was seeking asylum, FM3, FM5, and FM6 noted that a person seeking asylum may have plenty of "leisure time" to visit the public library, although the primary purpose of the library for forced migrants was not for leisure. According to FM3:

I think refugees, the first time they come to UK they have the time.

Similarly, FM5 stated that in comparison to the community of the receiving country "the asylum seeker has even more time to be used in libraries". In their own reasoning, FM6 suggested:

Maybe they [gatekeepers interviewed] say this because some people think that they must go to the library for hours and hours.

Here, the time available to spend in the public library or the time forced migrants believe that they have to spend in the public library, are considered more relevant to this finding than the perspective that public libraries are for leisure.

7.3.3 Consensus between forced migrants on whether public libraries are for leisure

The community validation revealed that the forced migrants interviewed do not agree with the finding of "public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time". Rather, the individuals interviewed maintained that they consider the public library to be a place of knowledge that one utilises for study or improving oneself. The forced migrant interviewees also felt that forced migrants have time to use public library resources as needed. This presents possible discrepancies between

gatekeeper perspectives and the perspectives of forced migrants that should be explored further to increase confidence in the findings.

7.4 Reaction to the theme that public libraries hold information but they are not the main source of information for forced migrants

The findings discussed in this section present the reflections of forced migrants on the statement: public libraries hold information but they are not the main source of information for forced migrants.

The responses to this statement that public libraries were mixed. Four participants (FM1, FM2, FM5, and FM6) agreed with it, although FM2, FM5, and FM6 expressed caveats to this. The remaining participants (FM3 and FM4) felt that public libraries are primary sources of information for forced migrants. However, FM3 qualified that this applied to forced migrants who are aware of the public library as an information source. There was no pattern to these results based on migration pathway or country of origin. With the small sample size, further investigation should take place to determine if there are patterns based on migration pathway or country of origin.

7.4.1 Argument from some participants that public libraries are a main source of information for forced migrants

FM3 and FM4 had different reasons for believing that public libraries are, in fact, a main source of information for forced migrants. According to FM3, forced migrants should use the public library as a main source of information. However, FM3 believes that the reason some forced migrants do not use the public library is because they lack motivation to use the public library and they are not aware of the ways public libraries can provide help. FM3 also thinks that individuals in forced migrant communities may not be aware of available public library resources. FM3 suggested that the public library could advertise more effectively to reach forced migrant communities.

FM4 believes that the library *is* the place forced migrants go for information. This is contextualised in comparison to their experience in their country of origin:

In many Arab countries, if you ask people you're not going to get close [to an answer].

In this case, other members of the community are seen as less trustworthy, particularly in the case of information that comes from books or the government.

7.4.2 Argument from some participants that public libraries are not a main source of information for forced migrants

Three participants felt that public libraries are not a main source of information for forced migrants in specific circumstances. However, FM2, FM5, and FM6 acknowledged that public libraries may be a main source of information outside of these circumstances. According to FM2, the status of public libraries as main sources of information is dependent on their modernity.

Most public libraries are not up-to-date, and it's not something people go to to read.

In the absence of an up-to-date public library, known communities were identified as main information sources. In particular, sources of information in mother-tongues were identified as valuable, whether they were available through social media or from material local sources. FM2 believes that up-to-date public libraries are more likely to be primary sources of information for forced migrants, particularly through TV, social media, and videos.

FM5 believes that use of the public library as a source of information depends on the type of information sought. Forced migrants in need of information on the asylum process and successful settlement in the UK rely on information from the Home Office, "who set the rules and regulations". Outside of information on the asylum process and successful settlement in the UK, FM5 was unsure at interview as to whether the public library is a main source of information.

Similarly, FM6 felt that the library was a main source of information for information that you might expect find at the public library. Examples include books for learning English or applying for a bus pass. However, FM6 does not think that libraries should be thought of as the first place to seek *all* types of information.

The type of information sought also featured in FM1's response to the statement on public libraries as sources of information. According to FM1, many of the materials provided by public libraries are sourced from predominantly white authors. This is true

for information about non-white people and cultures. FM1 often sees information written by white authors about non-white people and cultures discussed without contextualisation from the cultures where that knowledge originated. The question FM1 asks, then is:

Is that really information? Is that really a centre of information? Debatable, if you ask me.

This perception mirrors that of two interviewed gatekeepers with lived experience of forced migration (see [Chapter 6.4](#)). If public libraries are perceived to hold inaccurate information about the countries and cultures of forced migrants, they might be avoided as an information source.

Rather than public libraries, FM1 suggests that “mouth-to-mouth, you know, African style” is a primary information source for forced migrants. This is particularly true for forced migrants with low levels of English. Although the reliance on word-of-mouth information can lead to inaccurate information being shared, FM1 suggests that it is up to individual forced migrants to ensure they are consuming accurate information. The primary source of information for forced migrants, in FM1’s perspective, is “the community supporting them”. Examples of this community include other forced migrants and organisations such as City of Sanctuary. Similarly, FM5 stated that forced migrants currently in the process of seeking asylum are not reliable because “we are all in the same boat”. However, forced migrants who have achieved settled status in the UK are considered trustworthy and important sources of information. Here, the community is considered a reliable source of information.

7.4.3 Consensus between forced migrants on whether libraries are a main source of information

There was no definitive agreement between forced migrants interviewed on the accuracy of the statement that public libraries are not a main source of information. Two of the forced migrants who agreed that libraries are not a main source of information suggested that this is dependent on the type of information sought. The other forced migrants suggested that community is a main source of information. However, this requires forced migrants to make judgements on whether information

from the community is accurate. More research is needed to determine possible patterns in response to the theme from gatekeeper interviews.

7.5 Reaction to the theme public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants do not trust the system

The forced migrants were asked to reflect on the accuracy of the following statement based on their experience as a forced migrant in the UK: public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants do not trust the system. The reflections are presented in this section.

The responses of interviewees to the statement were mixed. Three participants did not express distrust in the system and two participants expressed the opinion that the system could not always be trusted. The remaining participant did not see the public library as part of the “system”, although the system as a whole was distrusted. The two participants who came to the UK through a resettlement programme (FM2 and FM4) did not express distrust in the system. In contrast, three participants whose migration pathways were through seeking asylum (FM1, FM3, and FM5) did express some distrust of the system. In contrast, despite a migration pathway of seeking asylum, FM6 did not express distrust in the system. They did state that this might be because their resettlement area in Scotland is very welcoming in ways that may be different in other areas of the UK. There appears to be a pattern of agreement with the theme from gatekeeper interviews based on migration pathway. Further research is needed to confirm the pattern, however, as the sample size is limited.

7.5.1 Argument from some participants that the “system” is trusted

Both FM2 and FM4 stated that they, and their communities, trust the “system”.

According to FM2, forced migrants have high levels of trust in the system, to the extent that forced migrants feel capable of manipulating it. The implication of this is that if forced migrants do not use the library it is not because of a lack of trust. Rather, FM2 suggests that lack of use may stem from forced migrants not wanting to use the public library because:

When they came [to the UK] many were older, so didn't want to 'study'. And visiting the library may not be a thing they did back home so they don't do it here.

This reasoning seems to relate to the perceptions of some gatekeepers (see [Chapter 6.3](#)) that many forced migrant adults are not interested in reading books.

FM4 expanded on the reasons for trust in public libraries. They explained that their experience was positive because the public library provided access to government information. Further, FM4 finds that even when not looking for information related to the public library, staff are willing to provide support. FM6 feels that, "the government helps us, not stop us". An example was given of their resettlement city, in which the people and government recognise that helping forced migrants will help the larger community. The perspectives above imply that non-use of the public library by forced migrants is more closely related to individual experiences and motivations than because of trust in the "system".

7.5.2 Argument from some participants that the "system" is not trusted

In contrast, FM1 and FM3 emphatically agreed with the statement that forced migrants do not trust the system. They also believe that this impacts public library use. Upon hearing the phrase, FM3's initial response was, "Yes, exactly". As a further explanation the process of acquiring an Application Registration Card (ARC card) was used. In order to receive support from the UK government, a person seeking asylum must apply for an ARC card. It is therefore an important application to complete properly to avoid delays to housing support. In the experience of FM3, acquiring an ARC card was confusing and the government advice was not available in user-friendly language. FM3 suggested that forced migrants would trust and use the public library more if it were presented as a place with solutions for problems associated with the system:

If the library had an advertisement for a few languages that [says] we help asylum seekers...or if library fixed my problem with the ARC card, I'm telling myself I have to help them. I introduce the library to my friends.

The feedback from FM1 connected the public library to the system more closely. In particular, the precariousness of safety for people seeking asylum was mentioned as a reason that public libraries might not be trusted. According to FM1, when it is known that public libraries are government institutions, it is also assumed that computer searches and material borrowing are monitored, which forced migrants believe may impact their asylum claim:

Is that going to affect my case because everything we do in this country is about how is that going to reflect on my case? Or would it affect my case? This is the problem we don't trust too much the libraries. – FM1

This opinion is similar to perceptions expressed by gatekeepers (see [Chapter 6.5](#)). If there is an indication that a topic will negatively influence the status a forced migrant holds, forced migrants will avoid using public library resources on that topic even if those resources are readily available. FM1 asserted at interview that not all forced migrants feel their public library usage will affect their immigration status, but the expectation that the system is not meant to support asylum claims has an impact on both whether the public library is used and the ways in which it is used.

7.5.3 Consensus between forced migrants on whether the “system” can be trusted

There was no clear consensus amongst the forced migrants interviewed on whether the “system”, and the library as part of that system, can be trusted. Three forced migrants do trust the “system”. It is important to note that all three either arrived in the UK through a resettlement programme or were settled in a supportive area. The two forced migrants who do not trust the “system” suggested that it is not useful to forced migrants. The possibility of resource use being monitored, a concept introduced in gatekeeper interviews ([Chapter 6.5](#)), was also expressed by one forced migrant. The lack of clear consensus indicates a need for further research on the topic to explore possible patterns based on migration pathway or country of origin.

7.6 Reaction to the theme public libraries are meant to serve all members of the community but forced migrants do not have the confidence that they can use the public library

Forced migrants were asked to respond to the following statement based on their experience as a forced migrant in the UK: public libraries are meant to serve all members of the community but forced migrants do not have the confidence that they can use the public library. The reflections are presented in this section.

There was a mix of responses. FM4 felt that there was no truth to the statement. However, the other interviewees agree with it. Three factors in particular were mentioned as related to confidence: discrimination, English language skills, and knowledge about library provision. Though there was a consensus of from the interviewed participants, further research is needed to determine if these perceptions are shared by larger forced migrant communities.

7.6.1 Suggestion that confidence to use the public library is related to discrimination

Discrimination, including, but not limited to, racism was identified as being connected to confidence to use the public library. FM1, in particular, described the racism and discrimination forced migrants who are also part of minority groups often face when entering new spaces for the first time:

You go to a library as a Black man, people will be thinking what's a black man doing in a library. What's he going to read, the cartoons? Or I don't know, is he coming to steal a book? I've had that in a library. All eyes will be turning at me. When I first come, I signed myself up to the library because we don't have computers in the hostel. And the first thing is they might basically be made to feel not welcome. You know, it's a white place that you as an African or a Middle Eastern go there and you start typing on a computer searching for something, they think what is she looking for? Is he looking for ways to make bomb? You know they see you; they know that you're an asylum seeker.

The quotation above is indicative of FM1's opinion that non-white asylum seekers feel unwelcome in public libraries. This subsequently affects whether forced migrants feel sufficiently confident, "courageous", or "empowered", to use the public library. In

response to a different question, FM2 also mentioned discrimination in libraries in a joking manner, yet it was understood in the interview that the core of such a joke is based on experiences with discrimination in public library spaces. Similarly, FM5 noted that the actions of other public library users affect the confidence to use the public library. However, in this case, racism and discrimination were not directly mentioned. Social status, and discrimination based on social status, was also raised by FM6:

People think that they are from a very low-level of society compared to Europe country. Sometimes they think, "In Europe countries the people are from high level. How can we go and ask for low level of book?"

The message expressed here is that the perceived low social status of forced migrants encourages discrimination against them and this – in turn – lowers the confidence of forced migrants in their ability to use the public library.

7.6.2 Suggestion that confidence to use the public library is related to knowledge about provision

Both FM3 and FM1 emphasised at interview the importance of knowledge of the public library as a factor that affects confidence. In particular, FM1 focused on the possibility that forced migrants may believe that public libraries require a fee for use:

Which library can you go to? Because back home it's not free. That financial thing, it affects it [confidence].

If forced migrants believe there are fees associated with public library use, they may not use the public library. In a similar vein, FM3 stated that if libraries "don't introduce themselves to refugees" forced migrants will not know that the resource is there to use and will not be confident that they can use it. In addition, FM3 suggested that if forced migrants have an experience of public libraries being unable to provide requested support, then forced migrants are not confident that the public library is useful, "They can't help, why would I go there?". In this case, confidence is not related to forced migrants' confidence in themselves, but their confidence that the public library is a relevant resource.

7.6.3 Suggestion that confidence to use the public library is related to English language skill

All participants noted that language was integral to confidence when using the public library. Despite remaining adamant that confidence as whole is not an issue, FM4 did acknowledge at interview that English language proficiency can affect comfort in the library, "It is nice if there is a translator". In partial agreement with the theme, FM2 suggested that the language barrier can start a cycle of whether forced migrants work to learn English and become confident using English resources found at the library, or if they choose not to use those resources. FM5 initially focused on "stress and other factors" rather than confidence as a factor of public library use. Later clarifying questions revealed that "specifically the language barrier" was also relevant.

FM3 explicitly stated, "When you can't speak English, how can you use it?" as an example of confidence using the public library. Similarly, FM1 questioned how someone could feel confident using a space they do not understand when there is a language barrier. As someone who now helps other forced migrants through the asylum process, FM6 noted that the language barrier was also affected by an individual's level of education in country of origin. FM6 explained that they work with women from countries such as Afghanistan who were unable to attend school in their countries of origin and now "don't have any knowledge of how they could start using the library".

7.6.4 Consensus between forced migrants on whether confidence affects public library use

Most forced migrants interviewed for the study agreed that there is a relationship between confidence and use of the public library. The three factors that affect confidence are: discrimination, knowledge of library provision in the UK, and English language skills. Each of these three factors were also raised in gatekeeper interviews (see [Chapter 6.6](#)). The consensus to this theme suggests that this perception is held by the majority of forced migrants, but further research is needed to increase confidence in the results.

7.7 Reaction to the theme public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting

The forced migrants who attended interviews were asked to reflect on the accuracy of the following statement: public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting. The reflections on this theme are presented in this section. There was consensus amongst interviewed participants that bureaucracy may not be an *insurmountable* barrier to forced migrants using the public library, however there were differences in opinion on how strong a barrier bureaucracy presents.

