Dissertations   Theses and Dissertations

10-16-2023

Barriers and Facilitators to Library Social Work Practice in the United States: A Mixed-Methods Study

Margaret Ann Paauw
Loyola University of Chicago Graduate School

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss

Part of the Social Work Commons

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO LIBRARY SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN THE

UNITED STATES: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

BY

MARGARET ANN PAAUW

CHICAGO, IL

AUGUST 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my family, friends, colleagues, peers, and the faculty at Loyola for all their support and encouragement throughout this process. I would not have been able to finish this program without you all. Daniel, you have always been so supportive of my life decisions no matter what, and for that, I am very grateful. You've never once doubted or discouraged me, and I am so lucky to have you. To my parents, thank you for being with me on this journey and supporting me in every way possible. I can't even begin to express my gratitude to you, Elk. You have pushed me to be a better academic, ally, and person.

To my coworkers and supervisors at AMITA and Thresholds, thank you for providing me with the flexibility to do this work while pursuing this degree. I am also particularly grateful to all my library social work colleagues across the country who have taught me so much about community practice and provided all of your thoughtful insights into this research. I feel so privileged to have worked alongside you in this emerging field. Thank you to Sarah Johnson and Dr. Mark Geisler for inviting me to work with you on two outstanding and significant research projects on library social work. I also wanted to thank my cohort at Loyola for being so supportive and challenging me to be the best social worker and researcher I can be. Since day one, I have been in awe of each of your strengths and interests, and I can't wait to see what your future holds.

Thank you to all the staff and faculty at Loyola. Thank you to my dissertation committee for providing me with incredibly insightful feedback and helping direct this research. I walked

away from every conversation with a thousand new ideas and perspectives I had not previously considered. And, of course, Dr. Singer. You have been with me since before I technically started this program and have made me feel valued every step of the way. I am so grateful for your mentorship, advice, guidance, and friendship throughout these past five years. Thank you for taking me under your wing and being so committed to my success.

Lastly, I wanted to thank Dr. Vanessa Vorhies-Klodnick. I went to you to ask about your experience as a Ph.D. student when you were teaching my research course during my MSW, and you were so open and willing to answer any questions I had. Since then, our paths have crossed many more times, including you generously providing me with research opportunities. I am profoundly grateful for your mentorship over the past eight years. You have always given it to me real, and that has been worth more than gold. You have also shown me the importance of mentorship, which has prompted my dedication to step up as a mentor to my own students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Library social work is an emerging field where libraries and social workers partner to meet the psychosocial needs of library patrons. With libraries being situated as the last truly public spaces, they are positioned as centers of communities and have called upon the field of social work to assist in navigating the changing landscape of their patrons. Library social work has been around for over ten years, yet research has struggled to keep up with practice. This study was the first nationwide study on library social work from the perspective of the people who are doing the work: library social workers. This research explored barriers and facilitators to practice as well as insights on developing, implementing, and practicing library social work.

Methods: This study utilized a mixed methods design. The quantitative survey focused on practitioner professional background, practice setting, practice tasks and duties, and experience in practice setting. The survey results were used to guide the semi-structured qualitative interviews which further explored the experiences of social workers practicing in libraries. Participants consisted of social workers practicing in libraries in the United States and were recruited through various professional networking sources.

Results: Thirty-nine respondents completed the survey. Participants reported providing a mix of micro-level direct services to library patrons, mezzo-level collaboration with community resources, and macro-level local and state-level policies that affected their patrons and the programs themselves. Fourteen library social workers participated in follow-up interviews where

participants discussed issues with role clarity, differences in professional philosophies among librarians and social workers, and a current trend in library social work programs ending due to issues surrounding inflated expectations of the work social workers can do within these settings.

Conclusions and Implications: The participants in this study provided deep insight into the barriers and facilitators of library social work. In its current state, the field of library social work is not an interdisciplinary practice. Libraries act as host sites for social work practice to occur under the constraints and demands of public libraries without full consideration of professional social work values and ethics. Because of this tension, library social work programs are ending. Some endings are due to social workers resigning or libraries feeling a sense of "buyer's remorse" as social workers did not perform in the ways they anticipated due to a lack of understanding of the profession of social work. It is recommended that libraries become fully informed about the profession of social work, including an understanding of the importance of supervision, licensure, liability, and continuing education, before seeking out such partnerships. Future research should expand data collection to include librarians and library administrators to develop a multi-dimensional understanding of the barriers and facilitators to achieving the goal of library social work as a truly interdisciplinary practice.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

Though libraries have long served the public, in recent years they have become

positioned as some of the last truly public spaces. Libraries are seen as essential institutions in

communities, offering a wide variety of services to the public. They are even considered

radically inclusive spaces as they remain open to every member of the public regardless of

background or positioning (Huzar, 2014). Library goals and functions have historically remained

the same: to provide educational materials and opportunities to the public. However, over the

past few decades, libraries have begun occupying a critical position as hubs for navigating the

increasingly complex social needs of their patrons. To continue to successfully meet the needs of

their communities, the field of library science has called upon the field of social work for

collaboration (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019; Luo et al., 2012).

Public libraries in the United States are longstanding public establishments, almost 300

years old, initially created to promote literacy among community members (Wiegand, 2015).

These institutions are often identified as fundamental in a democratic society (Wiegand, 2015). It

is said that the "three most important documents that a free society gives are a birth certificate, a

passport, and a library card" (p. 1). Approximately 96% of Americans live in an area that has a

public library system and 65% use these public libraries on a regular basis (Wiegand, 2015; Luo

et al., 2012), resulting in American public libraries seeing around 1.5 billion visits each year

(Barclay, 2017). The American Library Association's most recent annual special report details

how "visiting the library is the most common cultural activity Americans engage in by far," beating out enjoying live music, theater, national parks, and museums (American Library Association, 2020, p. 8). Considering such a legacy, it is clear that libraries remain important to Americans.

Librarians have long considered the "blurring line" between their profession and that of social work, though the practice of library social work is relatively new (Cathcart, 2008; Childers, 1984). For decades, librarians have been on the frontlines of their communities, working with progressively complex patron needs. In the field of social work, practitioners commonly profess the importance of meeting clients where they are at. As the library is one of the most popular communal spaces across the U.S., in this case, library social workers are literally going to where their clients are (ALA, 2020).

Though libraries have long attended to community needs, the first formal library social work program in the United States was established in 2009 in California (Provence, 2019; Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). After this first partnership, other library social work programs began to develop across the country. Within the course of a decade, the field has rapidly grown to approximately 60 full time social workers and 100 social work interns (Provence, 2019; Whole Person Librarianship Map, 2023). In the 2020 annual special report by the American Library Association, the library social work task force was recognized as a standout innovation (ALA, 2020).

Library social work is defined as any platform in which social workers and librarians collaborate on patron services and library practices (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). Other terms found in practice and the literature to describe library social work include "library social work partnerships," "social workers in the library" (SWITL), and "library social work programs"

(Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). The differences in terms exist as library social work is uniquely

adapted to each individual branch, library system, or community. A library social work program

could be used to reference a library social worker who is full-time in the branch primarily

providing individual case management, whereas a "partnership" could be a library social worker

providing consultation to libraries on best practices. Lastly, library social work interns are

common in the field as library programs start out with a pilot or test run through collaboration

with a university, usually due to funding constraints or the library wanting a trial period before

committing to a long-term structure (Johnson, 2019).

Further, the structure and model of library social work programs can vary not just by

community needs but also funding. Library social work programs can consist of full-time social

workers hired through the library itself or partnered with local government or social service

agencies. Often, full-time social workers will be the only social worker at a library (Schweizer,

2018). Other programs have bachelor's or master's level interns from a school of social work. In

these programs, interns are usually provided through other organizations where they receive

supervision, so several student interns can be placed in a single library concurrently (Luo et al.,

2012). A handful of library social work programs have started out with interns at the site, and

with additional resource allocation are able to secure a full-timer. Further, due to high need and

limited funding, master's-level social work field placement sites continue to make up a

significant amount of library social work partnerships (Whole Person Librarianship Map, 2023).

The practice of library social work is often a combination of micro, mezzo, and macro

practice (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). The most common task of library social workers is micro,

where social work student interns or licensed clinical practitioners provide linkage and referrals

to library patrons. Mezzo and macro practice are also usually incorporated into library social

work practice on the institutional level. For example, it is common that a library social worker will provide trainings or workshops to library staff and the public on mental health. Library social workers also partner with local community-based organizations to network and build relationships so that patron referral is more cohesive, thus the library social worker becomes a community fixture. An example of common macro library social work practice involves working with library administration to make system-wide changes in attempts to embed trauma-informed care into library practices. The level of practice changes to meet the needs of the community and is the largest determinant of which level a library social worker practices. The positionality of the practitioner as well as resources available for these partnerships also impacts at which level the library social worker practices (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019).

Problem Formulation

Major issues in library social work include: (1) a limited understanding and specification of this innovative new practice despite its continued growth in the U.S.; (2) a limited understanding of, and lack of dedicated resources, to address contextual, social, and individual facilitators and barriers to library social work; and (3) a lack of conceptual development in regard to library social work impact and associated research of library social work practice impact. In-depth mixed-methods examination of library social work practice is necessary. First, without clear documentation of positive outcomes, it will remain difficult for libraries and communities to secure funding for continued social worker integration into library settings. Public and private funding requires evidence that this novel, community-based public health approach indeed is feasible and impactful. Second, without clear guidance on library social work best practices and policies, there is increased chance that limited guidance in the literature will be given regarding programs in development. For newer partnerships or places looking to start a

program, and even for established programs, this guidance is crucial, and could be more effective and efficient in guiding program development and service delivery. Best practices should also not be a mystery. It is critical that practitioner voices and insights are heard. This research can guide best practices, including barriers and facilitators, which are discussed in the context of the research question hence.

Statement of Positionality

My position as a former library social worker is important to consider within the context of this research. Because this research operates under the critical realist paradigm (discussed below) where both mind-independent and socially constructed realities exist, it is understood that my position has impacted this research (Baert, 2005). However, this research is not solely based on my personal realities. Throughout this study, I have made a deliberate effort to tease out which experiences were my own and which were those of my research participants through reflective practices and constantly revisiting the data to confirm its presence in any statements. My personal and professional experiences fueled my interest in this area. My belief in the potential of library social work to address people's needs influenced my desire to learn about and document other library social workers' experiences and how those experiences varied from my own. Since 2018 I have gathered anecdotal evidence from social work library colleagues about what made library social work easier and harder. But I knew that I needed to hear from library social workers I didn't know. Further, I wanted to capture these experiences in more ways than just the anecdotal conversations I had been engaging in over the course of the last several years practicing as a library social worker. Therefore, in order to capture those experiences, I made efforts to elevate the voices of the research participants throughout the data collection and analysis processes. These efforts included reflecting on each code or quotation to ask myself how

and where this was represented in the data to make sure it was not my own experience. I only included data that was clearly represented by study participants and identified as important to them. There were some things that participants identified as barriers or facilitators that differed from my experience, and some that I disagreed with. In the spirit of critical realism and research ethics, I presented those voices and findings as reflections of my participant's realities. Though I waited to collect my data until I was no longer a library social worker, I found that my biases came out during the data collection and analysis. These biases included feelings of frustration and sadness about my own program ending, and pride in the work I did in the library. In an effort to moderate my biases, I enlisted a doctoral student in my cohort who is not a library social worker to independently code interviews (described in more detail in the Methods section). This process helped me to recognize places where my worldview was obscuring the voices of my participants.

I consider this dissertation to be practice research. I am a former library social worker who wanted to engage other library social workers in a rigorous empirical exploration of the barriers and facilitators to library social work. Practice research in social work consists of a practitioner being involved in research on their practice with the goal of informing and improving practice (Uggerhøj, 2011). I found it important, and congruent with critical realism, to bring in the practice experiences of the researcher (myself) to inform this study. I incorporated the practice wisdom I had acquired into this research. Practice wisdom is discussed frequently in social work education and is defined as practice approaches that are based on or incorporate previous professional and personal experiences (DeRoos, 1990). The practice wisdom I accrued throughout my time as a library social worker prepared me to be able to engage in this research in a unique way. Further, as there is almost no "best practice" in the field of library social work,

practice wisdom is something that I relied on and found important as a library social work practitioner. This dissertation study provides insight into the need for a guide to best practices in this field and is a first step in establishing such practices.

Research Questions and Rationale

This dissertation is the first national study of library social work and aims to deepen our understanding of what current library social work practice looks like in the U.S. and to illuminate the barriers and facilitators to successful library social work implementation. This study leverages the perspectives and voices of people doing the work in real time: library social workers. This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics, practices, and experiences of library social workers across the United States?

   a. What are the barriers to developing, implementing, and practicing library social work?

   b. What are the facilitators to developing, implementing, and practicing library social work?

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature Review Overview

This literature review provides a synthesis of literature on library social work

partnerships, programs, and history. Upon gaining an understanding of what is known, a gap in

the literature can be identified to provide future implications for research (Fink, 2014). Literature

search processes consisted of the following databases: JSTOR, EBSCO, Academic Search

Complete, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Keywords included: library social work, social worker

in the library, library AND social work, libraries AND social work, and libraries AND social

work OR social worker. To identify all relevant peer-reviewed and academic scholarship on

library social work, there were no limits on date of publication. However, this literature review

did not include any grey area data, such as news articles or website materials as those materials

were too specific to individual programs. In addition, a scoping review that included grey

literature is included in this literature review. This search yielded 41 publications with 21 peer-

reviewed journal articles, and one book. Scholarship in this area was primarily in social work,

although approximately half of the articles were published in library journals. Currently, the

literature on library social work consists of peer-reviewed journal articles, a thesis, and a single

book. The authors of these studies were a blend of librarians and social workers with almost half

of the articles published in library science journals and the other half in social work journals.

The literature review section of this dissertation will begin with providing a historical

overview of how libraries and social work have come partnered. Next, this section provides a

brief summary of the sole book on library social work: *Whole Person Librarianship* (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019) as well as a summary of a scoping review on literature on library social work (Lee et al., 2022). The next portion of the literature review section is divided into themes and will cover public libraries creating social capital, social workers' roles and program structure, the notion of care versus concern, patron populations and needs, and social justice in the library. Lastly, this study's meta theory and theoretical formulation will be explored through critical realism and ecological systems theory.

Historical Overview

In 1982, Beagle and Lacy first identified the intersection of library sciences and social work, highlighting the evolving role of librarians in Information & Referral (I&R) services (Beagle & Lacy, 1982). I&R, a component of the reference section, involves directing patrons to local community resources such as social services. Childers (1984) later echoed this sentiment, observing a shift from educational inquiries to social service-related referrals. These ideas persisted and expanded. Cathcart (2008) wrote about the "blurring line" between library sciences and social work. Westbrook (2015) noted that librarians had experienced an increase in the number of patrons asking about social services and presenting with emotional crises. Further, they noted the tension within the profession between those who believe that librarians should solely engage in traditional library tasks and those who advocate for librarians to connect patrons to community resources (Westbrook, 2015).

The first library social work publication was a program evaluation of the partnership between King Library, San Jose University, and NASW (Luo et al., 2015). Volunteer social workers provided services for two hours once or twice a month. Social work volunteers provided resources linkage and referral consultations to library patrons. Strengths of the program included

the location of the patron meetings and the system for screening patrons. Yet, Luo and colleagues (2015) noted the following areas that needed improvement: (a) promotion of the library social work program, (b) awareness of the program among staff, (c) program availability, and (d) peer support.

Whole Person Librarianship Book

The first (and as of this writing, the only) book on library social work, entitled *Whole Person Librarianship,* was published by a social worker and a librarian (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). The intent of this book was to provide information to libraries seeking to start a social work program or incorporate social work approaches to navigating patron situations. This work outlined library social work programs from across the country in a case study format to provide information about how library social work is practiced. It also acted as a helpful resource for new library social workers looking to understand more about the practice. Zettervall and Nienow point out the similarities in both professions' ethics regarding privacy, accessibility, self-determination, as well as social justice.

The introduction provides information about the history of library social work, starting out with the first program in 2009 in California. Statistics surrounding the prevalence of libraries in the United States were provided: "there are more libraries than McDonald's in the United States" (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019, p. 3). Library and social work statistics surrounding gender was also examined providing information that both fields are predominantly made up of women. Lastly, this section goes over intersecting professional values between librarians and social workers which are identified as: service, privacy and confidentiality, access to information, respect for rights, professional skills and integrity, and social justice.

The first chapter discusses the experience of the librarian author within the context of how librarianship has changed to meet the needs of its patrons. This chapter also explains that the authors are not saying that librarians should be social workers but there are social work practices that can be useful to them in their roles such as an understanding of the person-in-environment perspective. The second chapter explores the different types of partnerships that could potentially exist in libraries, using one case study as an example. This chapter also discusses things to consider in the sustainability of these programs such as space and funding. The next chapter touches on the work of library social work interns, which most social work studies focus on as is shown in this literature review section as well. The fourth chapter goes over full-time library social workers guided by the example of the San Francisco Public Library social work program. This example identifies micro as outreach and crisis management, mezzo as community connections and case referrals, and macro as systemic change as practice areas in this library social work program. This chapter also briefly suggests other things to consider based off this case study: logistics of hiring, programmatic data collection, onboarding, boundary setting, supporting the social worker, and supervision. Chapters five and six provide two other case studies presenting examples of program advocacy, program sustainability, cultural humility considerations, and definitions of reflective practice. Lastly, the conclusion of this book discusses implications for the future, the potential dynamic of libraries as host settings, and other professional resources.

Though *Whole Person Librarianship* (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019) covers many aspects of library social work practice, it is presented in a conceptual manner. The book does include case studies, but they loosely guide only some of the sections of this book. This dissertation research seeks to corroborate some of these reported phenomena through a mixed methods

design and further explore in-depth the experiences of library social workers that this book and previous research has been unable to capture.

Scoping Review

Though this study's literature review did not examine any grey literature, a scoping review of library social work in the U.S. was conducted in 2022, and included literature from journals, conferences, dissertations, and both print and web-based news articles (Lee et al., 2022); 53 items were identified and utilized in this scoping review, with 18 being categorized as academic and the rest as grey literature. The authors discussed how public libraries are an excellent setting to provide social services to vulnerable and peripheral community members. The authors found that partnerships between libraries and social work have significantly and quickly expanded since 2015. The study also found that social workers in libraries consisted of either social workers or social work interns who interfaced with patrons directly, provided training to staff, and acted as a liaison between libraries and community-based organizations.

Themes

Five themes emerged from this literature review: public libraries creating social capital, social workers' roles and program structure, the notion of care versus concern, patron populations and needs, and social justice in the library.

Public Libraries and Social Capital

As 21st-century society changes, so do public libraries in order to cater to the needs of their communities. The concept of social capital has become more relevant as library science has found itself in a unique position to provide patrons with opportunities associated with generating said capital, such as providing spaces to collaborate with others to address personal and community issues (Kranich, 2021). Social capital is considered a valuable community asset that

fosters healthy community relationships and social inclusion (Hodgetts et al., 2008; Kranich, 2021). Ray Oldenburg, an urban psychologist, identifies libraries as "third places" that link home life to social life as a central component in building community (Oldenburg, 1999). As such, librarians have noticed their positions foster community resiliency (Grace & Sen, 2013). Libraries promote community resilience by providing a protective factor to members, a third place that is inclusive and safe (Grace & Sen, 2013). Libraries are also seen to foster community resilience by creating social capital (Grace & Sen, 2013).

Moxley and Abbas (2016) identify libraries as community anchors for they are a staple in the community, one of the last truly public spaces for everyone. Additionally, Grace and Sen (2013) espouse that not only are libraries community anchors, but they build resiliency in communities through facilitating adaptation to disruptive changes within a community. Libraries provide a large array of services, including story time for children, internet and computers for job seekers, book clubs, community group meeting spaces, free seminars, and workshops. Libraries have even been found to provide children and adolescents with a place to go after school when their families are unable to afford childcare or extra-curricular activities (Edwards & Williams, 2010). Social capital is created through the existence of these types of services and opportunities readily available to community members (Grace & Sen, 2013; Johnson, 2012; Kranich, 2001).

From the perspective of a library practitioner, Lloyd (2020) described his experience as a library social worker using his branch and library social work program as a case study. Lloyd (2020) focused on the important role libraries have in communities and how social work is positioned to facilitate equitable library practices. Lloyd (2020) also conceptualized the library as a protective factor in a community as they provide a safe environment for community members

to learn and socialize. Lloyd (2020) concludes that due to lack of social service resources in his

community, sometimes the library in itself is the greatest resource or intervention.

Libraries seen as creating social capital is important to be understood within the context

of this research as the use of the library in modern days is multifunctional, including resource

navigating and other services provided by library social workers. Ray Oldenburg's (1999)

concept of "third places" coincides with the library's positionality within the community.

Because libraries are a part of these "third places," they are accessed by community members

seeking a wide range of answers and resources. By providing these spaces for communities to

seek refuge, not only are they engaging in creating social capital, but they are also building

community resilience through harnessing protective factors (Lloyd, 2020).

Social Workers in the Library: Roles & Structure

One theme that emerged in the literature relates to how library social work is practiced

and evaluated. Scholars note that there is a blend of micro, mezzo, and macro social work

practice although the library needs and the needs of the community shape which level of practice

library social workers engage in (Cuseglio, 2020; Lloyd, 2020; Luo et al., 2012). Library social

work can look very different depending on the community, funding, and library system

(Cuseglio, 2020; Lloyd, 2020; Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). Library social work programs consist

of either social work interns, part-time social workers, and/or full-time social workers who can

be employed through either the library itself or through local community-based organizations,

including government agencies (Cuseglio, 2020; Lloyd, 2020; Zettervall & Nienow, 2019).

Lloyd (2020) contributed a seminal practice article based on his experience as a library

social worker in Georgetown, Texas. He initially addressed the limitations of library social

workers, clarifying that they cannot resolve complex systemic issues like homelessness, but can

facilitate a shift in the library's approach to serving patrons experiencing homelessness. Lloyd emphasized that his primary role was to serve library patrons, which encompasses direct service (micro), policy and practice changes (macro), and providing staff trainings (mezzo), including mental health first aid as well as administrating Narcan, an anti-overdose medication. Notably, he identified the scarcity of community resources for patron referrals as a significant challenge.

Johnson's two studies on library social work internships emphasize the potential value of social work student interns within public library settings. Johnson highlighted in his first article (2019) the student intern's contributions in conducting needs assessments, providing staff training, and organizing programming. His second article (2021) reiterated these benefits and advised on library and university partnership best practices. Johnson (2021) advised assessing students' flexibility and preferences due to the unconventional nature of library placements, as well as recognizing that clinical-track students may not find this setting optimal. Additionally, the author acknowledged the challenges posed by alternative supervision structures in library social work partnerships given the absence of on-site social work supervisors.