7.7.1 Argument from some participants that bureaucracy is not a barrier to forced migrants using the public library

The majority of participants did not see bureaucracy as a barrier to public library use. FM6 noted that in their resettlement city, most library staff are aware that there are many forced migrants in the communities, and “if you have any ID card it’s enough, they will fill out everything for you”. Both FM5 and FM4 noted that bureaucracy would not stop use because “Everyone has to do it, even the local community”. The implication here is that bureaucracy is not a barrier because it is also imposed on the established community. The message in this case is that when a process is required of everyone, it is not considered a barrier. However, there was acknowledgement that forced migrants could have difficulty navigating bureaucracy, even if those difficulties were surmountable.

English language proficiency was once again mentioned as a factor affecting ease of use. This is similar to findings from gatekeeper interviews (see [Chapter 6.7](#)). However, language barriers are not considered impassable. According to FM4,

I don’t see it as an obstacle to coming back [to the library]. Even as I was filling it in, I had a question and they answered.

FM5 also stated:

The language barrier might stop people from going to the public library, I don’t think it should.

FM5 gave examples for how forced migrants could overcome language barriers in respect of bureaucracy. These include using an interpreter and focusing on increasing

English language skills in order to understand the forms. Although not a library user, FM2 also believed that in their community the bureaucracy in the public library would not present a barrier to forced migrants who want to use the library. In terms of bureaucracy, provision of support when completing forms as well as the expectation that all community members have to fill them out means that an inconvenience does not result in non-use.

7.7.2 Argument from some participants that bureaucracy is a barrier to forced migrants using the public library

Although the majority of participants did not believe bureaucracy would stop forced migrants from using the public library, FM1 and FM3 consider bureaucracy to be a stronger barrier than to the other participants. To demonstrate the barrier that bureaucracy represents, FM1 described the process of becoming a library member in their town:

For someone seeking sanctuary, you don't even have your ID card. The Home Office will give you this paper with your photo, slap on it your date of birth and everything. So that's your identification and you go there, they said, 'Can I see your ID, your passport and everything'. You think, are you kidding me? Woman, my passport is this paper. If I wash it today, I'm basically like no identification at all.

Forced migrants who are reliant on the identification provided by the Home Office may not have the proof needed to be granted public library membership, and in these cases the bureaucracy may become a barrier to use. The solution suggested by FM1 is for public libraries to accept a letter for identification because:

Public libraries are primary education, primary access to education. It's not a commodity, it's a necessity. People, that's the first source of knowledge where you go. I know some people might steal the book but you have my address.

From FM3's perspective, the bureaucracy to become a member of the public library is "very difficult" for forced migrants. This may cause them to regret going to the public library. With some hyperbole, FM3 recounted the number of forms required to register for services such as the General Practitioner (GP), or a bank account. They

suggested that after being asked to complete an excessive number of forms, forced migrants are wary of any process that requests personal information. In response to yet another set of forms to complete, FM3 once responded with:

Why you give me lots of forms? He said this is your information. I said to him, OK, why ask these types of questions? I'm not President Trump. I'm a refugee.

Although the process of becoming a member of the public library may not involve as many forms as applying for a bank account, FM3 believes that many forced migrants will avoid interactions where personal questions that are seen as irrelevant are asked. This includes questions on some public library forms. For both FM1 and FM3 the questions asked, quantity, and content, affects whether bureaucracy is an insurmountable barrier. If questions asked are irrelevant to a task, and/or the information requested is not available to forced migrants, inconvenience will result in non-use of public libraries.

7.7.3 Consensus between forced migrants on whether bureaucracy in public libraries is off-putting

The community validation exercise revealed that the majority of the interviewed forced migrants, all but two, felt that bureaucracy in public libraries is not an insurmountable barrier to use. This finding is in contrast with those from gatekeeper interviews ([Chapter 6.7](#)). However, the level of English language proficiency is considered a factor on the strength of the barrier presented by bureaucracy. The relevance of the content of the form to the desired task is an important factor as to whether bureaucratic process hinders public library use. This finding from the community validation exercise fits with gatekeeper opinion presented in Chapter 6.7. The discrepancy between gatekeeper perspectives and the perspectives of the forced migrants interviewed in community validation presents an opportunity for future research. Future research would increase confidence in the result that most forced migrants may not consider bureaucracy a barrier to public library use.

7.8 Reaction to the theme public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces

At interview, forced migrants were asked to reflect on: public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces. The reflections are presented in this section.

7.8.1 Suggestion that public library buildings are used as a resource in conjunction with other resources

Four of the participants were sceptical of the conclusion from the analysis of data for the main empirical study presented in [Chapter 6.8](#) that forced migrants use the spaces of public library buildings as a resource beyond its housing of physical materials. FM2 did not feel they had much to contribute to this question as they are not a library user. They did mention that as a student they would use the space of the public library for studying, but outside of study they didn't see a reason that the space of a library would be used.

FM3 and FM6 easily recalled examples of times when they used public library spaces as resources. FM6 remembered a time when they used the public library as a waiting place when they arrived early for an appointment with the Home Office. They had been told they were not allowed into the building until five minutes until the appointment.

The weather was very cold and as an asylum seeker I couldn't afford to go to the coffee shop. Then I thought of the library and I went there to read a book.

However, even in this situation FM6 used the library spaces in conjunction with more traditional resources. In addition, they have never used the public library as a meeting place.

Although the space of the library was seen as a resource by FM3, it was in the context of physical resource provision within that space rather than the space itself being the resource. FM3 suggested that library spaces could be used to more effectively support forced migrants. Examples include the provision of spaces where forced migrants can meet with designated interpreters and longer opening hours so that forced migrants can go to the library more frequently.

Other interviewees acknowledged that library spaces were resources. However, those spaces were not considered a primary provision from the library. According to FM4, although they were introduced to the public library in a group using the space, the purpose of the meeting was to learn English:

We all grabbed a book and learned. It is not for social things.

A similar experience was described by FM5, during attendance at English classes at the public library. Although an outside organisation managed the classes in the library, the students were guided to use library resources. In both cases, library spaces were used. However, the space was used for a specific separate purpose rather than as a resource itself. This mirrors the perspective FM3 shared about ways library spaces can be used to best help forced migrants.

7.8.2 Suggestion that using public library buildings alone as a resource is not always appropriate

Forced migrant participants also demonstrated negative opinions about the concept of using only library space. According to FM5:

If the reason they go there is to be more comfortable and then they start to use the other resource, that's good. But if they go just to log into the Wi-Fi and stay on their phones that is not good.

In FM2's opinion, even forced migrant children know better than to use the library space alone as a resource. Similarly, FM6 suggested that it was rude to speak in groups in the library:

For example, when I want to study ESOL in the library I don't like others speaking loudly together. I don't think it's a place to meet other people.

FM1's first reaction to the idea that forced migrants use library spaces was vehement:

So it's just another way of saying that, yeah, if you can steal people's resources and make your own, you can complain. But not if you go and just use a building rather than also picking up a book.

Based on this response, it is possible that forced migrants believe they will be perceived negatively by new communities if they are not seen to use physical library resources.

Following clarification¹, FM1 provided multiple examples of when they use library spaces as a distinct resource including, “socialising”, “doing an activity”, “taking advantage of the environment”, “integrate with the community”, “mental health and well-being”. When it is not perceived as a judgement to use library buildings as a resource, FM1 considers public library spaces to be arenas where forced migrants can receive non-material support. This is especially true for forced migrants with work restrictions:

Somebody not allowed to work of course wouldn't mind spending the whole day in that place. At least, I will get to communicate with people. You know, you get to talk to people rather than staying in the four walls of your home.

In this case, public library spaces are seen as arenas where connections with other people are made, a concept that is tied closely with the final theme.

7.8.3 Consensus between forced migrants on whether public library spaces are used as a resource

Unlike the findings in gatekeeper interviews (see [Chapter 6.8](#)), the forced migrants interviewed did not agree that public library spaces alone are used as a resource. Although some forced migrants mentioned library spaces being used, this was in conjunction with other resources. Library spaces as a meeting place were not mentioned by the majority of interviewees. There is a possibility that the reason for this discrepancy in findings is due to perceived discrimination (this possibility is discussed further in [Chapter 8](#)). The discrepancy between perceptions of gatekeepers and the perceptions expressed by the forced migrants interviewed for community validation indicates a need for future research on the topic. Further research can also

¹ As a result of the initial response by FM1, this question was adjusted for subsequent interviews. The adjusted statement read: Public libraries have physical buildings. Forced migrants and other community members use these spaces. Even with the adjusted question the use of library space as its own resource was generally viewed negatively by the remaining participants.

increase confidence that the perceptions expressed by the interviewed forced migrants are generalisable to larger communities of forced migrants.

7.9 Reaction to the theme public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community

The forced migrants were asked to reflect on the statement: public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community. The reflections are presented in this section.

The opinion here was split depending on the migration pathway of individuals.

Participants who arrived in the UK via a resettlement scheme (FM2 and FM4) do not believe that public libraries have a role to play in supporting connections. Participants who arrived in the UK as people seeking asylum (FM1, FM3, FM5, and FM6) hold the opposite opinion. The reason for this divide is likely to be due to the different support provided for forced migrants who are part of a resettlement scheme (see [Chapter 1.4.1](#) p. 7). However, further research with a larger sample size is needed to more accurately determine this possible pattern.

7.9.1 Arguments from some participants that the public library is rarely used to connect with communities

According to FM2, it, “might be the case, but is probably rare” that forced migrants use public library resources to connect with communities. FM2 did include the caveat that their response is based on their experience as a forced migrant from Syria, and that forced migrants with different backgrounds may use the library to enhance connections. As someone with a similar background, FM4 stated that they did not know if public libraries have a role to play in supporting connections. Seeing people that you know at the library and greeting them, maybe having a small talk with them, was seen as a bonus of going to the library, but not a main purpose. FM4 explained, “It [the public library] is not for socialising”.

7.9.2 Argument from some participants that the public library is used to connect with communities

In contrast, the participants whose migration pathways were seeking asylum indicated that the public library *is* a place where forced migrants connected to communities.

FM1 and FM5 mentioned that public libraries support integration. FM1 shared an experience of a Viking exhibit at their local library which provided the opportunity to organically build relationships with members of their new community. This type of interaction prompted FM1 to see the library as “a place of interconnectedness” in addition to “a place of educational learning”. A specific library event was cited by FM6 in support for this theme:

When we had an exhibition in the library, many of the refugees we had in our group came and met with us and other Scottish people in the library.

In both of these examples, specific events held by public libraries supported connections between forced migrants and local communities.

FM3 agreed that the public library is a place where forced migrants can connect with their local communities. However, they also said that this depends on public libraries marketing events well. It was also noted that events supporting connection should be facilitated by “an honest person”. In this context, forced migrants may become distressed if an event is led by an inappropriate person.

In addition to supporting connections with local communities, FM5 also mentioned that library resources are used by forced migrants to connect with people in their home country (as observed by gatekeepers, see [Chapter 6.9](#)). FM2 mentioned that forced migrants who do not have internet at home might use the library to access social media and news sites in mother tongues. However, FM1, FM3, FM4, and FM6 did not mention this at all. This may be related to other resources to which each has access, as suggested by FM2. In future research more detailed consideration of two questions, connections with local communities and those with home country communities may help elucidate the reason for the difference of opinion on this topic.

7.9.3 Consensus between forced migrants on whether public library resources are used to support connections

From the analysis above, it is clear that the interviewed forced migrants held mixed opinion as to whether public library resources are used to support connections. The division follows the pattern of migration pathways of forced migrant interviewees. Those who arrived through a resettlement programme did not believe that public

library resources are used to support connections. This finding is similar to that generated from data in the gatekeeper interviews ([Chapter 6.9](#)): gatekeepers that work primarily with forced migrants on resettlement programmes stated that public libraries are rarely used to support connections. In cases when public library resources are used to support connections, the forced migrant interviewees primarily referred to connections with local communities. Only one mentioned connections with their home country. This is in contrast to findings from gatekeeper interviews ([Chapter 6.9](#)). The pattern suggested by the findings here could have an impact on the practice of gatekeepers who work with forced migrants in the UK. Further research is necessary to confirm the perceptions held by interviewed forced migrants are applicable to larger populations of forced migrants.

7.10 Findings related to forced migrants' perception of the relationship between culture and public library use

The first questions in community validation interviews related to the conceptions of culture held by forced migrants, and that the influence forced migrants perceived culture to have on public library use (as described in [Chapter 4.4.3.1](#)). From these questions, two main findings emerged. Each is discussed in this section as additional data.

7.10.1 Suggestion that public library use has a relationship with the educational system of a country

Three participants (FM2, FM4, and FM6) explicitly connected use of the public library to education, specifically when education is highly regulated by the government. In FM2 and FM4's responses the primacy of memorisation of facts over exploration of a topic was mentioned. FM6 noted that in Iran there is no expectation that students will be able to understand and explain topics on their own:

The children just study the books that are for school. In Iran all the students, in all the village and city and all part of the country, they must study the same book at the same level.

Both examples are indicative of social norms regarding education as well as the value of information that is not regulated. These norms and values may also relate to use of public libraries.

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FM2 also noted that in their experience as a child in Syria, going to the library was considered “nerdy” and did not increase popularity. This is a social norm that connects libraries with undesirable traits. Furthermore, FM2 stated that public libraries are not well promoted in Syria, so people do not know where and how to access their services. Similarly, FM3 mentioned that knowledge of the library in their home country Iran is sparse in certain areas:

Tehran is a little bit close to here [the UK], they have culture and they know about [the public] library but lots of cities in Iran, they don't.

The lack of promotion of public library services is indicative of the value placed on public libraries as information resources. The role education systems play in the use of public libraries should be explored in further research to increase confidence of these findings, particularly in respect to countries of origin.

7.10.2 Suggestion that accessibility of public libraries influences their use

Factors that impact accessibility, such as geography, time, and income, are identified as an influence on public library use. FM5 also that the reason for their lack of library use in Sudan was due to a lack of libraries close to their village. Geographic accessibility was also mentioned by FM3 and FM6, both of whom noted that in some areas of Iran there are no public libraries. It was noted by FM6 that often membership in one library does not automatically give membership in another public library in the same city. This reduces the resources people can access. The absence of libraries that are geographically accessible may be indicative of the value placed on public libraries.