Cuseglio (2020) published findings from a case study on a library social work internship in New Jersey. This article identified what these partnerships can look like, including potential successes and challenges for libraries and schools looking to develop similar programs. Successes were noted as connecting patrons to community resources, assisting with building in-house re-entry services, and creating a full-time library social work position. Challenges were noted as role confusion, lack of space, unclear supervision, and compromised record-keeping and storage.

Aykanian et al. (2020) published a multi-case study examining how three different library social work internship programs (i.e., University of Maryland, New York University, and

University of Alaska Anchorage) engaged and supported individuals experiencing homelessness. University of Maryland's library social work partnership consisted of social work interns providing services to the public library involving case management, community engagement, program development, outreach, and coordinating mutual aid. New York University library student interns offered shelter assistance, public aid applications, and community support referrals, including for legal and domestic violence. As students were not able to be at all 88 branches, they helped create a resource directory specific to neighborhoods throughout New York City. Similarly, student interns at the University of Alaska Anchorage developed and staffed a community resource table, developed a job lab providing vocational assistance, and completed a needs assessment. Aykanian et al. emphasized that each location requires unique placements and special attention from university and library staff. Understanding community needs and library structure was noted as critical and discussed prior to the partnership. In addition, confidential space should be carved out in the library setting to support social work practice delivery.

Sharkey and colleagues (2021) conducted a case study of a pilot program that developed the first trauma-informed library system with grants through the Institute of Museum of Library Services, which was then implemented by social work student interns. Components of the Trauma-Informed Library Transformation consisted of student interns providing community resource navigation and referral, library staff training, and assessment of library policies. The library policy assessment sought to make the library as a whole more trauma-informed. Sharkey et al. identified things to consider for future partnerships in this capacity. Similar to Johnson's (2021) findings, appropriate student selection is important as this placement is new and still

being developed. Another consideration was identified as having continuity between library goals and social work goals for the program.

Most recently, Wahler et al. (2022) published an article as a guide to public libraries seeking to host social work student interns. After a review of the literature, the authors provided an overview of social work practicum learning objectives, including core competencies outlined by the Council for Social Work Education, to inform librarians of the educational goals and requirements of social work students. The authors made suggestions on initiating and preparing for student placement in a library setting, including suggestions for student selection, considerations of space, and supervision structure. Ideal student interns were again identified as autonomous individuals able to function in a non-traditional role with off-site clinical supervision. Spatial considerations also included privacy and confidentiality concerns. Lastly, supervision should include regular communication between students, library staff, and field supervisors.

Though several studies have explored what sort of tasks social workers in libraries engage in, they mainly have examined library social work interns. It is clear that library social work student interns have reported engaging in micro, mezzo, and macro practice tasks, but it is unclear how these tasks and roles vary based on interns vs. library social workers. Lloyd (2020) provided a reflective practice summary of his experience working as a social worker in a library corroborating engaging in micro, mezzo, and macro tasks; but a better understanding is needed. It is unclear why social work interns in libraries have been studied more than social workers in libraries. It could be because there are more of them each year or they are easier to access because of an affiliation with a university. Regardless, the need for further research on library social workers is apparent.

The Notion of "Care vs. Concern"

Another key theme that emerged from the literature review was how libraries view, understand, and treat their patrons and the promise of social work practice integration as a method to improve library staff treatment of patrons. Giesler (2017) brings up the notion of "care vs. concern" where he challenged librarians to think critically about the need and true purpose behind them wanting library social workers. Is it to provide care to the public? Or is it out of concern of public image, ultimately engaging in practices that perform social control, such as policies that criminalize homeless patrons by limiting the amount of bags one can bring in to the library, or rules around sleeping. Through focus groups, Giesler interviewed librarians from eight urban and suburban libraries and found that there were several different ways librarians viewed their roles as intersecting with traditional social work type roles. Some librarians felt that it was their duty to care for all patrons who entered the library. Others felt the need to control certain patrons to make the experience of being at the library comfortable and productive for the majority. An example of control is banishing those who are experiencing physical homelessness through adopting new library behavior rules—e.g., no sleeping, no more than three bags, or no washing in the bathroom sink. Giesler identified these "rules" as "criminalizing homeless survival tactics" (Giesler, 2017 p. 188).

While both approaches are upheld, they do occasionally overlap to form a sort of gray area. For example, some librarians thought that the rules surrounding sleeping in the library should be strictly upheld, especially if that person is homeless. Other librarians were concerned about their community and found these rules as an unfair burden on people who lacked sufficient resources, especially in situations of inclement weather. Giesler (2017) echoes the critiques of other scholars, including Hodgetts et al. (2008) who accuse libraries of criminalizing the poor

and homeless in public spaces. Provence (2019) criticizes libraries for viewing persons experiencing homelessness as nuisances. Provence (2019) and Lloyd (2020) also discuss the importance and examples of social workers facilitating systemic changes that make libraries more inclusive public spaces.

The profession of social work has historically struggled with engaging in social control, so it is unsurprising that this phenomenon is present in the literature (Abramovitz, 1998). It appears particularly relevant for social workers practicing in host site settings where program motives and direction is decided upon the by host—for example, librarians wanting social workers to "deal" with people experiencing homelessness and utilizing the library for shelter. Giesler (2017), Provence (2019), and Lloyd (2020) all have considered how this can play out in library social work and suggest this dynamic be considered.

Patron Populations and Needs

Increasingly, libraries are being positioned as spaces for a variety of vulnerable populations such as persons experiencing mental illness, those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, the unemployed, immigrants and refugees, and unaccompanied children and adolescents (Huzar, 2014; Pressley, 2017; Provence, 2019; Terrile, 2016). The most referenced patron population are people who are experiencing homelessness. This is largely in part due to the overwhelming number of homeless patrons utilizing the library as their only means for shelter (Giesler, 2019; Provence, 2019; Provence et al., 2020). This, in turn, has positioned some libraries as daytime shelters due to community funding constraints and social service closures (Giesler, 2019). The research of Provence and colleagues (2020) focuses on the roles library social work partnerships have with patrons experiencing homelessness. Provence et al. (2020) found that incorporating social workers into libraries can help humanize those who are

experiencing homelessness, which is important as the public library is one of the "last remaining social protections" (p. 444) for people in the community.

Several other populations have been studied on the role libraries play within the community. Adolescents are found to utilize the library frequently, with many libraries even creating specific programming or physical areas for youth and young adults. People who are experiencing unemployment utilize the library to look for jobs, assemble and print documents, or find library books to develop specific skills (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019). Immigrants and refugees also utilize the library regularly, often to receive information about language, learning about the local area, and navigating the law (Seattle Public Library, n.d.). For example, the Seattle Public Library has lawyers who go to the library several times a week to assist immigrants and refugees with their legal statuses (Seattle Public Library, n.d.).

Two studies were completed using a survey measuring psychosocial needs of patrons (Provence et al., 2020; Wahler et al., 2021). Both studies conducted the same needs assessment survey in two different Midwestern cities. The first study took place in the Indianapolis Public Library system using a needs assessment approach, which revealed that the psychosocial needs of the general community consisted of employment, financial, job-related training, transportation, and health insurance (Provence et al., 2020). Further analysis explored psychosocial needs among those who reported experiencing housing insecurity. The largest psychosocial need for that subgroup was the ability to keep warm or cold. The second study was performed in a Wisconsin city, revealing variations in the psychosocial needs of patrons who were housed versus unhoused (Wahler et al., 2021). Psychosocial needs of patrons overall were identified as social connectedness, mental health, financial assistance, dental health, education, and health insurance. For those experiencing homelessness, psychosocial needs were identified

as financial assistance, housing, mental health, employment, social connectedness, transportation, and a place to keep warm or cold. For all these services, people have turned to the library for assistance, whether the library has been able to fill that gap or not.

Different patron populations and various needs of patrons were noted in the literature and prove to be vast. From people seeking employment support to immigrants looking for naturalization resources, the library is visited by a large variety of people. Unsurprisingly, these populations also expressed a large variety of needs from mental health to health insurance. These different populations and patrons with various needs further illustrates the library as an important third place that can provide social capital to communities. Even if libraries do not have the capacity or answers to give to patrons, they are still being seen as a place in the community to go to ask these questions.

Social Justice in the Library

Finally, the field of library science has long discussed and engaged in social justice. Libraries themselves facilitate social justice by providing knowledge, services, and space to everyone in a community (Luo et al., 2012). Though libraries have a history of being fiscally conservative and risk avoidant, libraries across the country have nonetheless embraced social justice endeavors and strive for inclusivity (Gustina & Guinnee, 2017). Many librarians pursue a career in libraries not only because they enjoy reading but because they are passionate about serving people. Libraries have been community mainstays, providing myriad free services to patrons ranging from loaning books to providing community meeting spaces (Moxley & Abbas, 2016). Libraries are even referred to as radically inclusive public spaces as they provide access to educational materials, educational and social opportunities, technology, and even heating and cooling freely (Huzar, 2014). Though these spaces can be radically inclusive, the literature points

out the critiques among both the fields of library sciences and social work for gatekeeping and reinforcing social control (Gehner, 2010; Giesler, 2017; Huzar, 2014). Implications for social justice include critically examining the role and power differentials surrounding the implementation of these programs.

<div align="center">**Theoretical Frameworks**</div>

Critical Realism

The paradigmatic framework for this research is critical realism. As this study seeks to understand the experiences of library social workers, the scientific framework for this research requires a framework of science congruent with exploring experiences. Critical realism rejects positivist frameworks of the social sciences, explores creative aspects of science, and critically examines systemic impacts on social phenomena (Baert, 2005). Critical realism incorporates stratified views of reality in which both mind-independent realities and socially constructed realities are considered (Baert, 2005). This study considers how library social work is practiced which requires an understanding of shared truths while at the same time exploring the subjective experiences of individuals practicing as a library social worker. Because the critical realist paradigm believes in the presence of objective and subjective realities, a mixed methods research approach follows that paradigm. In addition, critical realism is identified by scholars as a key framework in mixed methodology research as it lends itself to both qualitative and quantitative pursuits (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The qualitative portion focuses on the subjective realities of library social workers and the quantitative portion sought to provide objective facts about library social work programs, partnerships, and practitioners.

In conjunction with critical realism's component of socially constructed realities, this author has used their position as a previous library social worker to inform this research. As

mentioned in the positionality statement portion of this dissertation, the author believes that practice wisdom being incorporated in research is a strength and incorporates the critical realist belief of incorporating mind-independent realities with subjective realities. Further, this researcher acknowledges the impact of their own personal experiences on this research, though sought to elevate the voices of the participants to explore their own subjective realities.

The critical realist paradigm encompasses critical and systems theories, including ecological systems theory (De Souza, 2022). Ecological systems theory focuses on the importance of the individual and their own subjective realities but encourages incorporating an understanding of mind-independent realities and factors that influence the individual. Further, Critical realism proposes that individuals influence and are influenced by social structure, which is one of the central components of ecological systems theory (Collier, 1994; Langer & Lietz, 2015).

Ecological Systems Theory

Though library social work informally pulls from practice intervention models such as motivational interviewing, strengths-based approaches, and harm reduction, there is not a clear and adopted theoretical model for library social work. While some social science researchers do not believe theoretical orientations are necessary in understanding social work practice (Thyer, 2001), considering theory in the case of library social work provides a roadmap for understanding the complexities of interdisciplinary work within a longstanding institution (i.e., the library) (Thyer, 2001; Gomory, 2001). Furthermore, library social work practice does not necessarily focus solely on individual interventions, as it incorporates meso, exo, macro, and chrono levels into service delivery (Thyer, 2001). In conceptualizing theoretical considerations for library social work practice, an understanding of the community environment and the

institutional environment's effect on barriers and facilitators to practice is key for successful implementation.

Ecological systems theory, or ecosystems theory, can be used to conceptualize library social work as it highlights the relationships of environmental factors (Langer & Lietz, 2015). Ecological systems theory not only focuses on how larger systems impact the individual but also on how those larger systems impact each other (Langer & Lietz, 2015). Further, Bronfenbrenner (1979) pioneered the concept of nested systems which identifies the ways in which microsystems, macrosystems, and everything in between influence each other. In Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, five systemic levels are identified: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. This model provides an excellent frame of reference when thinking about the interactions between the community, individual, institution, and politics in juxtaposition to the library, as well as how library social work specifically can help address these overlapping or nested systems. Please see Figure 1 below for visual representation.

Figure 1. Ecological Systems Theory Applied to Library Social Work
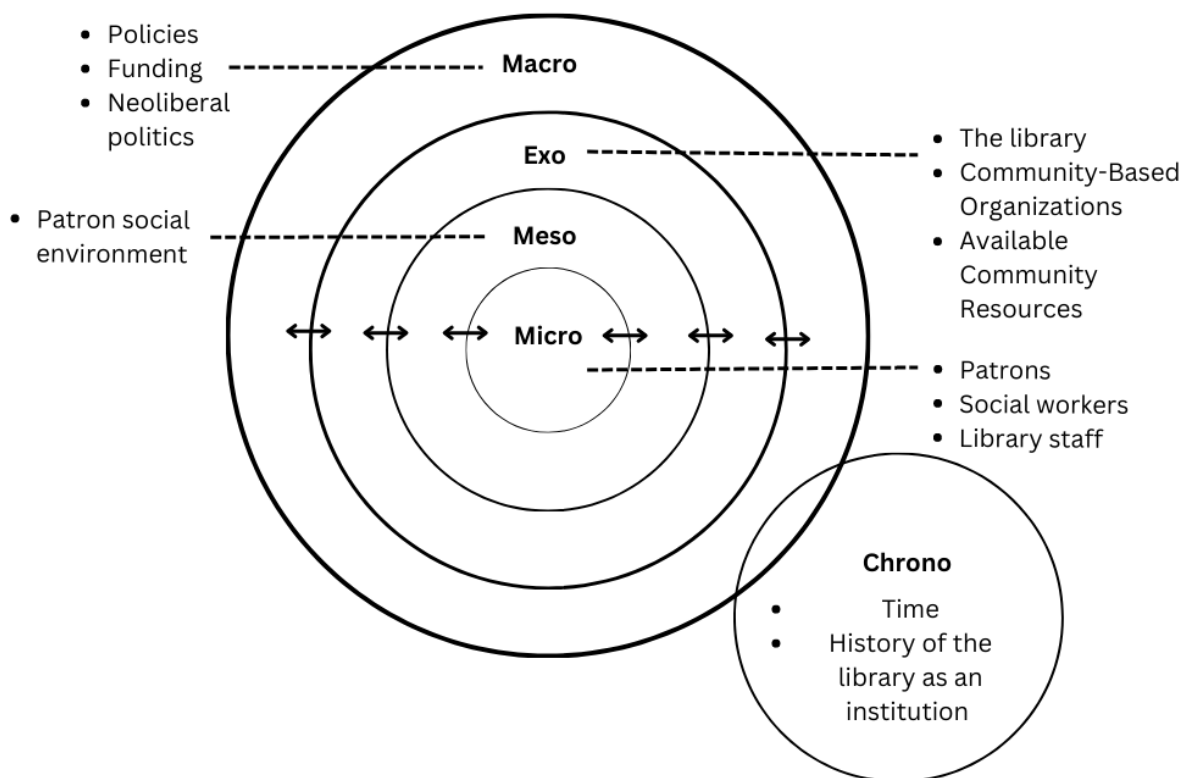
Microsystems are an individual's personal relationships and individual factors such as relations with parents, spouse, siblings, etc. The micro can also include an individual's mental health status, demographics, and other individual characteristics that impact who they are as a person. Mesosystems are the next level of the social environment such as school, work, and friend groups. The exosystem level includes larger social networks, local politics, and neighborhood community, including the public library. The macrosystem is made up of federal politics, cultural norms, and language (Langer & Lietz, 2015). The chronosystem is time and historical influences over each system. These models assist in our understanding of the

interactions between the library as an institution, its relation to patrons, and the way the environment shapes both patron services and community politics.

Libraries and social service organizations are positioned within the exosystem level as they are local community institutions. Whether a library social worker is hired through the library itself or is hosted by a community partner, part of their role is to engage community partners in programming and individual referral, which also occurs at the exosystem level. The effect of library administration on library patrons is apparent through the ecosystem's influence on meso- and microsystems by way of library rules, policies, and regulations that impact the patron's experience using the library. Macro- and exosystem institutional policies affect library social work practice by way of funding, stakeholder buy-in, and governmental budget constraints. By contrast, the chronosystem represents historical influences over time which, when conceptualizing library social work, would incorporate impacts of the library as an institution, conception, and current standing among the public.

Frameworks of Ecosystems Theory are recognized in the research through looking at the systemic arrangements that influence practice. Taking some themes from the literature review, austerity, the library as a "community anchor" (Moxley & Abbas, 2016), types of populations served, and "care vs. concern" (Giesler, 2017) all operate on and interact via the various levels articulated in ecosystems theory. The impacts of austerity expose macrosystemic issues that impact the role of the library. Libraries as a "community anchor" (Moxley & Abbas, 2016) are situated in a mesosystem but in turn affect the microsystem (e.g., the library patrons). The notion of "care vs. concern" (Giesler, 2017) also highlights the impact that micro- and mesosystems can have on the individual and by what dynamics these differing views impact the library as a

system. Lastly, identifying themes among the populations served highlights the microsystem as well as the impacts a macrosystem can have on how individuals interact with the mesosystem.

On a practice level, library social work focuses on the microsystem in consideration of meso, exo, and macro systems when providing services to patrons. For instance, when thinking about how certain rules are enforced, library staff and social workers are encouraged to consider the person within the context of their environment. Zettervall and Nienow (2019) write about how the practice of library social work generally operates out of the person-in-environment (PIE) model, which is essentially ecosystems theory, considering micro, meso, exo, and macro spheres of influence on the person and the environment in which they live. By considering all the systems that go into play when someone who is experiencing homelessness comes into the library—say, emitting odor—systems give a better framework to understand that person's specific barriers which prevent the maintenance of personal hygiene. Being aware of what is happening at the exosystem level (including shelter availability, access to showers, etc.) helps staff understand the particularities of that individual's situation and what specific ways the library can provide assistance.

Ecosystem theory can also be utilized when looking at the role of administration and library institutional structures that may impact the role of the library social worker. As previously stated, library social work programs vary in how they are situated in libraries (Giesler, 2019). One library social worker might be hired through the library, in which case the library social worker is more embedded in the workplace compared to someone whose supervisors are off-site. Other library social work programs are from outside community partnerships; for example, one library social work program from this study is provided through a homeless shelter (Giesler, 2019). Whether embedded within or from outside a social service agency, the dynamic

between administrations is different. For supervision, in particular, in the case of a library social worker that receives supervision from outside the library, the material conditions and support needed from the administration drastically differ. Administration also impacts the way that a library enforces rules. One library might be very strict about an odor policy, while other libraries might not be. The function of these rules and policies are influenced by the macro system and in turn, affects all the systems that exist below, down to the individual.

Gaps in the Literature and Research Recommendations

Although we know that the reason for these partnerships forming was to assist public spaces—e.g., libraries, specifically—in navigating the changing needs of their communities, there is much within the practice of library social work that has been neglected in research. Previous research has attempted to capture how library social work is performed, illustrating what it means to do library social work. The core purpose of these partnerships has also been examined, noting the importance of awareness around promoting equitable practices versus engaging in practices that target certain populations. Libraries also create social capital through the vast array of services and community opportunities they facilitate, with research focusing on specific patron populations utilizing library spaces for a variety of purposes.

From the ecosystem's perspective, it is understood that each individual library user belongs to a distinct social and environmental network that impacts their experiences. To this end, each library operates out of its own environment and heavily impacts and is impacted by the community in which it is located. In ecosystems theory, libraries are classified under the exosystem level, as a local community institution, that is directly impacted by the meso and macro systems, ultimately exerting influence upon the micro/individual system. Conceptualizing ecosystems theory in library social work practice is a way to understand systemic factors that

influence how library social work is practiced, particularly barriers and facilitators to practice.

As noted in the methodological literature section, there have not yet been any studies with a rigorous mixed methodology from the perspective of library social work practitioners. Geisler (2017; 2019) has suggested that a mixed methods study with a nationwide sample should be considered to further develop research within the field of library social work. Johnson (2021), Provence (2019), and Wahler et al. (2021) recommended further research in library social work as the current literature is not keeping up with the amount of practice in the field as new partnerships are being established every year. With the importance of research informing practice and the increasing popularity of these programs, it is clear that further investigation is exigently needed. Finally, research with a larger scope and mixed methodology could spearhead future studies in library social work in an attempt to complement this form of practice.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for this study utilizes an explanatory sequential mixed method design (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Rubin & Babbie, 2015). The quantitative data was collected first, and the qualitative data was collected last (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The quantitative portion of this study consists of descriptive statistics, and the qualitative component is exploratory, utilizing the narrative approach (Creswell, 2018). The narrative approach to qualitative research explores the library social work practitioner's experiences in their practice through discussion of their perceptions of barriers and facilitators to practice (Creswell, 2018). The quantitative data is used to gain a broad understanding of barriers and facilitators to practice. The qualitative data offers the space to begin to answer how social workers navigate their practice, barriers to practice, facilitators to practice, etc., which are not able to be explored as in-depth in the surveys (Patton, 2015). The main disadvantage of an explanatory mixed methodology over an exploratory mixed methodology is relying on literature and previous data to construct the survey used in the quantitative section vs. relying on data collected in the qualitative portion, which could be more informative than the current literature. Overall disadvantages of utilizing a mixed methods design consist of data not converging, more complex than focusing on one study design, and time consumption. However, in this study, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The survey was able to inform the qualitative portion, and both sets of data converged decently. Though this study was lengthy and consumed more time than one methodology, no study like

this had ever been done before and the research questions were best answered with this method.

The sample population for this research study is library social work practitioners in the United States. Participant criteria consisted of full- or part-time paid social workers who currently or previously practiced in libraries. Previous library social workers were identified as library social workers who had worked in the field in the past with no limit on time. However, participants did not go back any further than 2009, when the first social worker was in the library. Library social work interns were not utilized in this study as social work professionals are assumed to have a better understanding of the functions of their programs due to experience and level of partnerships. Further, supervisors of library social work interns or practitioners that do not practice in libraries were also excluded from this study. Social workers who provide drop-in services at libraries but are not involved in a cohesive partnership with libraries were also excluded. This study aims at understanding what the practice of library social work is; therefore, the sample population must only include those who have the most experience and knowledge about what it is like to practice library social work. For details regarding the sampling and recruitment for each dataset, please refer to the quantitative and qualitative sections below. According to the Whole Person Librarianship Map (2023), there are currently approximately 60 practicing library social workers across the United States that would qualify for participation in this study, and a handful of previous library social workers as well.