Level of income and amount of free time were also identified by FM3 as an influencing factor on public library use. Individuals who “have a good job” and “have a calm life” were more likely to use the library. The accessibility of public libraries based on income was also mentioned by FM1, who stated that there is a charge for using the library in Niger. The fee prevents people with lower incomes from using the public library. FM1 also identified this issue as potentially influencing use of the public library in host communities (see [Chapter 7.5.2](#)). FM6 specifically mentioned classes and events in public libraries being free in the UK, in comparison to in Iran where such events would require a fee. The expectation that those who are well off are able to use the library

may be indicative of social norms about access to public library services. Further research is needed to confirm the findings that accessibility is important to library use, particularly in relation to specific countries of origin.

7.11 Conclusion of chapter 7

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis of community validation interviews were discussed. These results were organised around the seven main findings developed from the gatekeeper interviews. Table 7.3 summarises the findings of the community validation.

Findings from gatekeeper interviews	Supported by majority	Unsupported by majority	No consensus
Public libraries are for leisure, but forced migrants do not have leisure time.		Unsupported	
Public libraries hold information but they are not the main source of information for forced migrants.	Supported		
Public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants do not trust the system.			No consensus
Public libraries are meant to serve all members of the community but forced migrants do not have the confidence that they can use the public library.			No consensus; Language identified as important
Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting.			No consensus; Language identified as important
Public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces.		Unsupported	
Public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community.	Supported		

Table 7.3 A summary of the findings of community validation.

The findings of community validation are revisited in Chapter 8 with respect of the other elements of the empirical work and the extant literature. Of particular interest are instances in which the analysis has generated opposing views (while recognising the limitations of the small sample surveyed for this community validation exercise).

Chapter 8: Discussion

8.1 Introduction to chapter 8

The findings from Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are discussed in this chapter. This is achieved with reference to ways in which the findings extend current knowledge on perceptions of forced migrants' use of public libraries, and the impact of culture on these perceptions. Recommendations for practice and policy (see [Chapter 8.4.1](#)) are identified, as are future themes related to newcomer populations and public libraries that merit research attention (see [Chapter 8.4.2](#)). The use of Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* in Library and Information Science research is also re-evaluated. The value of community validation outwith participants but within the community of interest is highlighted. Furthermore, consideration is made on the extension to recent debate on the epistemological function of public libraries in this chapter.

The main body of the discussion chapter considers explicitly each research question addressed in the doctoral study:

RQ1: How do people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services?

RQ2: What is the nature of the cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by people who support forced migrants?'

RQ2a: What impact does the relationship between culture and public library use have on the use of specific public library resources, as perceived by the people who support forced migrants?

The discussion draws primarily on the findings from the gatekeeper interviews, as presented in [Chapter 6](#) (see the seven themes on page 108). This is because gatekeeper perceptions of forced migrant use of public libraries represent the focus of the study.

Had the government documentation been more comprehensive in its coverage of public library provision for forced migrants, this would have featured more extensively in the discussion. However, as has been demonstrated in the analysis provided in [Chapter 5](#), the government documentation merely references the public library as a

service that supports orientation and/or provide leisure facilities to forced migrants. The potential of public libraries to contribute to other types of use, such as meeting information needs, or supporting literacy and learning, is not considered in the body of material supplied in response to the Freedom of Information requests made in 2021.

Where appropriate in this chapter, and at the end of each main section of the analysis, additional commentary is provided on the forced migrant perspective. This derives from forced migrants' reactions to the main set of findings from the gatekeeper interviews, as reported in the results of the 'community validation' exercise in [Chapter 7](#). It should be noted, however, that the findings from Chapter 7 are treated with caution in this analysis. Findings from Chapter 7, while not wholly generalisable due to sample size, provide insight and suggested areas for further research. Limitations of the sample size are discussed in [Chapter 9.3.4](#).

To demonstrate the novel contribution of the research findings reported in this thesis, frequent reference is made throughout the chapter to the related extant literature. This frames the new knowledge that has been produced over the course of this study, as well as highlights future research directions on its themes. (A full literature review is provided in [Chapter 2](#).) The *Theory of information worlds* (presented in [Chapter 3.4.1](#)) serves as a lens for understanding the findings in the context of cultural factors – notably social norms and information value – as determinants of public library use (perceived and actual).

As well as identifying opportunities for further research, the findings of this study point to interventions that might enhance services provision for forced migrants. For this reason, recommendations for policy and practice are also included in this chapter.

A further contribution of this thesis is to the use of motivational theories in library and information science research to investigate information practices. This relates to the use of Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs*, as presented in [Chapter 3.4.2](#).

In addition, a methodological contribution to the field of LIS has been made in the use of community validation, as demonstrated in [Chapter 4.6](#). The method was successful and effective in the use of not-yet-participants in the community of interest to validate the findings of previous methods. This approach differs from other member validation

methods and presents new opportunities to generate depth and breadth beyond initial findings. The method presented there can be replicated in future research studies and contributes methodologically to the discipline.

The chapter is presented in three main sections. The first two correspond directly to RQ1, and to RQ2 and RQ2a. For the former, three main themes developed from the analysis of gatekeeper interview data is considered in turn. These relate to public libraries (1) as places that provide access to leisure; (2) as spaces, and (3) as services that facilitate community connections. For the latter, the cultural factors of social norms and information value are treated separately. The main third section considers three other contributions of the doctoral work: recommendations for practice and policy in public library service provision for forced migrants; the identification of new opportunities for further research related to public libraries and newcomer populations; and a re-evaluation of the use of motivational theories such as Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* in LIS research.

8.2 How do people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services?

The first question addressed is how people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants') use of public library services. The results indicate that forced migrants are perceived to use the public library in three main ways:

1. As places where resources related to leisure activities are provided;
2. As spaces in which learning and meeting other individuals takes place;
3. And as resources to connect with their communities.

The first of these uses is most closely connected to an assumed understanding of the purpose of public libraries, rather than specific use. As such, it is introduced in the current section and considered in greater detail in [Chapter 8.3](#). As they are specific usage patterns, the use of the physical space in public libraries and the use of resources that support connection are discussed in greater detail here.

8.2.1 Public libraries are used as places where resources related to leisure activities are provided

Prior work identifies public libraries as places of leisure in general (e.g., Aabø *et al.*, 2010; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016), and many of the resources provided by public libraries are connected to leisure activities (Sørensen, 2021 p. 101067). The implication of the provision of resources that are used for leisure is that public libraries are places of leisure. Indeed, Dali (2012) found that the reading habits of Russian newcomers in Canada often revolved around reading for pleasure. The conceptualisation of libraries as places supporting leisure suggested by gatekeeper interviewees aligns with this previous work. Analysis of government documentation provides additional support, with public libraries most often connected to descriptions of leisure activities.

Many of the gatekeepers interviewed believe that because public libraries are perceived as places for leisure activities, public library resources are not used by forced migrant adults. Explanations in the gatekeeper interviews for the perceived non-use included references to *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. The priorities of forced migrants are assumed to relate most closely to the lower levels of the *Hierarchy of Needs*, in which leisurely activities are not sought out until survival is assured. This explanation reinforces conclusions in past work by Caidi and Allard (2005), Markwei and Rasmussen (2015), and Oduntan and Ruthven (2019) in which connected the *Hierarchy of Needs* with forced migrant information behaviours. Although *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* is not directly referenced, the inclusion criteria of Dali's (2012) research also follow the expectation that non-survival activities are not sought out in the "immediate aftermath" of migration. If public libraries are not associated with survival activities, as suggested above, forced migrant communities will exhibit low usage levels.

Both methods that were reliant on the perceptions of service providers (i.e., gatekeeper interviews and government document analysis) strengthen the conclusions of previous researchers. Not only is the public library considered in the context of leisure activities, reasons for low usage relate to the prioritisation of resources that support survival.

In the literature language resources are found to be regularly used by newcomers (see Table 2.4 p. 38). An example can be seen in work by Johnston (2016; 2018) and Johnston and Audunson (2019). In these papers, the public libraries of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, are part of a collaborative effort to provide integration support, with the libraries chosen as an arena for language learning. Therefore, the public library is formally tied to language learning for newcomers in these countries. In contrast to the libraries in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, language learning courses in the UK are largely separate from libraries. This is according to findings from all three empirical methods reported on in this thesis. In the documentation from local authorities in Scotland, ESOL was never included in the context of public libraries. In gatekeeper interviews, one public library staff member reported a language café. However, the programme was discussed in the context of connecting with community, rather than the context of language support. No forced migrants from the community validation interviews had experienced formal English language support provided by public libraries. Rather, there were reports of ESOL courses bringing students to public libraries for one class, or recommending local libraries as additional resources.

8.2.2 Public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces

In addition to types of public library resource use based on the perceived purpose of public libraries, specific resources were identified in the findings. The finding from community validation that library spaces are used alongside additional resources aligns with previous literature. According to Shoham and Rabinovich (2008) and Shuva (2022) physical spaces within libraries are often used by newcomers to support personal and professional tasks (additional detail can be seen in table 2.4 p. 38). Tasks regularly identified in the literature include studying, meeting people, and learning about the host community. In addition to the tasks described in the literature, the use of the public library for work and shelter from the elements have been identified (see [Chapter 2.5.3.1](#) p. 39). In previous work, use of public library spaces is sometimes connected to religious practices in which not all public spaces are appropriate for all members of society. In particular, forced migrants from cultures in which women restrict themselves to approved places are cited as enjoying the public library as one of the few free spaces available to them. An additional benefit identified by the literature

is the connection between the use of library spaces and increased trust in the host country society. From this work, it would be expected that trust in society is also noted by gatekeepers. This expectation is addressed in a separate theme developed from the gatekeeper interviews, connected to trust in the “system” and will be discussed in greater detail in [Chapter 8.3.1.3](#) p. 171.

Similar to the findings of prior work, multiple interviewed gatekeepers cited the physical spaces within public libraries as being regularly used by forced migrants. Identified uses of public library spaces matched the tasks listed in previous research. However, an additional nuance of the findings here is forced migrants utilising public library spaces to teach language to others. Both teaching English and teaching mother tongues were mentioned in gatekeeper interviews. While the connection between public libraries and language skills is prevalent in the literature, the use of library spaces to teach language outside of a library programme has not been mentioned.

Interviewed gatekeepers also mentioned the use of library space as a place to exist outside of provided housing. However, unlike in prior research, in gatekeeper interviews there was less emphasis on the public library being deemed “safe” and more emphasis on the public library being free of charge and a different environment. This may be related to many forced migrant accommodation sites being hotels in the UK. In situations where forced migrants are accommodated in hotel rooms or hostels, the ability to leave these small quarters was deemed important. Similarly, as forced migrants in temporary accommodation have very few monetary resources, being able to visit a place where there is no charge or expectation of purchase is valuable.

8.2.3 Public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community

Previous research suggests that public libraries support newcomer integration through the support of connections. Shuva (2022) found that as immigrants felt more comfortable in new communities, use of the public library to make connections decreased. Having more robust support and being placed in communities with individuals with similar backgrounds may result in greater comfortability in new communities. This could then result in lowered use of libraries as places to build connections. Previous work also shows that public library programmes support

relationships between newcomers and their new communities (see [Chapter 2.5.3.1](#) p. 40). This may be through chance meetings at public libraries or specific programmes. One example of such a programme is a conversation group. Language based programmes at public libraries have also been shown to support community connections and integration.

The role of libraries in supporting connections aligns with findings from gatekeeper interviews. Of the gatekeepers interviewed, there were differences in the import of the public library in supporting these community connections. Gatekeepers that primarily work with forced migrants that arrived in the UK through a resettlement programme indicated that there is less use of public libraries for community connections. A possible explanation for this discrepancy between gatekeepers is related to the amount of support provided to forced migrants at the time of arrival. In the UK, those forced migrants who arrive via a resettlement scheme are provided for differently than forced migrants who arrive seeking asylum. It is possible that those gatekeepers who work with forced migrants entering through a resettlement scheme have provision for community connections outside of public libraries, and do not have evidence of public libraries being used for building connections. As one resettlement officer said, when the community of forced migrants they supported was initially developed, the public library appeared to be used more often as a meeting place. However, as more forced migrants entered the community the rates of meeting at the public library appeared to decrease.

An extension of previous research is the finding that public libraries also support connections with countries of origin. The findings from gatekeeper interviews indicated that forced migrants use digital and makerspace resources to maintain contact with home countries. This role that a public library has is not present in previous literature, in which the emphasis is on integration in the receiving country. However, as the goal of integration is reciprocal (as discussed in [Chapter 1.4.2](#) p. 8), it is expected that forced migrants will maintain connections with countries of origin. The role that public libraries play in supporting these links is a topic for future research.

8.2.4 Community validation of findings related to RQ1

There are discrepancies between the findings of community validation and the findings of gatekeeper interviews related to RQ1. In this section, the findings of community validation are discussed according to the order followed in Chapter 8.2:

1. As places where resources related to leisure activities are provided;
2. As spaces in which learning and meeting other individuals takes place;
3. And as resources to connect with their communities.

Libraries as places where resources related to leisure activities are provided

The assessment that forced migrants consider public libraries to be places of leisure is not corroborated by the findings of the community validation interviews. Rather, the unanimous attitude of forced migrant interviewees was that the public library is a place where knowledge is gained. This was connected to formal models of education in particular, although less formal learning was also mentioned. This finding from community validation supports Shepherd *et al.* (2018), in contrast to other literature in which public libraries are suggested to be places of leisure. While not specific to newcomers or forced migrants, research on the value of public libraries also suggests that public libraries provide support knowledge acquisition. For example, Appleton *et al.* (2018) find that library users consider the epistemic role of the library to be of high value. Appleton discovered that the role of public libraries as receptacles of knowledge where individuals can learn was given primacy in terms of value. The role public libraries play in language learning was emphasised in community validation. Although the reason for choosing the particular book may be because it is on an enjoyable topic, but the purpose of using the library is for learning; specifically, learning English.

From the results of the gatekeeper interviews, there is support for the previous literature in which the public library is found to play a role in leisure activities. However, when contextualised by the findings of the community validation, it is apparent that there may be a difference in perception between gatekeepers and forced migrants themselves. Further clarification is needed, and therefore there is an avenue for additional research on this gap in perception. Additional discussion on the

ways the differences of perception relate to cultural factors can be found in [Chapter 8.3.1.1](#) p. 168, as it is relevant to the second research question.

Libraries as spaces in which learning and meeting other individuals takes place

The use of public library spaces was partially supported by forced migrants interviewed for the community validation method. Specifically, forced migrants who did not arrive in the UK through a resettlement scheme and are not well supported in their resettlement area noted the importance of library spaces. A recurring theme from community validation was the use of library spaces in conjunction with other resources. All forced migrants exhibited negative views on using only the library space, a trend that will be discussed in further detail in [Chapter 8.3.1.6](#) p. 175, as it relates to the cultural factor of social norms. Despite the general negative perception towards use of library space, there was one exception: the use of the public library as a shelter from the elements. As a public library acts not just as a place of shelter but also as a place in which forced migrants can use other resources as they wait, it is considered more desirable than other buildings. The gratuitous nature of the library is also key here, particularly for forced migrants that are on limited incomes. Both the use of libraries as shelter and the lack of charges may be linked to Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs*, as these features allow initial levels of the hierarchy to be achieved during visits to public libraries.

Libraries as resources to connect with their communities

Findings from community validation interviews showed that the accuracy of the statement that public libraries are used to connect with communities varies. Some of the forced migrants saw opportunities to connect with community as a possibility when visiting the library, rather than a main purpose of use. Other forced migrants saw the connection with communities as a primary purpose of library use. This difference in opinion mirrored the migration pathways of participants. Forced migrants who entered the UK as part of a resettlement programme indicated that connecting with community at the public library was a bonus, not a primary activity. In contrast, forced migrants that came to the UK as people seeking asylum suggest that public libraries are valuable as places to connect with community.

Regardless of whether connecting with community is considered a main resource of the public library, comments from forced migrants focused on networks with local communities. This is closely aligned with previous work, where the emphasis is on connections with local communities. However, the focus on local bonds is dissimilar to comments by gatekeepers, in which connections with countries of origin were emphasised. Although community validation revealed that links with countries of origin might be supported by public library resources, the ties were not strongly associated with the library. The slight disconnect between gatekeeper perspectives and the perspectives of forced migrants needs further exploration. Understanding the disconnect may help provide guidance on the types of resources most relevant to forced migrant needs.

8.2.5 Contribution to knowledge of the ways that those who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services

A contribution of this study in connection to RQ1 is the extension of findings by Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall (2022). In their work, a novel contribution was that the epistemic role of the public library was found to be valued more by library users than provision of leisure activities. Based on the findings of community validation in the empirical work reported on here, the epistemic role of the public library is also shown to be more highly valued by users. The confirmation of this role in a specific user community strengthens the findings of Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall (2022). In addition, the importance of the epistemic role of the public library has implications on library staff practice and library policy (discussed in detail in [Chapter 8.4.1](#) p. 180).

8.3 What is the nature of the cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by people who support forced migrants?

All seven themes developed from the gatekeeper interviews were deemed relevant to the second research question, with the following five considered particularly pertinent:

1. Public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time.
2. Public libraries hold information but they are not a main source of information for forced migrants.

3. Public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants don’t trust the system.
4. Public libraries are meant to serve all members of a community but forced migrants do not have confidence that they can use the library.
5. Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting.

Although the theme related to the library as a leisure activity was initially discussed in [Chapter 8.2.1](#) p. 160, it will be expanded on in this section. This expansion will cover the ways in which the theme is relevant to the relationship between culture and perceived use of the public library by forced migrants. Similarly, the themes related to the use of library spaces and library resources supporting connection will be discussed in this section in the context of their relationship with cultural factors. The section is organised with reference to the relevant cultural factors from the *Theory of information worlds*: social norms and information value (see [Chapter 3.4.1](#)). Previous research on culture and information behaviours has utilised the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (e.g., Khosrowjerdi *et al.*, 2020). However, the broader *Theory of information worlds* was deemed more relevant to the PhD research. Therefore, as the research is also the first to focus on the relationship between culture and public library use of forced migrants, the inclusion of prior work is less structured in this section.

8.3.1 Social norms

As seen in [Chapter 8.2](#), the results of the empirical work largely correspond to those related by other researchers. For example, there is close alignment here with prior work that identifies public libraries as places of leisure in general (e.g., Aabø *et al.*, 2010; Vakkari *et al.*, 2016). Although there is some discrepancy between the perceptions of the gatekeepers interviewed and the forced migrants interviewed, this too matches prior work. For example, Appleton *et al.* (2018) found the epistemic role of the public library to be valued by users more than the provision of leisure activities. The same is the case for topics of direct relevance to the broader topic of use of public libraries by newcomers. These include, for example:

- turning to community members for access information, rather than to institutions such as public library services (Borkert *et al.*, 2018; Fisher *et al.*, 2004a; Fisher, 2018);
- provision of information in appropriate formats (Lloyd *et al.*, 2013 pp. 130-131; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018 p. 1116);
- the association between trust in systems and their use (e.g., Vårheim, 2014 p. 65);
- the way confidence is related to decisions to use public library resources (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Johnston, 2016; Salzano *et al.*, 2020b);
- recognition of different preferences for information access and sharing in distinct groups (Lloyd *et al.*, 2013 p. 131; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018 p. 1116);

Where there is a lack of alignment between the results reported here and those of similar prior studies, this is likely due to specific contextual factors and artefacts of research design. For example, Khoir *et al.*'s 2017 study on Australian public libraries (cited above) reports that Asian immigrant families make frequent trips to public libraries for leisure purposes. However, the population observed in the study comprised highly skilled migrant workers, and the data collection techniques deployed included on-site recruitment of existing library user participants within public library premises.

There is one key difference, however, between the findings of many of the earlier studies and those reported in this thesis. This is the underlying reasons for observed behaviours. Although recognised - for example Lloyd (2017a, p. 42) acknowledges that lived experience of libraries and forced migration are important - they have not been investigated in depth in prior work. For example, apart from discussion in Fisher (2018) on the trustworthiness of information sources, the reasons to account for heavy reliance of newcomer population on community information sources - rather than those provided by bodies such as public library services - have remained unexplored to date. Here it can be argued that unreconciled differences between social norms (in countries of origin and/or the country of settlement) are at the core of the question of cultural factors as determinants of public library use.

8.3.1.1 Public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time

In respect of the perception that public libraries are for leisure but forced migrants do not have leisure time, the social norms experienced in the host country are particularly important. As can be seen in the account of the results in [Chapter 6](#), opinion may be shaped by gatekeeper views, as well as the context of the forced migrants themselves (e.g., they lack leisure time). Findings from the analysis of government documents indicates that public libraries are considered arenas of leisure in the way libraries are categorised by local authorities in Scotland (see [Chapter 5.3.4](#)). As discussed in [Chapter 8.2.1](#) p. 160, the perception of interviewed gatekeepers is also that public libraries are used for leisure. The resources provided by public libraries are considered “extra”, and not relevant to the survival needs prioritised by forced migrants. Following from these perspectives, the role of Maslow’s *Hierarchy of Needs* can be seen. Indeed, the *Hierarchy of Needs* was referred to directly in conversations with gatekeepers about the relative value of public library services when compared with others such as housing and the NHS. Here it is evident that when the levels of physiology and safety are not met, needs from higher levels such as self-actualization are not pursued.

The use of public libraries as places of leisure for newcomers is not fully supported by previous literature (e.g., Johnston, 2016; 2018; Johnston & Audunson, 2019). These differences may be explained by the social norms related to the purpose of a public library and the ways in which it should be used. Although not explored in depth, social norms associated with the purpose of a public library are present in previous literature. For example, Audunson *et al.* (2011) found that newcomers with experience of public libraries in their country of origin were more aware of library resources than those with less experience. Expectations of the public library based on social norms in country of origin affected expectations of the public library in the new community.

The discrepancy in the literature (e.g., Vakkari *et al.*, 2016 compared to Appleton *et al.*, 2018) and the empirical work reported on in this thesis is connected to a gap identified in the literature review (see [Chapter 2.7](#) p. 57): research tends to favour the perspective of libraries as service providers. In the literature, it is not the service providers that identify the epistemic role of the public library, but the library users. In contrast, in work that suggests the public library is used for leisure activity research is

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often approached from a context of service provision (e.g., which of the services we provide do you use). A similar phenomenon is seen in the findings of this PhD project. In the context of service provision (i.e., government document analysis and gatekeeper interviews), the public library as a place of leisure was prioritised. However, in the context of library users (i.e., community validation), the public library as a resource for survival was emphasised.

The link between the gap in the literature and the findings of the research is also important to consider in the context of research on culture. If the cultural differences of a community are considered only from the perspective of that community, inaccurate assumptions may be made about reasons for resource use (or disuse). This is particularly important if generalisations are to be made, as the culture of service providers may vary between regions/countries. For example, as discussed in [Chapter 8.2.1](#) p. 161, the social norm in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden that public libraries are provisors of formal language learning support is different than in the UK. Therefore, the relationship between culture and forced migrants' public library use may manifest differently in Nordic countries even if the culture of forced migrants is comparable to those in the UK.

The suggestion that a social norm in the UK is that public libraries are places of leisure has implications for both practice and policies of public libraries. Social norms of the service providers may influence the use of resources, as these norms may impact the ways resources are provided to forced migrants. An example of this is the ways public libraries are advertised to forced migrants. It is possible that if forced migrants are being informed of libraries in the context of a leisure activity, they do not go to those libraries because it does not match their social norms, not because they do not have leisure time. Future research is needed to gain additional understanding of how social norms relate to the perception that public libraries are for leisure, and the ways this may impact use by forced migrants.

8.3.1.2 Public libraries hold information but they are not a main source of information for forced migrants

The perception that public libraries hold information, but are not a main source for forced migrants can be associated to home country social norms. These social norms

include the exclusivity of public library services, and the status of reading as an activity not regularly undertaken by adults. Social norms related to the exclusivity of public library services were noted by interviewed gatekeepers. As one gatekeeper related, forced migrants may not have experience with a public library that can be used by all members of the community. The expectation that the public library cannot be used by everyone may result in less forced migrants attempting to use the public library. Such a perception translates to lower use of the public library if forced migrants do not feel they are of an appropriate status. The perception that some societies are “better” than others is also related to confidence to use the public library and is explored in more detail in [Chapter 8.3.1.4](#) p. 174.

Berger (2002 p. 83) and Audunson *et al.* (2011 p. 224) note that youths tend to be primary users of public libraries in forced migrant communities. Multiple gatekeepers interviewed also noted that forced migrants with families made use of library resources for their children. A social norm that public libraries are for education, often more closely associated with school-age children than adults, may be an explanation for this trend. Indeed, one gatekeeper with lived experience of migration stated that in their culture adults tend not to read. In light of this social norm, it is understandable that public libraries are largely being used by the children in forced migrant families or in the context of learning English.

In addition, while the social norm of community information sharing and decision making does not nullify the possibility of visiting a public library to access information, a perceived low community “presence” there, both in terms of people found in the physical space and the information value of library holdings (e.g., materials in mother tongue languages, print resources of relevance to the forced migrant community), is a cultural barrier to participation. Both the accessibility of information and the relevance of that information are important factors on the decision to trust an information source. A community member that has previously navigated the asylum system is likely considered to have more accessible – in terms of language – and relevant information than that of public libraries on many topics.

8.3.1.3 Public libraries are part of the “system” but forced migrants do not trust the system

In regards to the theme that public libraries are distrusted because they are part of “the system”, social norms formed during times of conflict and migration journeys are key cultural contributors. The role of the migration itself on the creation of information practices is noted by Borkert *et al.* (2018). Distrust in particular resources, including other members of the forced migrant community, was learned as forced migrants navigated mis- and disinformation on their journeys. In relation to the empirical work of the PhD, one gatekeeper highlighted the migration journey as the basis of a micro-culture that the majority of forced migrants acquire. The social norms related to this culture included norms about who to trust.

The relationship between trust in the system and the public library has been addressed in previous literature by Caidi and Allard (2005 p. 316). In those societies where libraries are seen as colonial powers, arenas for the elite, or controlled by a government that does not encourage critical thinking, a public library may not be trustworthy. Multiple gatekeepers described instances in which forced migrants fled a government that was not trusted and arrived in the UK to experience an asylum system that they also felt couldn't be trusted. Interviewed forced migrants with this type of experience were the ones who agreed that the “system”, and to some extent the library, was not trusted. Previous research has shown that a lack of trust in the “system” and between people often leads to a less functional society (e.g., Caidi & Allard, 2005 p. 307). While public libraries have been shown to increase trust of newcomers (e.g., Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Vårheim, 2011; 2014), this is dependent upon newcomers using public libraries. As has been shown in the empirical work reported on in this thesis, initial use depends on a basic level of trust in the public library that forced migrants may not have. This presents a challenge for public library staff, as initial levels of trust should be sought to encourage use, after which trust in the new community can be built.

8.3.1.4 Public libraries are meant to serve all members of a community but forced migrants do not have confidence that they can use the library

The perception that forced migrants do not have confidence that they can use the public library was conceptualised in two ways: a belief that the public library was

suitable for forced migrants to use, and that forced migrants had the English language skills to use the public library.

A discussion on the role discrimination plays in use of the public library is not readily available in the literature on the public library information practices of forced migrants. Although racism and discrimination are not explicitly mentioned in the literature, Caidi and Allard (2005), Johnston (2018), and Johnston and Audunson (2019) allude to its presence through discussions of in-groups, out-groups, and cohesion between groups. In gatekeeper interviews the topic of racism and discrimination were explicitly named by one gatekeeper, and there were descriptions of prejudice from other gatekeepers as well. In terms of discrimination, social norms may dictate the form discrimination may take and the level of acceptability these forms have in society. In the context of the work reported in this thesis, social norms that equate Black people as less intelligent and brown bodies as terrorists have an impact on the comfort Black and brown people have in particular situations². If a Black man feels that he will be judged for using the public library, his confidence to use the public library will be lowered. The potential for discrimination is also connected to the theme about the use of public library spaces, and will be explored in the context of that theme in [Chapter 8.3.3](#) p. 177.

In the case of discrimination and racism, the culture of service providers is once again integral to a holistic understanding of the relationship between culture and library use. Social norms related to discrimination in the culture of a service provider will have an influence on the willingness of affected communities to engage with resources. However, without consideration of this cultural factor, inappropriate conclusions about reasons for non-use may be made.

Socio-economic status is also connected to confidence that the public library is suitable for forced migrants to use. This relates to work by Caidi and Allard (2005 p. 316) and Salzano *et al.* (2020b). In both pieces of research, it is found that libraries are sometimes perceived as a resource for those of high socio-economic status. In some

² These two examples were used specifically by one of the interviewees in the community validation (see [Chapter 7.8](#)).

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Chapter 8: Discussion

cases, this is because of membership fees (e.g., Salzano *et al.*, 2020b) and in others it is because of class lines (e.g., Caidi & Allard, 2005 p. 316). As with discrimination, the confidence that a public library is suitable to use is affected by the social norms surrounding socio-economic status. If there is a social norm that public libraries are for people with high social status the confidence a forced migrant has to use the library may decrease.