This study utilizes an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach by collecting the quantitative data first and then the qualitative (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Rubin & Babbie, 2015). After the quantitative data was collected, the survey was closed, and the data was analyzed. Through the analysis process, quantitative findings were considered in making adaptations to the qualitative interview questions. Though qualitative interview questions were already outlined,

the analysis of the quantitative findings was used to inform the final interview questions before the interviews were conducted. After the second portion, the qualitative portion, of data collection, responses were coded and analyzed through a thematic approach. Please refer to each data analysis section below for details regarding the analysis.

<center>**Quantitative Data**</center>

Sampling and Recruitment

The sample for the quantitative survey consisted of library social workers who meet the above criteria for participation. Non-probability expert sampling was utilized as the sampling method (Padgett, 2017; Rubin & Babbie, 2015). Recruitment consisted of formal contact via email requesting participation as well as postings on online forums. The largest online forum that was used is the Whole Person Librarianship listserv. This listserv consists of approximately 700 members who are librarians, social workers, and interns but is open to anyone interested in library social work. The listserv exists for people to network regarding their programs or programs they wish to start. Resources such as articles, forum boards, and marketing materials are shared in this listserv. It is also used for promoting research, finding research participants, and creating needs assessments. By posting it to this listserv, a large number of people involved in library social work were reached; however, response rates remain unclear as it is unknown how many of the 700 listserv members are social workers. The survey was also emailed directly to library social workers who are listed on the Whole Person Librarianship Map (2023) which consisted of approximately 50 social workers or interns. Lastly, surveys were also sent to members of the Public Library Association's Social Work Taskforce and the American Library Association's Social Work Interest Group which also consisted of a blend of librarians and social workers. The exact response rate is unknown because (1) there is no accurate count of how many

social workers have practiced in libraries throughout its conception; and (2) recruitment largely consisted of listservs and associations that consisted of both librarians and social workers.

To accurately vet interested participants, the first question on the survey asked about the title of their position and whether or not they are social workers. Participants that responded with "intern" in their title were removed. In addition, surveys that had unclear titles and did not answer questions about practice background or education were removed.

Survey Procedures

The quantitative data portion of this study was entirely a web-based survey (Dillman et al., 2014). The survey consisted of a 28-item online survey with a questionnaire incorporating open and close-ended questions developed by the researcher. Survey questions were determined by the researcher based off the research questions and gaps in the literature. The survey was collected through the computer program Qualtrics. Survey questions include descriptive and attitudinal information (Rea & Parker, 2014) and are broken down into four categories: practitioner professional background, practice setting, practice tasks and duties, and experience in the practice setting. The practitioner professional background section consists of questions regarding what led the participant to the field of library social work, how they heard about the position, etc. The practice setting portion asked about the library setting and its surrounding community in which it is situated. Practice tasks and duties look at what exactly the social worker does and what sort of services they provide. Lastly, experience in the practice setting provides the opportunity for participants to share information about what it has been like working in the library, including challenges and successes. Each category attempts to address information surrounding barriers and facilitators to the design, implementation, and practice of library social work (see Appendix B for survey questions and formatting).

Initially, the survey was opened to responses in April 2022. Within three weeks responses slowed down. Reminder emails were sent out each week for those three weeks. In an attempt to gain a larger response, the survey was re-sent out to all of the recruitment sites several months later, again with reminder emails each week for three weeks. Survey responses were confidential and kept anonymous unless the participant decided to participate in the qualitative survey in which they submitted their contact information in the last question on the survey. For those who were interested in participating in the qualitative interviews, their survey was no longer anonymous, though it continued to remain confidential.

To increase survey response rates, the survey was between 20-25 minutes to not take up too much time. The participants are all professionals with high workloads so less time to complete the survey is particularly important for getting a higher response rate for this population (Dillman et al., 2014). The use of language is also important in increasing responses (Dillman et al., 2014; Lohr, 1999). Language such as 'respond immediately' or 'unsubscribe here' was not used. Subordinating language, and convincing potential participants to complete the survey were also avoided as it can be considered disrespectful and decrease willingness to participate (Dillman et al., 2014). The recruitment email (see Appendix E) included details about the survey and once opened, it prompts the consent section before allowing the participant to continue. The researcher's contact information was readily available on both the recruitment email and the consent section of the survey. Some questions on the survey were required but not all questions required an answer to complete the survey (Dillman et al., 2014). Though this runs the risk of having incomplete data, it increases the chances of more people responding. Please refer to the next section for protocol of incomplete data. To decrease response burden, the questions have also been designed to be non-intrusive, as only descriptive and attitudinal

information was being collected (Lohr, 1999). Lastly, the design of the survey itself, online, is significantly more convenient than a paper/mail survey which in turn increases the rate of response (Dillman et al., 2014).

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data for this study was collected through Qualtrics and analyzed utilizing Qualtrics's built-in analytic program. In preparation for analysis, survey responses were cleaned in Qualtrics, largely examining data for inclusion or exclusion criteria (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The quantitative data from the survey was largely descriptive and was reported on without the use of complex statistical analysis. Next, the data was displayed through tables, showing lists of results, and summaries. Data from incomplete surveys were handled depending on the amount. Any survey that was missing more than five questions was removed from the sample. For the surveys in which only a few questions were missing responses, the percentages were recalculated with those responses adjusted (Rubin & Babbie, 2015). For example, if question 7 only had 34 responses instead of 37, the percentages calculated were based on the 34 responses.

Qualitative Data

Sampling and Recruitment

Participants were recruited for interviews through the survey, so no re-sampling took place. As mentioned in the quantitative sample section, at the end of the online survey, respondents were asked if they would be interested in participating in the qualitative interview portion. Again, non-probability purposeful expert sampling was used to collect the original sample, though instead of recruiting the same sample as the quantitative portion, recruitment information was only sent to those who indicated a willingness to participate in the second portion of data collection (Padgett, 2017; Rubin & Babbie, 2015). Once a list of willing

participants was compiled, purposeful sampling was used again to decide which participants would be invited to participate in the interviews. The goal was to interview participants with a range of experience practicing library social work, including developing, implementing, and practicing. This information was established from the surveys. Interview selection had a preference for those who had been in the field longer and had more experience with developing, implementing, and practicing. Email correspondence was utilized to reach out to those who indicated a willingness to participate after the quantitative data were analyzed.

The sample size depended on how many respondents indicated an interest in participating in the qualitative interview and when the researcher felt that saturation had occurred (Padgett, 2017). In qualitative research, saturation is reached once data becomes repeated and participant reflections become redundant (Padgett, 2017). Saturation was reached at fourteen participants.

Interviews

Interview-based narrative study was the approach to qualitative data collection as the interview questions center around practitioner experience (Butina, 2015; Willig & Stainton, 2017). This study hoped to capture the voices of research participants by focusing on how library social workers have made meaning through the work they do (Butina, 2015; Willig & Stainton, 2017). Qualitative data collection included 60- to 90-minute semi-structured interviews. Qualitative interviews facilitate in-depth questioning for a better understanding of a phenomenon, more than only the survey would provide (Patton, 2015). Facilitating the narrative approach, semi-structured interviewing allowed for flexibility in content and flow of conversation (Butina, 2015; Padgett, 2017). In addition to questions surrounding barriers and facilitators to development, implementation, and practice, interview questions included information about what the library social work partnership consists of, how it originated, how

long they have been there, how long they have been in the field, what led them to become a library social worker, etc. The qualitative interviews were administered via Zoom by myself, the researcher, and recorded and transcribed using Zoom's built-in transcription service (Quinney et al., 2016; Barber, 2013). Due to the inaccuracy of Zoom's transcription, transcriptions were extensively cleaned before analysis (see Appendix A for interview questions and the opening script). Interview questions were minimally amended based on survey results. Consent forms consisted of consent to participate and consent to be recorded. Every participant gave consent to be recorded. Consent forms were signed and collected prior to analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data analysis processes followed thematic analysis consisting of reading transcriptions, creating codes or themes, and making meaning of the data (Willig & Stainton, 2017). Thematic analysis was utilized due to its flexibility with epistemological and theory orientations, specifically this study's chosen ontological perspective, critical realism, and theoretical framework, ecological systems theory (Willig & Stainton, 2017). The coding strategy was deductive based on what we knew from the quantitative data and existing literature (Christians & Carey, 1989). Themes were identified based on the coding process outlined in the following paragraphs. Direct quotes were utilized throughout the qualitative results section to provide the use of voice to supplement reports on findings (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

In preparation for the qualitative data analysis, the interview Zoom transcriptions were cleaned. After the transcriptions were cleaned, they were reviewed for accuracy and re-transcribed by the researcher when necessary (Creswell, 2018). Next, the transcriptions were uploaded into the qualitative analytic software, Nvivo. The use of this computer software assisted in organizing transcriptions, codes, and notes throughout the process of coding

(Creswell, 2018). The data was first explored through an initial reading of all transcriptions and the development of preliminary notes and codes. Upon revisiting and listening to interviews, subthemes emerged and were identified as codes (Creswell, 2018). The construction of codes was identified based on relevance to research aims and recurrence. The codebook created for the quantitative portion was utilized as a roadmap for the qualitative coding process. Codes based on research questions were heavily focused on for the development of themes, though many other codes emerged or intersected. Themes were identified as overarching accounts with codes fitting under the umbrella of each theme. Once themes were identified and explored, a summary of results was developed. Lastly, the results were validated following the measures outlined below.

For achieving rigor in the qualitative section, trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation and member checking (Patton, 2015; Padgett, 2017). Triangulation consisted of observer-triangulation through the help of another researcher who was enlisted to read an interview and come up with their own independent codes (Padgett, 2017). The codes that the research helper came up with were then cross-referenced with the codes that had been identified by the researcher of this study. Both researcher and research helper came up with similar codes. There were only a few codes that were different and were agreed upon after engaging in a conversation and researcher providing more clarity about the thought process surrounding inclusion of those codes. The member-checking process consisted of a follow-up conversation over the phone and email with research participants. These conversations included questions for clarification, thoughts on codes, and an opportunity to provide any additional comments. Member checking can be more likely obtainable when prior relationships exist, which often is a strength in utilizing the practitioner as the researcher (Padgett, 2017).

Incentives and Ethics

There were no direct incentives to participate in this study. However, participants were offered a platform to discuss their practice and contribute to practice research (Padgett, 2017). Ethical considerations included maintaining confidentiality, particularly if a participant disclosed something negative or something that could jeopardize their employment (Padgett, 2017). Information was de-identified if it was not already anonymous and stored on Loyola's secure cloud drives and backed up to a password-protected hard drive. Each participant received a number, and their interviews were then associated solely with that number. In the interview transcriptions, Zoom had the name of the participant cited each time they spoke. Through the find and replace all tool, each time a name was on paper, it was replaced with that number so the transcriptions were clear of all names. This process was repeated if they had disclosed the name of their particular library as well. The principal investigator was the only individual with full access to the data. Advisor had access based on request and did not request access throughout the course of the study. Due to the standard access of technology to participants, it was anticipated that the only barrier to participation was time and availability as social work practitioners are generally very busy. Detailed demographic data was not relevant to include in this study. All research procedures were approved ahead of time by Loyola University Chicago's Institutional Review Board.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Quantitative Survey Results

Participants

Of the 43 who attempted the survey, 39 completed it (three were removed because they were social work interns; one was removed due to incomplete data).

Practitioner Professional Background

Many libraries have chosen various titles for their social workers. Among the 39 participants, 21 different titles were reported for their positions: *Library Social Worker* (n=9), *Community Resource Coordinator/Specialist* (n=8). Three participants reported that their title was Social Worker. The remaining eighteen titles only had one participant each and consisted of Behavioral Health Specialist, Community Engagement Coordinator, Community Health Social Worker, Community Resilience Consultant, GPS Social Worker, Health and Social Services Coordinator, Immigrant Services Coordinator, Library Director, Library Social Work Programmer, Library Social Worker/Consultant, Licensed Social Worker, Literary Program Specialist, Mental Health Coordinator, Social Services Coordinator, Social Services Liaison, Social Services Specialist, Social Services Supervisor, Social Work Coordinator, Social Worker, and Special Initiatives Manager.

The average duration of a social worker in this role was 19 months. The longest-serving practitioner worked at their library for six years and one month, while the shortest tenure was three weeks. Most participants held a master's degree in Social Work (80%), followed by

bachelor's degrees in Social Work (10%), and other qualifications (5%), which included a Ph.D. in Social Work and "some college, seven years of social service provision." Bachelor's degrees and master's degrees in other fields accounted for 2.5% each.

Two-thirds of the participants with a master's degree reported having a specialization or track during their program. The most common tracks were community organizing/macro (21%), mental health (24%), advanced generalist (18%), clinical (12%), no specialization (9%), other (9%), school (6%), and medical/health (3%). Other specializations included children and families and social and economic justice.

About 67% of the participants held licensures, while 33% did not. The most common licenses were clinical social work (LCSW, LICSW) at 42%, followed by a master's license (LMSW) at 38%. One participant held a bachelor's license (LSW), and 15% had another type of license, such as Licensed Mental Health Counselor or Associate Clinical Social Worker (ACSW).

Regarding prior practice experience before working in the library, 16 participants had experience in community mental health, 11 in community organizing or macro capacity, 10 in health or hospital settings, 7 in clinical practice, and 6 in schools. Other previous practice settings, reported by 18 participants, included domestic violence, adoptions, research, criminal justice/forensic, refugee resettlement, sexual assault/rape crisis centers, homeless shelters, gerontology, and child welfare.

Table 1. Practitioner Professional Background.

Variable	Percentage or Duration
Duration in Role	
Average Duration	19 months
Longest Duration	6 years, 1 month (73 months)
Shortest Duration	3 weeks
Education	
Master's Degree in Social Work	80% (N=31)
Bachelor's Degree in Social Work	10% (N=4)
Other Qualifications	5% (N=2)
Bachelor's Degree in Other Field	2.5% (N=1)
Master's Degree in Other Field	2.5% (N=1)
Specialization	
Community Organizing/Macro	21% (N=7)
Mental Health	24% (N=8)
Advanced Generalist	18% (N=6)
Clinical	12% (N=4)
No Specialization	9% (N=3)
Other	9% (N=3)
School	6% (N=2)
Medical/Health	3% (N=1)
Licensure	
Clinical Social Work (LCSW, LICSW)	42% (N=11)
Master's License (LMSW)	38% (N=10)
Bachelor's License (LSW)	5% (N=1)
Other License Types	15% (N=4)
Prior Practice Experience	
Community Mental Health	24% (N=16)
Community Organizing/Macro	16% (N=11)
Clinical Practice	10% (N=7)
Health/Hospital	15% (N=10)
School	9% (N=6)
Other Settings	26% (N=18)

Practice Setting

Participants were in libraries across the United States, with the most (N=18 or 46%) in the Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, MI, OH). The next highest area was the West (WA, OR, ID, MT, CA, NV, UT, CO, WY, AK, HI) with ten participants or 25%, followed by the Southeast (AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, FL, SC, NC, TN, KY, VA, WV, VA, DC, MD, DE) with five participants (13%), the Northeast (PA, NJ, CT, RI, MA, NH, NY, VT, ME) with four participants (11%), and lastly Southwest (AZ, NM, TX, OK) with two participants (5%). Libraries of the participants were largely in urban areas (64%) followed by suburban (33%) and only one (3%) participant was in a rural branch. The following figure (Figure 2) provides a visual representation of the geographic span and distribution of participants from the survey.

Figure 2. Library Social Work Survey Participants by USA Region

LEGEND
Midwest (n = 18)
West (n = 10)
Southeast (n = 5)
Northeast (n = 4)
Southwest (n = 2)
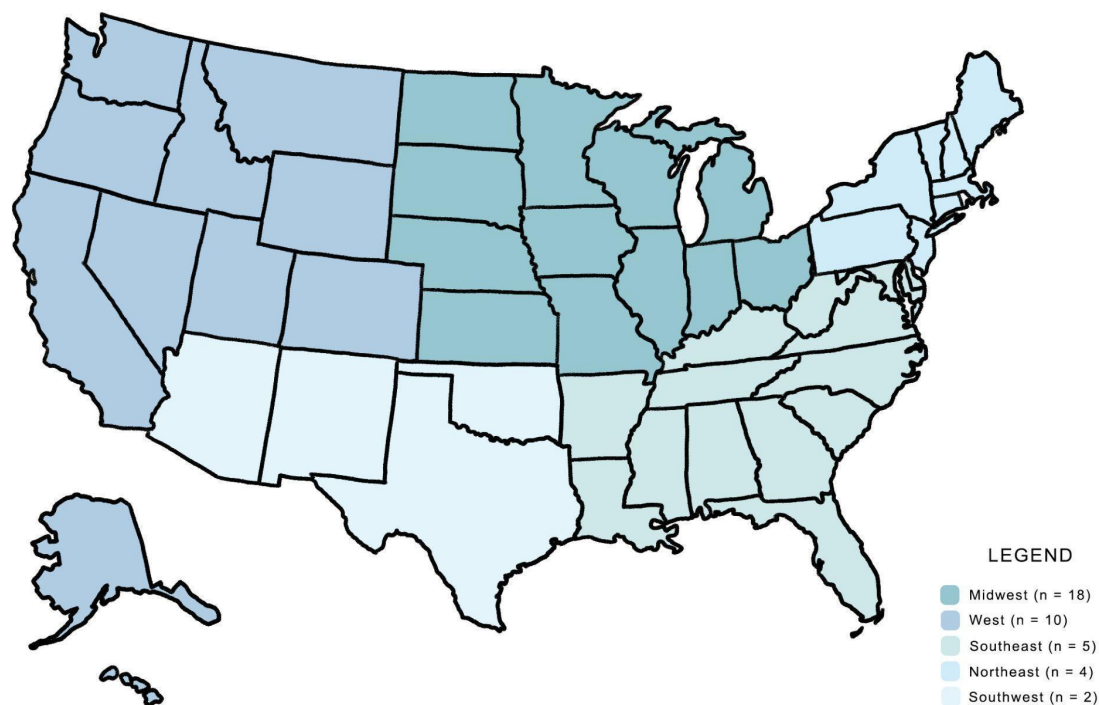
The length of library social work programs varied from less than a year to more than five years, with the average program at 2.64 years. Programs that had been running for two to three years (28%) and less than one year (28%) both had the same number of participants, followed by those in operation for more than one year (18%), four to five years (13%), and five+ years (13%). Most reported they were the first library social worker to hold their position (67%); 15% reported that there was one library social worker before them; 8% noted that there was a library social work intern before them as well. One respondent said "other" and expanded by saying that there was one social worker before them, but they resigned after only a few days. Most were the only library social worker in their library system (84%). Approximately 50% hosted social work interns while half did not.

Supervision. Out of the 39 social work librarians who responded to the questions about supervision, 23 (60%) reported that they did not receive clinical supervision and 16 (40%) reported that they received supervision. Of those, seven received clinical supervision through a community agency social worker with two each responding that they received supervision from a social worker employed at the library, a university-based social worker, or an independent social worker. Of the 40% who receive clinical supervision, 18% receive it from a community agency. Social workers employed through the library, social workers from a university, private/Independent paid social workers, and others were all tied next at 5%. The two participants that identified "other" under supervision clarified by noting: "Social Worker through the County," "The direct practice group is the closest to supervision."

Funding. The structure of how these programs were funded was asked about in the survey as well. Positions had multiple sources of funding but were more commonly funded through the city or local government (34%), internally funded through the library (31%), and/or

in combination with grants (25%). Positions funded through outside community organization, e.g., community mental health agency, hospital, etc. came in at 4% while other was 6%. Other funding structures were identified as "Started as grant-based," "City gives money to a local nonprofit to employ me," and "Was grant-based, currently funded through the library with funds from local government."

 Patron Populations. Lastly, community populations that the participants provided services to were explored. Respondents could provide more than one answer to this question. Ninety-four percent of participants reported working with people experiencing housing insecurity, including homelessness. Ninety-four percent also reported working with people experiencing food insecurity. Ninety percent of participants reported working with people with serious and persistent mental illness, followed by older adults (90%), parents (77%), adolescents & young adults (74%), immigrants and refugees (66%), children (60%), and other (13%). Other was expanded upon: "I only work with these populations through community-based referrals, not clinically," persons with developmental disabilities, people with substance use/dependence, "veterans (n=2), persons with disabilities, families."

Practice Tasks and Duties

 Respondents could again give more than one answer to questions about practice tasks and duties. 95% of participants reported working with library patrons in some capacity. Ninety-two percent of participants reported working with library staff, 77% with library administration, and 90% with community-based organizations. No participants selected "other" under this question. The next set of questions prompted participants to indicate on a slider how much of their job consisted of certain items. Participants reported that on average, 54% of their time was spent providing individual assistance to library patrons, 25% was spent doing outreach to community-

based organizations, 24% providing individual support for library staff, 22% engaging in library programming, 15% developing and providing library staff training, and 29% other. Unfortunately, no notes were provided in the "other" section to provide clarification.

Of the 95% of participants who reported working directly with library patrons, participants reported spending the following amount of direct patron assistance on average providing the following services: 48% of the time assisting with resource linkage to basic needs, 40% providing assistance with government applications (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, SSI), 28% providing emotional support, 23% providing resource linkage to mental health or substance use treatment, 19% intervened in crisis situations, and 56% of time spent on "other." Other included housing (2) and basic computer skills and job applications.

Participants reported that service needs were identified by: solely the library social worker (59%), via collaboration between library and social worker (48%), via patron needs assessment or input (46%), via a community needs assessment (36%), by library staff (30%), or through other routes (8%). Other routes included: "currently planning a patron needs assessment and staff needs assessment," "Unsure," "library identified needs, needs assessment was done (but pre-COVID-19) and then just what patrons come in and ask for".

Most participants (67%) reported using an Excel or Word document to keep track of patron interactions. 28% used a computer program to document client interactions (e.g., Charity Tracker), and 20% used other means of data tracking. No participants reported using electronic health or medical records. Other means of data tracking included: "In the process of building a tracker," "It is a library software not designed for these purposes," "A program my agency uses called CEMR, Notehouse, Survey monkey," Wufoo, HMIS (2), "Paper intake and notes." HMIS stands for Homeless Management Information Systems and is used throughout the United States.

Participants reported numerous ways that their programs evaluate their practice. Thirty-three percent of participants reported that their program did some sort of annual report. Thirty percent reported having yearly employee reviews. Twenty-three percent state that their grant required some form of evaluation. Thirteen percent reported an evaluation of their program through a university or outside agency. A little over a quarter (31%) of participants reported that they do not do any type of formal evaluation of their program. Ten percent of participants selected "other" which included "We collect data ourselves, identify goals and self-assess," "We provide a stats report to the library every quarter," and "Monthly Report."