The second characterisation of confidence is related to English language levels. Previous work by Audunson *et al.* (2011), Burke (2008), Johnston (2016; 2018), Van der Linden *et al.* (2014), and Shoham and Rabinovich (2008) emphasise the importance of language skills to public library use by newcomers. Newcomers with lower levels of fluency in a host country's language are tend to use the public library less. Related to this tendency, use of language cafés in the public library increased confidence to use the library. This is in part due to heightened language skills. Based on these previous findings, it can be argued that as fluency in a host country's language increases, so too does the confidence to use library resources. In terms of social norms, expectations of library provision can be tied to confidence. If the social norm is that public libraries will provide resources in languages other than the dominant one in a country, the importance of language fluency is likely decreased. However, if the social norm is that public libraries do not provide resources in other languages, the importance of language fluency to confidence increases.

The role of service providers culture is also at play here. Based on the findings of government document analysis and interviews with forced migrants, the social norm in the UK is that public libraries tend not to be formal provisors of ESOL classes. Despite public libraries playing a role in increased literacy and language skills, they are not formally included as a resource in documentation. They therefore may be overlooked as a resource. As a result, forced migrants who have low English fluency may not be confident that the library has resources they would be able to use.

8.3.1.5 Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy and forced migrants may find this off-putting

Gatekeepers identified the bureaucracy present in many public libraries as potentially off-putting for forced migrants. One explanation for this perception shared by

gatekeepers was the concept of a bureaucratic culture. It was suggested that the UK has a bureaucratic culture, in which the social norm is that numerous forms and applications are required to access resources. Forced migrants who arrive from countries without the same emphasis on bureaucracy may find it difficult to adjust to the levels of bureaucracy in institutions such as the library.

Both Lloyd *et al.* (2013 pp. 130-131) and Martzoukou and Burnett (2018 p. 1116), suggest that the use of English forms to share knowledge is often a barrier. Lloyd *et al.* (2013) specifically mentions cultural background in this context. It is suggested that for newcomers with a cultural background of oral traditions may have more difficulty navigating in a new culture in which: (1) information is not shared orally and (2) information is shared in a language in which newcomers are not fluent (Lloyd *et al.*, 2013 p. 139). In the findings of the empirical work reported on in this thesis, interviewed gatekeepers noted that the completion of forms and applications was made more difficult because they were written in English. The importance of language is supported in the literature. The social norm of the ways information is shared (e.g., orally or written) is connected to language skills and expectations of bureaucracy.

8.3.1.6 Public libraries have physical buildings and forced migrants use these spaces

The connection between forced migrant use of public library spaces and RQ2 is closely connected to a disagreement between the perspectives of gatekeepers and community validation. The theme is related to the literature and RQ1 in [Chapter 8.2.2](#) p. 162. As the connection between this theme and culture relied on discrepancies in opinion, a deeper discussion of the theme is included in [Chapter 8.3.3](#) p. 177. alongside other findings of community validation. In terms of the perception that forced migrants use public library spaces, there was disagreement between gatekeepers and community validation. One aspect of this disagreement may be connected to the social norms about the way public libraries should be used. All forced migrants interviewed expressed negative opinions towards the idea that public library spaces were used as a single resource. One forced migrant expressed frustration at the theme because they perceived the theme to be a judgement that forced migrants are lazy. This frustration was driven from experiences with social norms in the UK in which forced migrants are not considered productive members of society. Such social norms may influence the

use of resources such as library spaces – or resources that support connection – even if judgements are not made by library staff or library users. These same social norms may be intertwined with the social norms related to racism and discrimination discussed in [Chapter 8.3.1.4](#) p. 172.

In addition to the role social norms in the UK may play, the social norms in countries of origin may also influence the negative viewpoints expressed by forced migrants. If the expectation is that public libraries are to be used to gain knowledge and support education, the use of public libraries outside of these aims may be considered incorrect. Both the use of public library spaces and the use of resources to connect with communities may be types of use that do not align with social norms in forced migrants' countries of origin. This misalignment may impact the use of these resources, particularly if there is also perceived judgement from local communities.

8.3.2 Information value

The cultural factor of information value is also at the core of the question of cultural factors as determinants of public library use. Information value is often intertwined with the factor of social norms. Social norms dictate which sources and formats of information are more highly valued in particular information worlds. For the research reported in this thesis, the factor of information value is particularly relevant to themes related to sources of information, trust in the “system”, and bureaucracy. The social norms related to the places information is sought have an impact on the information value placed on resources found in public libraries: if it is a social norm to distrust the “system”, then information from entities viewed as part of the “system” are not to be trusted either, so lack value and are not used. The possibility of discrimination also plays a role, particularly if the public face of the entity is a white person requesting personal details as a condition of service provision. This simply confirms that public libraries are, indeed, no different from other elements of the distrusted system.

The format of information may also be assigned value (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010 p. 42). Public libraries that are known to provide information in a format that has lower information value may not be used. This is particularly relevant to forced migrant

communities, as findings suggest that levels of literacy may be low in both English and mother tongues. A dependency on promotion of resources via written materials is a detriment in this case. Findings indicate that if a person with low or illiteracy is handed information in written form, they may be able to utilise the information if they know someone that is literate. However, this is not assured. As such, a regularly used method of marketing for libraries (e.g., flyers and brochures) is likely to be ineffectual.

In addition, the bureaucracy involved in library membership may be viewed with frustration if information codified in documents has low information value. In this case, such bureaucracy may be seen as an artificial barrier, rather than a process valued in the UK. Therefore, forced migrants may be less likely to use public library resources if their values differ.

8.3.3 Community validation of findings related to RQ2

There is a clear discrepancy between the opinions of interviewed forced migrants and the views expressed by interviewed gatekeepers on the topic of public libraries as places of leisure. Expectations of the role of public libraries in countries of origin, as reported by forced migrants, often related to education. The library was seen primarily as a place of knowledge in which people would study, for school or for their own development. As one forced migrant suggested, in the UK the expectation might be that the library is for leisure but for forced migrants the library provides tools for survival. This discrepancy in social norms may lead to ineffectual marketing of resources.

Social norms related to the exclusivity of public library services were noted by both interviewed gatekeepers and interviewed forced migrants. A variation of the social norm that libraries are for the elite was identified by a forced migrant. This variation relates to the perception that European societies are “better” than that of the countries of origin of forced migrants.

In community validation interviews, social norms were also identified as determinants of the decision to trust specific resources. This included discussions on whether people from their countries of origin could be trusted to tell the truth. From interviews with forced migrants, it was discovered that the social norms dictating whether public

libraries were part of a system to be distrusted differed. The differences in opinion relate to the migration pathway, with forced migrants that arrived as part of a resettlement programme or were assigned to a generally more supported resettlement area (i.e., Scotland) disagreeing that the “system” should be distrusted. This pattern of disagreement lends support to Mulvey’s (2018) claim that Scotland is more compassionate than other areas in the UK in the arena of support for forced migrants. A more compassionate approach to forced migrant support is suggested to positively impact integration. Such a suggestion is also supported by the community validation, as interviewed forced migrants often cited lack of support as one reason to distrust the system.

Through community validation interviews deeper understanding of the social norms connected to confidence were revealed. In particular, racism and other forms of discrimination were mentioned in interviews with forced migrants as important to level of confidence in using the public library. The mention of racism and discrimination complements findings from gatekeeper interviews.

In community validation, forced migrants did not fully agree with the theme that bureaucracy in libraries was off-putting. However, this was expressed as bureaucracy not being an insurmountable barrier to library use. There was frustration expressed at the amount of bureaucracy expected for what should be a simple task. In this sense, the social norm of bureaucratic processes is not appreciated by some forced migrants but is not so off-putting as to prevent resource use.

In terms of the perception that forced migrants use public library spaces, there was disagreement between gatekeepers and community validation. One aspect of this disagreement may be connected to the social norms about the way public libraries should be used. All forced migrants interviewed expressed negative opinions towards the idea that public library spaces were used as a single resource. One forced migrant expressed frustration at the theme because they perceived the theme to be a judgement that forced migrants are lazy. This frustration was driven from experiences with social norms in the UK in which forced migrants are not considered productive members of society. Such social norms may influence the use of resources such as

library spaces – or resources that support connection – even if judgements are not made by library staff or library users. These same social norms may be intertwined with the social norms related to racism and discrimination discussed in [Chapter 8.3.1.4](#) p. 172.

In addition to the role social norms in the UK may play, the social norms in countries of origin may also influence the negative viewpoints expressed by forced migrants. If the expectation is that public libraries are to be used to gain knowledge and support education, the use of public libraries outside of these aims may be considered incorrect. Both the use of public library spaces and the use of resources to connect with communities may be types of use that do not align with social norms in forced migrants' countries of origin. This misalignment may impact the use of these resources, particularly if there is also perceived judgement from local communities.

8.3.4 Contribution to knowledge on the nature of cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by those who support forced migrants

Using the *Theory of information worlds* (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010), cultural factors cast as elements of social norms and information value are revealed as key determinants of forced migrant use of public libraries in the UK. In addition, this account has provided theoretical explanation for the use (or non-use) of public library services by forced migrant communities. It thus contributes a further dimension to a body of extant literature which, to date, has tended to describe the information behaviour of newcomer populations without examining its determinants, and only does so on the basis of data collected from the context of public library service informants. The empirical work described in this thesis gathered data from the context of public library service informants, non-public library service informants, and forced migrants. In this way, discrepancies in perception were identified and suggestions for further research were based on these divergences.

The second major contribution of this work is the consideration of the culture of service providers as well as the culture of service users in research related to culture is conducted. When previous research cites cultural differences as important to library use (e.g., Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; see [Chapter 2.6.3.2](#) p. 52), there is an

implication that the difference in culture stems from service users. Although this is one interpretation, it is also important to note that a difference can be addressed from both sides. As can be seen in this thesis, it appears that the purpose of public libraries is conceived differently by service providers (gatekeepers and government documents) compared to service users (forced migrants). However, the knowledge that the reason for non-use might be due to these differences in culture would not have been apparent if culture were considered only from one perspective. This has implications for practice and policy (see [Chapter 8.4.1](#) p. 180) and future research that explores the concept of culture.

8.4 Further contributions of the doctoral study

8.4.1 Recommendations for practice and policy in public library service provision for forced migrants

The findings of the PhD research have implications on the practice and policy of public libraries. Implications of policy include both library policies and the government policies that may also affect library provision.

In terms of practice, there are implications related to the cultural background of service providers, and of the general receiving community. One manifestation of this is the prevalence of discrimination and racism in a community. As demonstrated by findings from both gatekeeper interviews and community validation, confidence to use the public library may be affected by social norms related to discrimination. In addition, the specific library resources used by forced migrants may change if discrimination is felt on the part of the forced migrant. It is important for library practitioners, then, to be aware of the environment of the library in which they work. They themselves should be cognisant of the ways social norms affect interactions with library users of diverse backgrounds. In addition, library staff must be aware of the ways library users interact with each other, and the ways the general library environment is affected. This awareness should then be used to inform library policy on acceptable behaviours of staff and library users. Knowledge of the ways social norms affect interactions with, and between, library users may also lead to the adoption of training programmes to encourage allyship, or provide a welcoming atmosphere to all users.

There are also implications for the ways resources are marketed. Social norms regarding the purpose of public libraries are integral here, as the social norm in a receiving country may not match the social norm of forced migrants. As demonstrated by the findings of this research, there is a potential disconnect in how libraries are conceptualised by people established in the UK (e.g., as a place of leisure) and forced migrants (e.g., as a place to study). Forced migrants, therefore, may use library resources less than they otherwise would if promotional materials aligned with their expectations. With knowledge about possible discrepancies in perceptions of the purpose of public libraries, library staff may be better able to develop marketing materials that will appeal to forced migrant priorities. In addition, it may be important to experiment with new formats of promotional materials. If the information value of current formats is lower in forced migrant communities, even promotional materials that match forced migrant expectations may not result in use.

Beyond library practice, the findings have potential implications for broader local authority policies. The lack of consideration for public libraries as arenas to support integration in policy documents is surprising in respect of the connection between public libraries and integration of newcomers made in previous research (see [Chapter 2.5.3.1](#) p. 39). In particular, the importance of literacy and English language skill is highlighted in the findings of all three methods as important to integration. The role of public libraries in the development of literacy and language skills is well established in the literature and supported by the findings from the PhD study. In addition, the role of public libraries in increasing literacy and language skills is acknowledged in other policy documents in the UK (e.g., Smarter Scotland, 2010). The implication, then, is that local governments may be underutilising a valuable resource.

If public libraries were more closely tied to integration efforts, as shown to be the case in other countries, local authorities would have another tool with which to reach their goals. Forced migrants would have additional avenues of support available that may strengthen positive experiences in the UK as a receiving country. This, in turn, may result in stronger communities and economic advancement.

8.4.2 New opportunities for future research related to public libraries and newcomer populations

The discussion in this chapter highlighted numerous areas for future research. One of the major limitations of the current work was the reliance on the perceptions of service provider gatekeepers. To address this limitation, future research should be conducted with the perspectives of forced migrants themselves highlighted. Within such research, additional exploration based on country of origin should be prioritised. The low number of participants with lived experience of forced migration resulted in a lack of comparison between different countries of origin. It is possible that opinions on specific topics (e.g., the conceptualisation of the public library as a place of leisure) may vary based on country of origin. As the current research did not target forced migrants from specific backgrounds (e.g., length of time in the UK, country of origin, belief system, etc.) the possibility of differences between communities of forced migrants should be considered in future work.

There is also a place for additional research on the role public libraries play in the maintenance of connections with countries of origin. This topic of research is relevant to all newcomer groups. In relation to forced migrants, it is an area of research not currently covered in the literature, as extant literature has a focus on integration into a receiving society.

A major contribution of the current work was the consideration of service provider culture in addition to the culture of forced migrants. The dynamic between both sets of cultures is an additional area of future investigation. Research on this dynamic is likely to generate valuable data that can be used to inform practice. This is particularly important as the number of global migrants continues to increase.

Geographic restrictions were an additional limitation of the current work. As the number of global migrants continues to rise, future research in additional regions would strengthen the usefulness of the current research. Although practice and policy implications may be relevant outside the UK, specific social norms may have different impacts on library use in alternate regions. Therefore, there is a need for additional research on the relationship between culture and use of the public library in other countries.

8.4.3 A re-evaluation of the use of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in LIS research

A theoretical contribution of the PhD research is the use of motivational theories to contextualise information practices. In the case of the research reported in this thesis, Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* (Maslow, 1943) might be considered a moderating variable for the five societal elements of the *Theory of information worlds*. This is on the basis of conversations with interviewees about the relative value of public library services when compared with others such as housing and the NHS, as noted above. Here it is evident that when the levels of physiology and safety are not met, needs from higher levels such as self-actualization are not pursued. From this observation, it is suggested that the presence of possible moderating variables identified by motivational theories should be considered in future research that adopts the *Theory of information worlds* as a framework. Maslow's *Hierarchy of needs* is one of many motivational theories that may be applied to LIS research. However, as identified by Savolainen (2018), there is a lack of consideration of motivational theories in the field overall.

Previous LIS work with motivational theories is largely based in the realms of knowledge management (e.g., Jeon *et al.*, 2011; Mosala-Bryant & Hoskins, 2017; Shih-Wei, 2010) and information behaviour, often specifically information seeking behaviour (e.g., Malhotra *et al.*, 2008; Malik *et al.*, 2019; Markwei & Rasmussen, 2015; Oduntan & Ruthven, 2019; Savolainen, 2012; 2018; Sigaard & Skov, 2015). The motivating factors of behaviours tend to be the focus of such studies, such as Mosala-Bryant and Hoskins (2017) research on the motivational factors that affect knowledge sharing. Specific motivational theories (e.g., the *Theory of planned behavior*, the *Organismic integration theory*, *Self determination theory*, *Expectancy-value theory*) are examined in order to explain the drivers of behaviours (e.g., Jeon *et al.*, 2011; Malhotra *et al.*, 2008; Mosala-Bryant & Hoskins, 2017; Savolainen, 2012; 2018; Shih-Wei, 2010; Sigaard & Skov, 2015). The interaction between motivational theories and established theories in the field of LIS, however, are not considered in the literature. Similarly, research in which motivational factors are addressed alongside established LIS theories does not address potential interactions between theories (e.g., Markwei & Rasmussen, 2015; Oduntan & Ruthven, 2019).

The contribution of the research reported in this thesis adds to the body of LIS research that has connected the *Hierarchy of needs* to information seeking behaviour (e.g., Markwei & Rasmussen, 2015), and information needs (Oduntan & Ruthven, 2019). It also demonstrates a way in which motivational theories such as the *Hierarchy of needs* may interact with established LIS theories. Therefore, there is a need for future research on information practices and information behaviours to not only consider motivational theories as explanations to phenomena, but to consider the interaction between motivational theories and LIS theories such as the *Theory of information worlds*.

8.5 Conclusion of chapter 8

The discussion of the main findings of the empirical work, with reference to the extant literature, highlights the contribution to knowledge of the doctoral work. As the first ever study to consider the information practices of forced migrants as a distinct population of public library users, and with a focus on aspects of culture as determinants of public library use (or non-use), the findings hold value in their own right.

Added to this is the main perspective considered here. More usually sought in this type of research are the views of library staff; here those of gatekeepers, who bear influence on the ways in which forced migrants approach public services, were gathered. Using the *Theory of information worlds* as a lens, it has been demonstrated that forced migrants are most readily perceived to interact with public library services for the purposes of leisure and to access physical spaces, particularly to maintain and forge connections with their community. This is accounted for by the cultural determinants of social norms (for example, trust in the “system”, expectations of provision) and information value (of information sources per se, and their formats).

Furthermore, this work has practical value in that it provides recommendations for practitioners and policy-makers (for example, the need to actively maintain welcoming environments in public libraries), identifies new priority areas for research (for example, research on the relationship between culture and public library use with forced migrants as primary participants), and has presented a re-evaluation of the use

of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs as a moderating variable in LIS research of the nature discussed here.

In addition, the methodological contribution discussed in [Chapter 4.5](#) presents a novel method to determine the credibility of findings in qualitative and mixed methods research. This community validation method would be beneficial to future research with multiple populations, service providers and service users, or with communities that are traditionally not heard.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The aim of the doctoral research was to extend knowledge of the information practices of a specific subset of newcomers – forced migrants – in UK public libraries (as described in [Chapter 1.1](#) p. 3). This was achieved through the development of a theoretical framework in which cultural factors such as social norms and information value were considered as possible determinants of information practices (see [Chapter 3.4.1](#) p. 64). The theoretical framework was used as a lens through which to interpret the findings generated from of three datasets: (1) analysis of government documents, (2) interview data gathered from service provider gatekeepers, and (3) community validation interviews with forced migrants. The work was conducted with reference to the broader LIS literature on information behaviour/practices and public library use.

In this conclusion chapter, the findings of the research are revisited in relation to the research questions. The contribution of these findings to the existing knowledge on the public library use of forced migrants and cultural factors as determinants of use are summarised. Implications on library practice and policy are also identified. Finally, recommendations are provided for future research concerned with the relationship between culture and information practices.

9.2 Summary of research findings

To contextualise the contributions to existing knowledge, it is necessary to review the findings from which the contributions originate. Here a summary of the research findings is presented as they relate to the two research questions identified in [Chapter 2.7](#) p. 58.

9.2.1 How do people who support forced migrants perceive their (forced migrants) use of public library services?

One perception of library use was related to conceptions of the public library. This conception is that public libraries provide resources of leisure, but forced migrants do not have time for leisure activities. It is this finding in which perceptions of lower public library use by forced migrants is encapsulated. Both the analysis of government documents related to forced migrant integration and gatekeeper interviews provided evidence for this perception. However, the community validation suggests that this

perception is inaccurate. Rather, the epistemic role of public libraries is considered primary. This discrepancy in opinion is tied to two contributions to current knowledge: the importance of considering the culture of service providers; and to a lesser extent an extension of work by Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall (2022).

Additionally, the perceived use of public library services was connected to the use of library spaces by forced migrants. The use of public library space is free and, theoretically, the space can be used without any expectations placed on the user. Public libraries therefore provide shelter from the elements without a negative impact on a forced migrant's economic resources. Library spaces are perceived to have more value than, as they could be utilised even if English language skills are lacking. This perception of service providers was not fully supported by the community validation exercise. Although library spaces are seen as valuable, they are rarely considered a resource in their own right. Rather, library spaces allow forced migrants to interact with other resources provided by the library.

A final perception of service providers is that libraries are arenas in which community bonds can be forged. The provision of programmes such as story hours and conversation groups allow for connections with local communities. In addition, the provision of digital resources and computers allow for connections in countries of origin. These resources are perceived to be regularly used by forced migrants who wish to both build new relationships and maintain existing ones. As with the use of library spaces, this perception by gatekeepers is partially supported by the community validation exercise. Whereas the perception of gatekeepers is that a primary use of the public library is to support connections, forced migrants perceive these connections to be an extra benefit. Through use of the library for study, valuable connections may be made to members of the receiving community. However, if such connections are not made, the primary motivation for library use is still be met (in this case to gain knowledge).

9.2.2 What is the nature of the cultural factors that determine forced migrant use of the public library, as perceived by people who support forced migrants?

Two cultural factors from the *Theory of information worlds*, were identified in the findings: social norms; and information value. This identification is the basis for the major contribution of the research, an understanding of cultural factors that may influence the information practices of forced migrants in public libraries. The further contributions of the consideration of service provider culture and the use of motivational theory such as Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* in information practice research are also based on the detection of these cultural factors.

Social norms are connected to both the perceived use of the public library by forced migrants (described in detail in [Chapter 8.3.1](#) p. 167), and perceived conceptualisations of the public library. Social norms related to the purpose of the public library are particularly relevant to the perceived use of library resources in the UK. Social norms on the part of service providers are also influential here, as norms related to discrimination may be relevant to the confidence of forced migrants to use the public library, and how library services are introduced to new community members. Social norms developed during the migration journey have been found to be relevant to both trust in the public library as part of the "system", and to decisions on relevant information sources.

The cultural factor of information value is predicated by social norms. The value placed on formats and sources of information is tied to social norms. The findings of the research indicate that experiences in countries of origin, during the migration journey, and in the receiving country influence the value of certain formats of information. Should the "system" be mistrusted and public libraries views as part of that system, the value of information from public libraries decreases. Similarly, if a written format is not considered valuable due to illiteracy, library resources in a written format are unlikely to be used.

9.3 Contributions to existing knowledge

The findings of the empirical work represent four contributions to the existing knowledge to the field of Library and Information Science in the area of public library use, more specifically, public library use by forced migrants.

9.3.1 Contributions to the domain of public library use

The major contribution of knowledge from this PhD work is an understanding of the relationship between cultural factors and use of the public library by forced migrants. This is the only research to date that has focused on the public library use of forced migrants. It is also the only research that explores the impact of cultural factors on the use of public libraries. Specific original findings are the ways that the cultural factors of social norms and information value shape library use by forced migrants. This is significant as previous work has merely suggested a cultural influence on public library use, rather than explored it. The impact of social norms on both initial public library use, and continued use is important to note, particularly for practitioners who support forced migrants. The role of service provider culture on the use of public library resources is important here. In past work, the differences between receiving country culture and forced migrant culture has been highlighted as an explanation for usage patterns. This can lead to a tendency to focus on the differences apparent in the cultural backgrounds of forced migrants. Based on the findings, however, it is suggested that service provider culture be included in the focus. Discrepancies in conceptualisations of the public library, for example, can have an impact on whether library resources are considered relevant by forced migrant communities.

A further contribution to the field is an extension of Appleton *et al.* (2018), Appleton (2020), and Appleton and Hall's (2022) findings on the role of public libraries from the perspective of users. The value gained by users from resources related to the epistemic role of libraries have been described in this previous research. The apparent discrepancies between gatekeeper perceptions and forced migrant perceptions, as noted in [Chapter 8](#) with reference to the primary role of public libraries, strengthen the argument that the provision of knowledge resources is highly valued by participants. This is particularly relevant to practice and policy, especially when traditional resources may be considered less relevant to users.

9.3.2 Methodological contribution

The methodological contribution of the work is in the development of a novel method of validation for qualitative or mixed methods research. As discussed in [Chapter 4.5](#) p. 101, the community validation method conducted in the empirical research used a combination of member checks and triangulation to determine credibility of the findings of gatekeeper interviews. The use of not-yet-participants to conduct member checks revealed discrepancies between the perceptions of service providers and the perceptions of service users. Such a combination of methods is not found in the extant literature, and presents an additional method for researchers to establish the validity of qualitative, and mixed methods, findings. The method would lend itself to future research that uses two populations of interest or research in which a goal is to explore subjectivity between participants.

9.3.3 Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contribution of the work is related to Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, as identified by gatekeepers in [Chapter 6.3](#) p. 109 and expanded on in [Chapter 8.4.3](#). p. 193. It has been demonstrated that Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* acts as a moderator of the relationship between identified cultural factors and public library use. The use of this motivational theory as an additional explanatory variable is significant in the findings, particularly in relation to the ways that service provider culture shaped perceptions. The consideration of the interaction between motivational theories and LIS theories is not evidenced in extant research. In this respect, the study contributes theoretically to the discipline, and to the use of motivational theories in future work on information behaviour and information practice.

9.3.4 Practice/policy contributions

The findings of the PhD research have implications on the practice and policy of public library service delivery. In terms of practice, it has been shown that the culture of service providers is also relevant to the use, or non-use, of public libraries. This is important to consider for the promotion of services, as a service marketed in a way that does not match forced migrant expectations of the library may not be utilised. The cultural background of service providers, and the culture of a receiving country in general, is also important to consider. Social norms related to discrimination, for

example, can affect continued use, the use of specific resources, or both. Practitioners in libraries should be aware of the ways that library resources are marketed, and the ways the library environment is affected by local culture.

The lack of consideration for public libraries as arenas to support integration in policy documents is an indication that public libraries are not being utilised to their full potential. If public libraries were more closely tied to integration efforts, as shown to be the case in other countries, local authorities would have another tool with which to reach their goals. Forced migrants would have additional avenues of support available that may strengthen positive experiences in the UK as a receiving country. This, in turn, may result in stronger communities and economic growth.

9.3.5 Limitations

The research undertaken in the course of the doctoral study has been sufficiently robust to underpin confidence in the findings and contributions reported here. However, there are limitations related to geographic scope of the study and the inclusion of participants. Geographically, the findings are based on libraries in England and Scotland, rather than all four constituent home countries of the UK. It is possible that findings related to the impact cultural factors may have on library use will be relevant outside of England and Scotland, but this is not assured. In addition, the study participants in the main data collection exercise were predominantly service providers without lived experience of forced migration. Had the empirical work not been undertaken during the pandemic lockdown periods, it would have been easier to recruit forced migrants to the study (see [Chapter 1.3](#)). The use of non-library service providers partially addressed the gap identified in [Chapter 2.7](#), related to the tendency of research of this nature to be approached from a perspective of libraries as service providers. The community validation was conducted to address the limitation of the lack of forced migrant voices in the two main data collection exercises. With a low number of participants in the community validation, however, conclusions from this element of the study should be regarded with a degree of caution.

9.4 Future work

The major contributions of the PhD work are novel, in that they address topics not undertaken in extant LIS literature, and significant for their identification of recommendations for practice and policy developments. There is further work to be done in order to extend the understanding of the relationship between culture and public library use. To this end, recommendations for future research on this topic are highlighted below.

- One of the major limitations of the current work was the reliance on the perceptions of service provider gatekeepers. Future research should be conducted directly with a large body of forced migrants.
- Research with a focus on the perspectives of forced migrants amongst a larger body of participants will allow for comparative analyses e.g., by country of origin.
- There is also a place for additional research on the role that public libraries play in the maintenance of connections with countries of origin.
- A major contribution of the current work was the consideration of service provider culture in addition to the culture of forced migrants. The dynamic between both sets of cultures is an additional area for future investigation.
- As the number of global migrants continues to rise, future research in additional regions (i.e., beyond the UK) would strengthen the value of the research presented in this thesis to generate practice and policy recommendations that have wider implications.

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Appendix A: Original research questions

Research question 1: How do forced migrants use public libraries during their period of residence in the UK?

Research question 2: What is the nature of the cultural factors that influence this public library use?