Experience in the Practice Setting

The experience in the practice setting section started out with questions surrounding program hierarchy and structure and went on to explore challenges and difficulties. Thirty-seven out of the 39 participants rated their relationship with library administration on a scale from 1 being the least amount of access to 10 being a great collaborative relationship with library administration. On average participants reported a 6.86 on access and collaboration with library administration with the minimum response being 1 and the maximum of 10, with a standard deviation of 2.83. Participants were then asked to rate the extent to which a social worker was involved in program development on a scale from 1-10 with 1 being not at all involved and 10 is a great deal involved. On average, participants rated their involvement in program development as 7.94 with a range from 0 to 10 and standard deviation of 3.44.

Thirty-two percent of participants reported library administration were in charge of their program, following the branch manager (24%) and head of adult services (8%). The majority of participants (35%) reported that "other" was the head of their program and clarified "Assistant Director of Library; Manager of Reference; The library system's Director; Library Social Worker

Director; Library Director; Library Deputy Director who is in charge of public desk departments; Social Work and Special Initiatives Manager / Assistant Director (me); Director of Programs and Services; I am l; Senior library arts and culture supervisor; Programming Supervisor; Program Coordinator (Internal program staff); Independent Contractor; Assistant head of adult services."

Participants were asked to consider a list of items that reflected the most challenging aspect of their position and instructed to check all that applied. The most frequently selected challenge was navigating the lack of community resources available to patrons (n=24). Next was getting the word out about your program/visibility of services (n=13), navigating confidentiality (n=11), assisting library staff, including providing trainings (n=10), achieving buy-in from library staff about your program (n=9), keeping track of patron interactions (n=9), obtaining regular supervision (n=8), developing programs or trainings (n=8), and assisting library patrons in general (n=6). Other challenges (n=11) were identified as "integrating my position into the library structure; being the only person on staff with a true social work mindset and approach to working with high needs people; relationship with library administration (doubts, undermining, lack of respect); achieving buy-in from library administrators; capacity to provide support to staff and patrons—I am one social worker for a large library system of 25 branches; space; not having a social work office; professional isolation at the library (only social worker); maintaining a sustainable workload; lack of support from library exec; staff passivity and resistance."

Table 2 provides in-depth information on the following question: *What do you believe is most important for library social work programs to have?* Each item that respondents could choose from related to this question was rated on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being not at all important and 5 being most important. In order from most to least important, participants identified that the most important resources for library social work programs to have is access to

community resources (4.84), funding opportunities/secure funding (4.61), other (4.50), library

staff buy-in (4.43), supervision or outside social work support (4.09), access to administration

(3.84), better visibility/marketing (3.63), easy and useful data tracking (3.62), opportunities for

macro work (3.54), and opportunities for micro work (3.54). Other important resources for

library social work programs were identified as "access to trainings on trauma-informed

practices; clarity of the role of a Social Worker in the Library (not security, etc.); administration

buy-in; collaborations/good relationships with other community organizations."

Table 2. Important Library Social Work Components

What participants believe is most important for library social work programs to have*

On a scale of 1-5 (1 = Not at all important; 5 = Most important)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Count (N)
Access to Administration	2	5	3.84	0.82	0.68	37
Better visibility/ marketing	1	5	3.63	0.99	0.98	32
Library staff buy-in	2	5	4.43	0.79	0.62	37
Easy and useful data tracking	1	5	3.62	1.21	1.47	34
Supervision or outside social work support	2	5	4.09	0.87	0.76	35
Access to community resources	3	5	4.84	0.44	0.19	37
Opportunities for macro work	1	5	3.54	1.05	1.11	35
Opportunities for micro work	1	5	3.54	1.00	0.99	35
Funding opportunities/ secure funding	3	5	4.61	0.54	0.29	36
Other	4	5	4.50	0.50	0.25	4

Table 3 provides in-depth information on the following question: What you believe your program is lacking? Each of the items included under these questions were also rated on a scale from 1-5 with 1 being not at all important and 5 being most important. In order of most lacking to least lacking, participants identified access to community resources (3.59), supervision or outside social work support (3.33), library staff buy-in (2.96), access to administration (2.78), better visibility/marketing (2.76), opportunities for macro work (2.71), easy and useful data tracking (2.70), funding opportunities/secure funding (2.62), opportunities for micro work (1.89), and other (1.50). Other items programs are lacking were identified as "Support/respect from library administration" and "Network with local resources and agencies."

Table 3. What is Lacking

What participants believe their program is lacking*

On a scale of 1-5 (1 = Not at all lacking; 5 = Most lacking)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance	Count (N)
Access to Administration	1	5	2.78	1.28	1.65	23
Better visibility/ marketing	1	5	2.76	1.30	1.70	25
Library staff buy-in	1	5	2.96	1.32	1.73	26
Easy and useful data tracking	1	5	2.70	1.21	1.47	27
Supervision or outside social work support	1	5	3.33	1.37	1.89	24
Access to community resources	1	5	3.59	1.19	1.41	29
Opportunities for macro work	1	5	2.71	1.28	1.63	21
Opportunities for micro work	1	4	1.89	1.02	1.04	19

Funding opportunities/ secure funding	1	5	2.62	1.44	2.08	26
Other	1	5	1.50	0.87	0.75	4

Open Ended Concluding Question

The last question of the survey was an open-ended free-form question leaving space for participants to share any other information about their experience. Sixteen participants left a response in this section. The responses in this section were varied but there was some overlap. Three participants noted that a challenge was working in a community with a "shallow resource pool" that there weren't enough resources to refer patrons. Three other participants who used this section noted that despite challenges, overall, they had a good experience in this role. Two participants mentioned being the library social worker and in a director role and that navigating the two roles at the same time was challenging.

Several responses noted difficulties with record keeping and the role that funding plays. One participant stated that it was very difficult to obtain grants and continue to get grants to fund their program. Recording keeping was noted as difficulty with continuing to obtain grants because they wanted to have the library social worker collect data that was difficult to collect in this service setting. Lack of research was also noted by a participant and how minimal research in this field has made it difficult to evaluate and provide standards for record keeping. Another participant had funding that was internal, paid for by the library, but worked at a social service agency where they were able to obtain supervision. This participant noted that this dynamic was difficult to navigate because the library didn't trust their expertise and felt that they had power over the position because they were the ones that were funding it, minimizing the role the social

service agency played in the partnership. Further, this participant stated that administration

doesn't "treat me with respect" and "trust my expertise."

Another group of participants used this open-ended section to discuss library social work

program "buy-in" and interprofessional support. Some participants noted that libraries are

initially "welcoming" but not "fully informed" of what all social work entails and requires, such

as supervision. A few other participants noted resistance from library staff in wanting to

understand the community or shifting their roles to meet the needs of their communities. One

participant noted "It is difficult to navigate librarian assumptions about the "de-

professionalization" of librarianship when it comes to offering more social service-esque

programming/services." Another participant reported that the library doesn't consider their

perspective unless it's a crisis. Lastly, one participant noted the difficulties in getting support

from library staff, specifically security, and administration in regard to the confidentiality of the

patrons they serve.

<div align="center">Qualitative Interview Results</div>

Participants

Fourteen social workers completed in-depth qualitative interviews. Participants were

geographically well represented. Participants varied in length of time as a library social worker

but largely consisted of social workers who had been practicing for a year or longer. Five

participants were former library social workers.

Overview

Participants spoke about their experiences as current and former library social workers.

There were approximately 60 codes by the end of the data analysis process. These codes were

then grouped into major and minor themes including subthemes. This section is organized by

major themes and consist of: Role Clarity, Program Components, and Endings. Subthemes under Role Clarity include: Library Social Work Practice Tasks: Micro, Mezzo, Macro; Lack of Understanding of Social Work; Differences in Professional Philosophies; Expertise; Buy-In and Support; and Safety and Security. Subthemes under Program Components include: Space; Supervision; Funding; Interns; Professional Support and Resources; Flexibility; Marketing; Lack of Community Resources; and Community and University Collaborations. Subthemes under Endings include: Buyer's Remorse; Program Endings; and How Library Social Workers Felt About Programs Ending. Minor themes included role titles and professional background which was discussed briefly at the beginning of the interviews and is addressed first in this section.

Role Titles

Several participants referenced their titles as being more inclusive, utilizing the title community resource specialist versus social worker. Several factors were noted in having their titles be listed without the word "social worker" due to the stigmatization of the profession as well as not everyone practicing being a licensed clinical social worker. Some social workers only had their BSW. Some had their MSW but were working towards getting licensed. Some never got their license because it was not relevant to the work they were doing as they weren't doing clinical work in the library though several participants were fully licensed clinical social workers.

Professional Background

Participants had a variety of professional backgrounds but largely consisted of community mental health, crisis response, working within the shelter system including domestic violence shelters, and child welfare. Several participants had worked in a macro capacity including community organizing, diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as non-profit

management. Three participants reported having previously worked in libraries, though not in a social services capacity. One participant even had a library science degree. Transferable skills that participants brought with them from previous positions were connecting people to resources, system navigation, and the ethos of "meeting people where they are at."

Role Clarity

Role clarity was an important theme that emerged during interviews. Because there is no "how to" book and this practice is new, many librarians and social workers struggled with navigating exactly what the program would look like. Librarians had an idea of what they wanted when looking to start these programs, but they might not have always matched up with what was actually in the realm of what social workers can do. Once a social worker was hired, the social worker would determine what they would do day-to-day based on their understanding and experience within the field of social work, but also consider what the library and community needed. The first part of this section will go over social worker tasks, challenges, and components connected to their roles in libraries.

Library Social Work Practice Tasks: Micro, Mezzo, Macro

Participants incorporated a variety of social work practices within their positions. Most commonly, participants were providing micro and mezzo services such as "light" case management, resource navigation and referral, staff training and support, and engaging in library policy decision making. Traditional clinical practice was agreed to not be appropriate in the library setting for a variety of reasons that will be explored throughout this results section. Several participants noted that even traditional case management is not something that is fully feasible due to the limited capacity that practitioners are able to realize with patrons in the library setting. Participants expanded on the concept of doing case management in libraries and said that

they don't carry a caseload, don't require any sort of an intake process, and can't assist in anything that requires any long-term follow-up. Traditional casework was noted as being high-barrier which isn't congruent with practicing in a low-barrier setting, like libraries.

Services provided to patrons in libraries were based on the needs of the community and patron makeup. Participants reported that they worked with a variety of patron populations but largely those being affected by poverty, experiencing housing instability, employment instability, food insecurity/food apartheid, and mental illness. In rural and suburban settings, a few participants reported helping older adults who were isolated and had limited income that would reach out to the library for resources to help with home repairs and upkeep.

Though it was made apparent that "every day is completely different" (P103), typical daily tasks were based on the needs of these populations and largely included resource navigation and referral. The main program goals were to "Get more people housed, get more people employed, get more people connected to services" (P104). Participants reported assisting patrons with applications for housing, food stamps, health insurance, job applications, etc. If there were a local organization or resource within the library that could provide, they would connect that patron to that resource. One participant stated that "I feel like a lot of what I do is sort of like a bridge, you know. It's a bridge to when they're getting to their permanent place where they're getting more permanent support" (P105). Further, two participants specifically noted that their role was to make sure that people were successful in their lives outside of the library. Lastly, participants reported an array of ways that patrons are connected to their programs and are provided based on appointments, drop-in, and/or referral from library staff.

Every participant reported that the majority of their role was to provide direct patron assistance though also noted that a portion of their positions were also mezzo tasks. Mezzo tasks

included involvement in library policy decision making, programming, serving as leadership, staff support, staff training, and building partnerships with community-based organizations. A couple of participants stated that they were invited to have a seat at the table when making policy decisions or revisions, especially around things like banning patrons. A few participants mentioned that they were involved in some form of a leadership role whether being the "person in charge" (P115) on certain shifts or being the representative of a department.