Appendix B: Initial codes of government document analysis

Initial Codes
Adjustments to Current Provision
Covid Specific (Subcode of Adjustments to Current Provision)
Asylum Process
Community (Local)
Community (Forced Migrant)
Criminal Justice Support
Different from Local Population
Diet (Subcode of Different from Local Population)
Document FOR Forced Migrants
Education
Employment
Equality
Expectations
Expectations of how Forced Migrants will act (Subcode of Expectations)
Experiences of Forced Migrants
Family Reunification
Family Services
Feedback Measures
Finances
Further Education
Give Agency
Health
Home Region Qualifications Vs Scottish
Housing
Integration
Language
Leisure
Library
Listed Organisations
Literacy
Digital Literacy (Subcode of Literacy)
Not Explicit
Official Policies
Poverty
Region of Origin
Religion
Resettlement Area
Social Services
Strain on Councils
Tailored Support

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Transportation
UK Law
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Violence from Local Communities
Volunteering
Vulnerability
Welcoming

Appendix C: Final codes of government document analysis

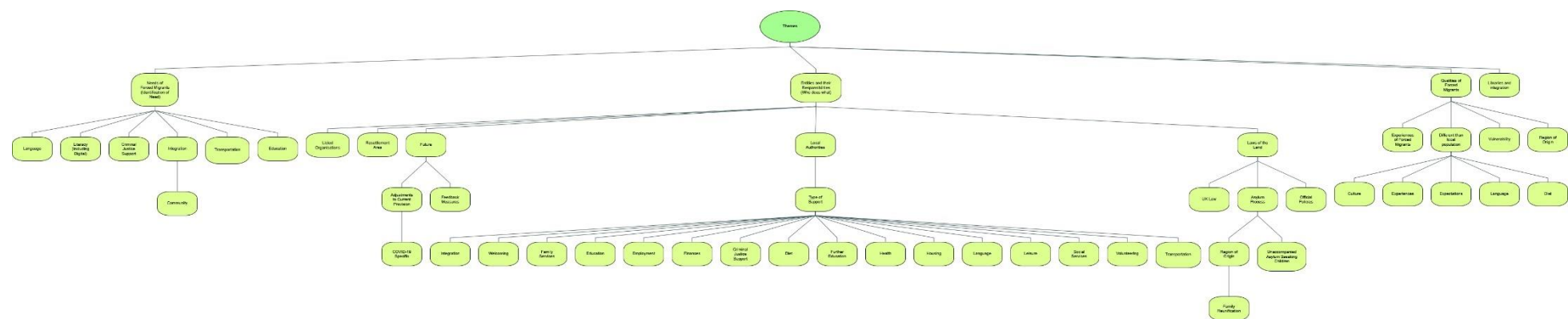
Final Codes
Adjustments to Current Provision
Covid Specific (Adjustments to Current Provision)
Asylum Process
Community
Criminal Justice Support
Diet
Different from Local Population
Document FOR Forced Migrants
Education
Employment
Equality
Expectations
Experiences of Forced Migrants
Family Reunification
Family Services
Feedback Measures
Finances
Further Education
Give Agency
Health
Home Region Qualifications Vs Scottish
Housing
Integration
Language
Leisure
Library
Listed Organisations
Literacy including Digital
Not Explicit
Official Policies
Poverty
Region of Origin
Religion
Resettlement Area
Social Services
Strain on Councils
Tailored Support
Transportation
UK Law
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

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Violence from Local Communities
Volunteering
Vulnerability
Welcoming

Appendix D: Mind map of government analysis finalised themes from NVivo



Appendix E: Gatekeeper interview recruitment email

Hello,

My name is Rachel Salzano and I am a PhD student at Edinburgh Napier University. My research topic is about the relationship between culture and public library use in forced migrants (refugees and people seeking asylum). I am hoping to work with both forced migrants and gatekeepers (people who work with and support forced migrants) and thought you and your team might be willing take part in gatekeeper interviews and to share information about my research with the forced migrants they support. I include a summary of my research below.

My PhD research is about how culture influences the use of public libraries by forced migrants. It is meant to help illuminate why certain resources are used in specific ways and whether they are actually the best resources to provide support for forced migrants or if they are just the next best option. The work is framed around the needs, requirements, thoughts, and experiences of forced migrants, rather than current public library provision.

The study is mostly being conducted online, with interviews taking place on Microsoft Teams or telephone. There are three branches of this research: interview with forced migrants; art exhibition with artwork from forced migrants; gatekeeper interviews with individuals who work with and/or support forced migrants.

For the interview, participants can contact [REDACTED] to express interest. Interviews will be conducted through video conferencing interviews, regular telephone interviews, or in person depending on participant comfort. Interviews will take approximately an hour to complete, and translators will be available if needed.

For the art exhibition, participants can submit a photograph or piece of artwork in any medium (if it is a physical medium such as crochet or sculpture that they would be unable to send via post, participants can take a photo of the piece and send me the photo) which represents why they use the public library. I will then work with participants to create a description to go along with the submission (preferably through some form of interview). The submissions will result in a public art exhibition -

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physically in Edinburgh and online - showcasing forced migrant voices (with prizes for the artwork and stories).

I am also interviewing individuals who work with or provide support for forced migrants. These interviews (via Microsoft Teams or telephone dependent on participant comfort) will be used to triangulate data gathered via other methods.

If you or anyone you who works/volunteers for (organisation name) is interested in participating in my gatekeeper interviews, they can contact me via email at

████████████████████ I've attached an information sheet to this email to provide you with some more information about the interview process. Please do let me know if you have any questions and/or would like some posters calling for participants.

Thank you,
Rachel Salzano (she/her/hers), PhD Student
School of Computing - Research Centre for Social Informatics
Edinburgh Napier University

Appendix F: List of organisations contacted

Name	Type of Gatekeeper	Notes
Potential participant	ESOL	Declined to participate
Aberdeenshire Libraries	Library	Contacted, no participants yet
Abraham Moss Library, Manchester	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Service Development Coordinator	Awaiting permission for participation from SLT; no permission granted
Participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Interviewed
Potential participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Refugee and Migration Programme Manager	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Library Staff	Interviewed
AMINA	Support Organisation	Declined to participate
Potential participant	Policy Maker	Declined to participate
Potential participant	Leith Central Community Council	Declined to participate
Participant	Digital Inclusion Officer	Interviewed
Potential participant	City of Sanctuary Arts Stream	Sharing the call, will introduce me to specific libraries at Libraries of Sanctuary event Nov. 17
Bearwood Action for Refugees	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Policy Officer COSLA	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Library Staff	Interviewed
CILIP	Library Organisation	Sharing the call, some recent interviews may have been the result
CILIPS	Library Organisation	Sharing the call, some recent interviews may have been the result
CLEAR Project Southampton	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Crofton Park Library, Lewisham	Library	Contacted, no participants yet
Deptford Library, Lewisham	Library	Contacted, no participants yet

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Downham Library, Lewisham	Library	Contacted, no participants yet
Dundee International Women's Centre	Support Organisation	Sharing the call (retweets), but no interview from volunteers/staff
Potential participant	Director of Refugees for Justice	Declined to participate.
Edinburgh Central Mosque	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Declined to participate
Potential participant	Leith Central Community Council	Declined to participate
Potential participant	Library Staff	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Forth Valley Welcome	Support Organisation	Declined to participate
Glasgow Women's Library	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Library Staff	Declined to participate
Participant	City of Sanctuary Coordinator	Chatted about ways she could help; she is connecting me with others she think might be interested; working on scheduling interview
Participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Interviewed
Potential participant	Executive Director of Edinburgh Interfaith Association	Responded to my email for more information, is looking into ways to help spread the word, but no interview
Potential participant	Works in UofE Edinburgh Global Department	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Library Supervisor	Declined to participate, sent me to Pam Horton.
Potential participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Declined to participate
Participant	Adult Education Coordinator	Withdrew data
Participant	Resettlement Coordinator	Interviewed
Potential participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Declined to participate
Potential participant	Library Staff	Contacted
Participant	Resettlement Coordinator	Interviewed
Potential participant	Library Staff	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Resettlement Coordinator	Interviewed

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Kingsheath Action for Refugees	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Kirklees Libraries	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Library of Birmingham	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Longsight Library and Learning Centre, Manchester	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Mhd Ziad Alissa, Mhd Rateb	Refugee	Contacted, yet to hear back.
MILK Café	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Learning and Employability Officer	Interviewed
Multicultural Family Base	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Multilingual Library Scotland	Support Organisation	Sharing the call (retweets), but no interview from volunteers/staff
Potential participant	Works with Syrian Futures	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Napier Friends	Support Organisation	Contacted, some responses from volunteers
Newcastle Libraries	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Library Staff	Contacted me via blog, responded via email, yet to hear back. Interviewed.
North City Library, Manchester	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Oldham Library and Lifelong Learning Centre, Manchester	Library	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Refugee Host	Contacted, yet to hear back.
PAFRAS (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers)	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Senior Library Supervisor	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Potential participant	Higher Up in Edinburgh Libraries	Has shared the call with some list-servs, no response on individuals to contact within own library system
Participant	Maryhill Integration Network	Interviewed
Potential participant	Library Staff	Contacted

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ReACT	Support Organisation	Declined to participate
Participant	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Interviewed
Refuweege	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Refugee Host	Interviewed
Saheliya	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Participant	Volunteer	Interviewed
Potential participant	City of Sanctuary Regional Coordinator	Declined to participate
Scottish Refugee Council	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
SLIC	Library Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Stirchley Library, Birmingham	Library	Because of lack of work over Covid-19 the library wasn't sure they would be able to help, but they sent on information of other organisations to contact. I responded saying that their insight could still be very valuable. Final response was that library staff still didn't feel as though they should participate, but a more "involved" library was also suggested as a contact.
Potential participant	Scottish Refugee Council Officer	Declined to participate.
Potential participant	ESOL	Contacted, yet to hear back.
Gatekeeper	Researcher With Forced Migrants	Interviewed
Thimblemill Library, Sandwell	Library	Advised to contact Julie McKirdy
The Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group	Support Organisation	Contacted, yet to hear back.
The Welcoming	Support Organisation	Sharing the call (retweets), but no interview from volunteers/staff
UNESCO-RILA	Research Organisation	Sharing the call, some interviews from this sharing
University of Edinburgh Refugee Support Team	Support Organisation	Responded to my email for more information, is sharing the call to students and staff but no interview yet

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Gatekeeper	Resettlement Coordinator	Interviewed
WHALEArts	Support Organisation	Sharing posters; I applied for a volunteer position but have not heard back, no interviews

Appendix G: Information sheet and consent form for gatekeeper interviews

Participant information sheet

The Effect of Culture on Public Library Resource Use Interview

The project aims to explore the ways refugees and people seeking asylum use resources provided in public libraries during their stay in the United Kingdom. Specifically, the project is focussed on gaining more information about the relationship between cultural background and public library use by refugees and people seeking asylum. This is being achieved by speaking with individuals who support refugees and people seeking asylum.

During an interview taking no longer than one hour, participants will be encouraged to discuss and explain what influences their use of public library resources, with special attention given to cultural factors. These interviews will be recorded, with findings used to inform further research and will be published in suitable conference proceedings.

All participants will be given an opportunity to screen their contribution and afforded the chance to request edit, anonymisation or removal before publication. All data collected will be stored in a secure manner and deleted when no longer required, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Edinburgh Napier University's procedures, with all data anonymised and pseudonyms used, where applicable, to prevent participant identification. Interviews will be transcribed via a professional transcription service then the audio recordings destroyed. Participation is always voluntary, and you are free to request amendment or withdraw consent at any time without consequence.

This information sheet is your copy should you wish to retain it.

If you have any questions regarding this interview, future workshops, future research participation, the published works or any other question on this topic, please contact me at [REDACTED].

The Effect of Culture on Public Library Use Interview Consent Form

Edinburgh Napier University requires that all persons who participate in research studies give their written consent to do so. Please read the following and sign it if you agree with what it says.

1. I freely and voluntarily consent to be a participant in this research to be conducted by Rachel Salzano, who is a PhD Student in the Edinburgh Napier School of Computing.
2. I have been informed of the broad goal of this research study. I have been told what is expected of me and that the interview should take no longer than one hour to complete.
3. I have been told that my responses will be anonymised. My name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in any report subsequently produced by the researcher. I have been told that these data will be analysed within the School of Computing (though transcription may be outsourced to a trusted professional service). I have been told that these data may be submitted for publication.
4. I have been informed of my rights to request edit, anonymization or removal of my contributions to any and all publication.
5. I also understand that if at any time during the session, if I feel unable or unwilling to continue, I am free to leave. That is, my participation in this study is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw from it at any time without negative consequences.
6. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
7. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the interview, or future research and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
8. I have read and understand the above and consent to participate in this study. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to keep a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature

Date

The influence of culture on perceived use of public libraries by forced migrants in Scotland and England

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I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the respondent has consented to participate. Furthermore, I will retain one copy of the informed consent form for my records.

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix H: Interview schedule for non-library staff gatekeepers

1. How do you define culture?
2. What is your role in your work with forced migrants here in the UK? (e.g., through your work organisation – if so, what is this organisation; individually through volunteer work – if so, what is this volunteer work)
3. Can you describe how you/your organisation most often interacts with forced migrant populations?
4. In your organisation, what groups are the forced migrants you work with from?
 - a. *Do you notice any differences between these groups when it comes to using certain resources?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence these differences?*
5. Are interpreters ever used in your work with forced migrants?
 - a. *Does comfort with interpreters influence how forced migrants use your services?*
 - b. *Do you think it influences how forced migrants use other services?*
 - c. *Have you noticed cultural background influencing whether forced migrants are comfortable with the interpreters you use?*
6. What sort of services does your organisation provide forced migrants?
 - a. *What public services do you know that the forced migrants engage with?*
 - b. *How frequently do they engage with these services?*
 - c. *Why do they engage with those services?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence this engagement?*
 - d. *Are there any services that forced migrants engage with less? Why?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence this engagement?*
 - e. *Are there any changes with how forced migrants engage with these services? Why?*
7. What services and resources do forced migrants request/look for you and your organisation that you don't already provide?
 - a. *Why do they request these?*
 - b. *In what ways does cultural background influence these requests?*
 - c. *What organisations might be able to provide these services/resources*
 - i. *Do you partner with any of these organisations?*
8. What other organisations does your organisation partner with?
9. Do you ever refer forced migrants to the public library?
 - a. *Why or why not?*
 - b. *What public library services do forced migrants use? Why?*
 - i. *Are there differences in this use by difference groups of migrants?*

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- ii. *In what ways does cultural background influence this use?*
 - c. *How frequently do forced migrants use the public library?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence this frequency?*
 - d. *How does forced migrant engagement with public library services change over time? Why?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence these changes?*
 - e. *Do forced migrants seem happy with what the public library offers?*
 - i. *In what ways do you think cultural background influences these opinions?*
- 10.** *Have you noticed any systems or processes of your service that have resulted in discomfort for the forced migrants with whom you've worked?*
 - a. *How have you mitigated discomfort in these situations?*
 - b. *Do you think there are cultural reasons for this discomfort?*
- 11.** *How does your organisation get feedback from the forced migrants you serve?*
 - a. *If you do not currently gather feedback, why don't you?*
 - b. *What type of feedback have you received?*
 - i. *In what ways do you think cultural background influences this feedback?*
- 12.** *How are you staying in communication with forced migrants?*
 - a. *Has this changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic?*
 - b. *What devices do forced migrants prefer to use for communication?*
 - c. *In what ways do you think cultural background might influence the reason for using these devices?*
- 13.** *How have your services and roles changed during the Covid-19 pandemic?*
 - a. *Why do you think they've changed?*
 - b. *Will these changes continue after restrictions ease?*
 - c. *Have forced migrants expressed happiness or unhappiness with the changes?*
 - i. *In what ways do you think cultural background influences these feelings?*

Appendix I: Interview schedule for library staff gatekeepers

1. What is your role in your work with forced migrants here in the UK?
2. Can you describe how you/the public library most often interact with forced migrant populations?
3. In the public library, where are the groups of forced migrants that you work with from?
 - a. *Do you notice any differences between these groups when it comes to using certain resources?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence these differences?*
4. Are interpreters ever used in your work with forced migrants?
 - a. *Does comfort with interpreters affect how forced migrants use your services?*
 - b. *Have you noticed cultural background influencing whether forced migrants are comfortable with the interpreters you use?*
5. What sort of services does the public library provide forced migrants?
 - a. *What services do you know that the forced migrants engage with?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence this engagement?*
 - b. *How frequently do they engage with these services?*
 - c. *Why do they engage with those services?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence this engagement?*
 - d. *Are there any services that forced migrants engage with less? Why?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence this engagement?*
 - e. *Do forced migrants engage with these services differently over time? Why?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence these changes?*
6. What services and resources do forced migrants request/look for from the public library that aren't already provided?
 - a. *Why do they request these?*
 - i. *In what ways does cultural background influence these requests?*
7. What other organisations does the public library work with to serve forced migrants?
8. Have you noticed any systems or processes of your service that have resulted in discomfort for the forced migrants with whom you've worked?
 - a. *How have you mitigated discomfort in these situations?*
 - b. *In what ways do you think cultural background influence this discomfort?*

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- 9.** How does your organisation get feedback from the forced migrants you serve?
 - a. *If you do not currently gather feedback, why don't you?*
 - b. *What type of feedback have you received from forced migrants?*
 - i. *In what ways do you think cultural background influences this feedback?*
- 10.** How do you communicate with forced migrants?
 - a. *Has this changed due to the Covid-19 pandemic?*
 - b. *What devices do forced migrants prefer to use for communication?*
 - i. *In what ways do you think cultural background might influence the reason for using these devices?*
- 11.** How have your services and roles changed during the Covid-19 pandemic?
 - a. *Why do you think they've changed?*
 - b. *Will these changes continue after restrictions ease?*
 - c. *Have forced migrants expressed happiness or unhappiness with the changes?*
 - d. *In what ways do you think cultural background influences these feelings?*

Appendix J: Example of coded text of gatekeeper interviews

What For_Space x

<Files\\2106081730SC> - \$ 1 reference coded [0.90% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.90% Coverage

do know that the Syrian family use it. Mainly as a meeting place for somewhere to go and meet with a volunteer to help with homework. But also the little girl did the library reading challenge or whatever. It's called the big summer read or something so that- so she was linked to it because of that last year as well.

<Files\\21061013IS> - \$ 1 reference coded [0.26% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.26% Coverage

Well, room hire was a useful one. The- yeah, you know some of them that were religious could actually meet and just have a little prayer meeting in hours.

<Files\\21131214NC> - \$ 5 references coded [3.11% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.62% Coverage

Uhm, we host weekly a wonderful group called the Network of International Women and their women from all from all different cultures and backgrounds. And- and they meet with us and they sew and make and they meet once a week.

Reference 2 - 0.53% Coverage

Plus the services that are really popular as well are things where we- we, you know, have groups meeting so it's supporting them, socialising, practicing English, uhm, meeting other people.

Summary Reference Text

- What For_ESOL
- What For_Books
- Resettlement Officer
- What For_Community
- Third Sector Organisation
- Space
- Coding Density
- Library Staff

In Codes Code to Enter code name (CTRL+Q)

RS 17 Items Files: 17 References: 39 Unfiltered 100%

Appendix K: Initial codes for gatekeeper interviews

Code	
Accessibility_Distance	Books (subcode more use)
Accessibility_Time	Computers (subcode more use)
Age	ESOL (subcode more use)
Age of Users	Online Tasks (subcode more use)
Assumption There Will be Help	Periodicals (subcode more use)
Awareness of Library	Space (subcode more use)
Barrier Solution	Travel Info (subcode more use)
Barriers	Wi-Fi (subcode more use)
Bureaucracy	Mother Language
Change Over Time	Motivation
Communication Patterns	Citizenship (subcode motivation)
Community Activities_From Library	Connecting to Homeland (subcode motivation)
Community Activities_Non-Library	Cost (subcode motivation)
Community Focused Culture	Do I See Myself (subcode motivation)
Concept of Culture	For Children (subcode motivation)
Confidence	Job Search (subcode motivation)
Contact With Library	Language (subcode motivation)
Council Staff	Non-Public-Library Use
Country of Origin	Perception of UK
COVID-19	Power Imbalance
Differences Between Group Support	Priorities
Digital Literacy	Rather Just Buy Books
Digital Literacy_Non-Library	Reading Culture
Distrust of System	Relation Vs Transaction
Education Level	Religion
ESOL_Non-Libraries	Reluctance to 'bother'
Experience of Libraries in Country of Origin	Requests_Library
Feedback	Requests_Non-Library
For Whom	Researcher
For Whom_Education Level	Resettlement Officer
For Whom_Gender	School-University
Frequency	Scotland vs England
Gender_Not For Whom	Shaping Perspectives
Integration	Static Content
Introduction to Library	Third Sector Organisation
Keen Levels	Trust
Language	Volunteer
Less Use	Welcoming
Computers (subcode less use)	What For_Accreditation

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Printing (subcode less use)	What For_ Books
Libraries Are Imposing	What For_ Community
Library Provision	What For_ Digital Resources
Library Staff	What For_ ESOL
Literacy	What For_ Leisure
Lived-Experience	What For_ Library Perspective
Maintaining Culture of Origin	What For_ Space
Migration Journey	What Is Considered Information
More Use	Where is Information

Appendix L: Final codes of gatekeeper interviews

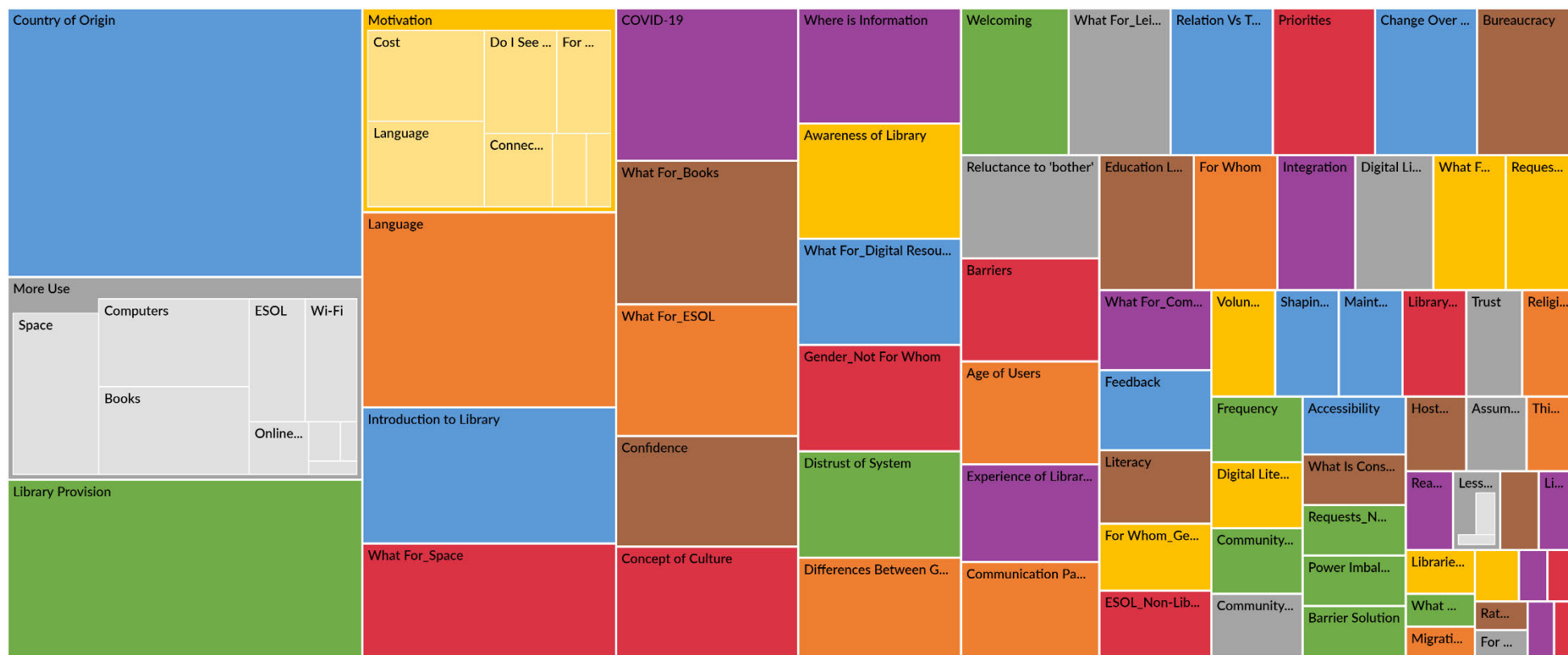
Code	
Accessibility	ESOL (subcode more use)
Age of Users	Online Tasks (subcode more use)
Awareness of Library	Periodicals (subcode more use)
Barriers	Printing (subcode more use)
Bureaucracy	Space (subcode more use)
Change Over Time	Travel Info (subcode more use)
Communication Patterns	Wi-Fi (subcode more use)
Community Activities_From Library	Motivation
Community Activities_Non-Library	Citizenship (subcode motivation)
Community Focused Culture	Connecting to Homeland (subcode motivation)
Concept of Culture	Cost (subcode motivation)
Confidence	Do I See Myself (subcode motivation)
Council Staff	For Children (subcode motivation)
Country of Origin	Job Search (subcode motivation)
COVID-19	Language (subcode motivation)
Differences Between Group Support	Power Imbalance
Digital Literacy	Priorities
Digital Literacy_Non-Library	Rather Just Buy Books
Distrust of System	Reading Culture
Education Level	Relation Vs Transaction
ESOL_Non-Libraries	Religion
Experience of Libraries in Country of Origin	Reluctance to 'bother'
Feedback	Requests_Library
For Whom	Requests_Non-Library
Frequency	Researcher
Gender_Not For Whom	Resettlement Officer
Host Culture	School-University
Integration	Shaping Perspectives
Introduction to Library	Third Sector Organisation
Language	Trust
Less Use	Volunteer
Computers (subcode less use)	Welcoming
Printing (subcode less use)	What For_Accreditation
Libraries Are Imposing	What For_Books
Library Provision	What For_Community
Library Staff	What For_Digital Resources
Literacy	What For_ESOL
Lived-Experience	What For_Leisure
Maintaining Culture of Origin	What For_Library Perspective
Migration Journey	What For_School
More Use	What For_Space

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Books (subcode more use)	What Is Considered Information
Computers (subcode more use)	Where is Information

Appendix M: NVivo hierarchy chart example for gatekeeper interviews



Appendix N: Information sheet and consent form for community validation

Participant information sheet

The Effect of Culture on Public Library Resource Use Interview

The project aims to explore the ways refugees and people seeking asylum use resources provided in public libraries during their stay in the United Kingdom. Specifically, the project is focussed on gaining more information about the relationship between cultural background and public library use by refugees and people seeking asylum. Participants will be adults older than 18 years of age who are refugees or people seeking asylum who live in the United Kingdom.

During an interview lasting approximately one hour, participants will be encouraged to discuss and explain their relationship with public libraries and public library resources, with special attention given to cultural factors. Questions will be based on the results of previous interviews with individuals who work or volunteer to support people seeking asylum.

These interviews will be recorded, with findings used to inform further research and will be published in suitable conference proceedings and journals. All participants will be given an opportunity to screen their contribution and afforded the chance to request edit, anonymisation or removal before publication. All data collected will be stored in a secure manner and deleted when no longer required, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Edinburgh Napier University's procedures, with all data anonymised and pseudonyms used, where applicable, to prevent participant identification. Interviews will be transcribed then the audio/video recordings destroyed.

Participation is always voluntary, and you are free to request amendment or withdraw consent at any time without consequence. There will be no negative effects if you choose not to take part or leave the study. This information sheet is your copy should you wish to retain it.

If you have any questions regarding this interview, future research participation, the published works or any other question on this topic, please contact me at r.salzano@napier.ac.uk.

The Effect of Culture on Public Library Use Interview Consent Form

Edinburgh Napier University requires that all persons who participate in research studies give their written consent to do so. Please read the following and sign it if you agree with what it says.

1. I freely and voluntarily consent to be a participant in this research to be conducted by Rachel Salzano, who is a PhD Student in the Edinburgh Napier School of Computing.
2. I have been informed of the broad goal of this research study. I have been told what is expected of me and that the interview should take approximately one hour to complete. I have been told that the interview will be recorded, and once transcribed the audio/video recording will be destroyed.
3. I have been told that my responses will be anonymised. My name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in any report subsequently produced by the researcher. I have been told that these data will be analysed within the School of Computing (though transcription may be outsourced to a trusted professional service). I have been told that these data may be submitted for publication.
4. I have been informed of my rights to request edit, anonymization or removal of my contributions to any and all publication.
5. I also understand that if at any time during the session, if I feel unable or unwilling to continue, I am free to leave. That is, my participation in this study is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw from it at any time without negative consequences.
6. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
7. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the interview, or future research and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
8. I have read and understand the above and consent to participate in this study. My signature is not a waiver of any legal rights. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to keep a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature

Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the respondent has consented to participate. Furthermore, I will retain one copy of the informed consent form for my records.

*The influence of culture on perceived use of public libraries by forced migrants in
Scotland and England*

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Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix O: Interview schedule for community validation

What does the term culture mean to you?

How would you describe your own culture?

Are there any aspects of your own culture that you think affect whether you use the public library?

Are there any aspects of your own culture that you think might affect whether others use the public library?

I interviewed people who work with and support refugees. I asked them about their perspectives on how the people they support use public libraries. I also asked them about their perspectives on why the people they support use public libraries in specific ways. From their answers, I found the following themes. For each theme, can you speak about your thoughts about the theme and whether you think it is accurate?

Public libraries are for leisure but refugees do not have leisure time.

Public libraries are part of the “system” but refugees don’t trust the system.

Public libraries hold information but are not the main source of information for refugees.

Public libraries are meant to serve all members of a community, but refugees do not have confidence that they can use the library.

Public libraries have certain levels of bureaucracy, refugees may find this off-putting.

Public libraries have physical buildings that hold resources and refugees use these spaces.

Public libraries hold resources that support connections and forced migrants use these resources to connect with their community.