A few participants reported providing support to staff in their job description but described feeling uncomfortable having a "dual role." Library staff support would include providing emotional support or even case management to staff who were in need of assistance. One participant disclosed that one of their library's staff had become homeless and was struggling with not being able to tell their supervisor due to issues of confidentiality. That same participant went on to discuss the fine line between something being a social work issue versus a human resource issue and often staff would feel more comfortable going to the social worker than human resources because there was less of a worry about repercussive actions. Another participant specifically mentioned that they would not provide staff support in any capacity because it was too much of a dual role.

Over half of the participants mentioned providing library staff training. Training included topics covering de-escalation, LGBTQ awareness, mental health, self-care, trauma-informed practices, safety, and social work code of ethics. Though most participants provide training, several of them mentioned that they had to advocate to be able to present on certain topics. One participant stated, "It was very much a no one but librarians can tell librarians how to do their jobs" (P111). They went on to say that it took them approximately two years before they were

officially allowed to provide training. On the other side, another participant reported that they

receive "Full support on any programming I want to do around mental health awareness" (P101).

Tasks and roles looked somewhat different in the initial stages of these programs. A few

participants specifically stated when they first started in their roles, they spent a lot of time

connecting with local social service agencies in the community and started to build relationships.

This was a way that participants were able to get to know what resources existed in the

community so they'd be able to provide information to patrons. Several participants described

the importance of doing a needs assessment in the initial stages to get a good idea of what types

of services the library social worker could provide based on the needs of the community. One

participant noted, "I think those assessments are key to getting everything started" (P105).

Another participant stated that ideally a needs assessment should be done before hiring a social

worker:

> I would really say that absolutely starts with the community needs assessment before you
> even hire staff before you even write the grant for the project have a community needs
> assessment that is informing what you mean when you say this community has a lot of
> needs. Our library patrons have a lot of needs because that's gonna really change who you
> bring on or what their focus is, and then that changes who they partner with. (P104)

Lack of Understanding of Social Work

After discussing the general overview of roles, tasks, and responsibilities, participants

discussed the impact of the lack of understanding of the field of social work from library

administration and staff and how it affected their positions. Ideally, roles and tasks would be

determined by both libraries and social workers based on the needs of the community in tandem

with a solid understanding of social work ethics, values, and boundaries. However, several

participants noted librarian's inflated ideas about what social work is and what social workers

can do. Participants noted that libraries are looking for a "magic bullet" to address patrons of

concern and are hoping that social workers would fulfill that role. Further, participants noted that library staff's "oversized expectations" of what social workers can do were challenging and impacted the work that they did in libraries. "Social workers were thought of as like magical fairies. You can do anything and everything" (P111). The expectation of social workers being able to do "anything and everything" contributed to confusion about role clarity based on a lack of understanding of the social work profession.

Another challenge that participants described was not only the library's lack of understanding of the social work profession but a general lack of awareness and understanding of various systems' impact on patrons:

> Clearly, from the top, all the way down to our public-facing staff was a misunderstanding of how the systems work and was then directed to the individuals. And the assumption that is largely reinforced in the cultural narrative of it must be of individual failing that has caused this, and it's like not even a little bit. It is such a systematized oppression that has led all these individuals to have the same experience, and at some point, you know, when you do social work you're like. Wait a minute if you're experiencing this, and you are, and you are, and you are ad infinitum. It's like that's not an individual issue. That is a systems macro concern, and then we're bringing a social worker, and is trying to put a Band-Aid on situation, and it's like I'm only as good as the resources I can refer to and there aren't any fucking resources here. (P111)

The same participant went on to tell a story about sharing a patron update regarding housing with their library supervisor:

> I remember at one point due to some staffing changes. I was reporting directly to our executive director for a few months, and so my first meeting with her is like, oh…let's celebrate someone. I got somebody housed, and she was like, Oh, great! How long were you working with them? And I was like two and a half years, and her face she just had no concept that that would be how long it took, and I was like, and that was quick like that was amazing that we did that, and just like seeing that she was like what in the world. (P111)

Participants reflected on their abilities within this position and the incongruencies between the perceptions of what social workers are able to do in a practice role versus the reality:

I can't build, you know thousands of houses for people, you know? I don't have like the solution to substance use and mental health crisis, like all I can do is, you know, fall back on my tool set that I learned in school. (P116)

I think the big challenge was the misconception of social work. We have a social worker so therefore everyone will be housed. Everyone will behave. She is magic. She will solve all the problems, and I said it over and over and over again, like I'm, only as good as the resources that this community offers, and the community offers so few resources. (P111)

Further, social workers not only think about patrons in the context of the library but think about them outside of the library as well. One participant said that they tell library staff that their role is to "help people be successful inside and outside of the library" (P111). So, when staff go to them, they must first ask themselves, is that what this referral is centered in? Another participant stated:

I've tried to explain, you know, we function at these various levels that we have to have like a nice well-rounded approach to addressing things in community. And then she (library supervisor) goes back and reminds me: You know your job is to be the social worker in the library, and then like, it's not that easy. I don't just exist within the library. The people that I work with exist outside of here like I have to. (P112)

Participants discussed the importance of boundaries working in a setting where social work isn't completely understood. "Filling in the gaps without overextending ourselves is literally, I would say the motto of library social work" (P110). This field was described as having a lot of "grey areas" and not being very well developed. Maintaining boundaries has been helpful in managing expectations of libraries in "what's doable and what's not" (P106). On the other end, other participants described a common frustrating situation where they feel underutilized based on library staff's lack of understanding of what social workers can and should be involved in:

Sometimes I'll just walk out and see the police here. I'm like, so I was on the other side of that door, so I know good and well they weren't having a violent outburst because I would have heard it, and I'm on the other side of that door where you're paying me my salary, and you're calling out, you know. So it's all like good intentions, but trying to

readjust. Again, I think where it comes back to… I'm realizing it's almost re-education on what social work is. (P107)

Differences in Professional Philosophies

Though the field of library science and social work share many professional philosophies and values, tensions between library science and social work professional philosophies and values emerged during the interviews. Participants reported struggling with understanding library philosophies when they first started, saying that it was as if they were "speaking a different language" (P110). Participants also described the differences in "library culture" vs. "social work culture." Library culture was described as coming "from white, middle-class norms… Everything is based around that like very narrow window" (P111) whereas social work comes from a culture focused on social justice and equity.

One over-arching reported challenge in differences in professional philosophies was the lack of trauma-informed approaches in libraries. Several participants stated that the lack of a trauma-informed library setting was a disconnect with the work that they were doing and in some cases would even counter the work they were trying to do. "As a social worker, I would have handled something one way, whereas uh sort of a library perspective kind of had to handle it other ways" (P110). This was particularly notable with policies surrounding banning or certain approaches to security and safety: "But the library was not challenging that narrative, even though the library was well aware that that narrative was false" (P108). This was reflected even in everyday language, as one participant noted in disgust, with the use of the word "vagrant" that their library would use to describe someone who was difficult to work with.

Though differences in philosophies are present, several participants noted that there appear to be two different camps of librarians: those that believe that their job is to only engage

in traditional library work and others that believe in the flexibility of their roles to meet the needs of their community. For librarians who operate out of the first belief system, the ones that believe that it is "not their job" to pivot the work that they do and address the needs of the public, participants found it particularly challenging to work in these settings. "Why aren't librarians receiving training and working with people? It's a huge and obvious oversight" (P108). One participant articulated this phenomenon well:

> You get the whole spectrum. So, there are some staff that are like, you know, this is too much, the library shouldn't be doing this. We shouldn't even have, like, extra people that aren't really librarians… We should be able to, you know, just refer people out kind of thing. And then there are people who, you know, have been doing this sort of like resource, referral for forever, and are just like, Oh, so what are *you* doing? I already know how to do this. (P104)

Participants described the importance of providing low-barrier, easily accessible services in libraries only to be met with resistance. Participants discussed frustrations with libraries prioritizing certain populations over others and that library social workers were "attracting" the wrong kind of patrons.

> Well, we don't want to attract more homeless folks here like we don't want to be *that* much of a resource. It's like, What am I supposed to do then? Um, but yes, yes, that sort of concern that we'll be making libraries more into a less of a library, more into a social service hub. (P106)

Expertise

The concept of social work expertise in library settings is adjacent to the lack of understanding of social work and differences in professional philosophies as several participants noted that due to these factors, their work wasn't truly interdisciplinary when their expertise wasn't understood or valued. The majority of participants were the only staff at the library with social work backgrounds and at times were frustrated "to be told that I should run social work

stuff by a team of non-social workers" (P106). One participant discussed the value of expertise

and incongruencies in true interdisciplinary work in libraries:

> I think that a lot of public libraries treat social workers and other helping professionals on staff like slow cookers, right? They stick us in a cubicle in the back. They don't give us an office. They don't really like broadcast that we're there necessarily. Ah! And then, when there's a patron whose behaviors may be especially difficult or may have needs that the staff doesn't know how to meet. Then they pull us out of the metaphorical cabinet and say, okay, go fix this problem. I don't want to be involved. You go fix it, and then hope, and then they hope that we do that, and then we go back into the cabinet. And again, as I said earlier, that's just not how this works when you invite when you say we are now becoming an interdisciplinary institution. You cannot operate that sort of way when a group of professionals invites a different kind of professional into their workplace. To me that is a suggestion that we are looking forward to you helping us reframe, and reshape the way that we do our work, and instead, what we see is this slow cooker, stick it in the cabinet thing. And again, there's that discrepancy and it is highly problematic, and it speaks to all the frustrations that we've been talking about, and I think it really speaks to the burnout. And frankly, the anger that a lot of us are experiencing in these positions because we know that the opportunity is there. We know that our expertise is there. We know that the patron need is there, but we're just, we're continually, continuously shoved in the back of the cabinet. Both sometimes literally shoved back into a cubicle, certainly ideologically shoved back into the metaphorical cabinet. (P108)

Buy-In and Support

Another factor that was noted as imperative to the longevity and successes of these

programs was overall library buy-in of the social worker in the library program from staff and

administration:

> I feel like if you don't have the support of the of the body of the library, the programs, I mean, I know funding's a big thing, but even with the funding, if you don't have the support, the program is not going to go anywhere. Go fund it all you want, but nobody wants you there. (P101)

When library staff and administration really believe in the program, participants report

that they do what they can to provide extra support and fight for the permanency of these

programs. Buy-in also encompasses the component of libraries having a good understanding of

social work and a "shared understanding of the vision of the program" (P116). Participants

expanded on library staff buy-in suggesting that being willing to not only give referrals but also to take training and work on teams, so the social worker isn't as siloed. Further, it was suggested that the social worker should be in some role of leadership where "clinical oversight can echo in those spaces" (P103). Another participant said: "So I would say, having leadership that is specifically social work-related or tied to the social work program at an administrative level is a requirement" (P116). This included believing in the expertise of the social worker: "Do you have a seat at the table? But there's no one listening to you. So, what's the point of having that? Leadership ability of like sitting with other leaders when you're not being heard" (P115).

Not only was library administration mentioned as important to have support from, but everyone. Frontline staff are the center of the library, they interact with patrons the most. Oftentimes, they are giving referrals to library social workers and identifying patrons who may need assistance.

> Staff support? Hundred percent. You need that staff support and that staff integration. If I didn't have these amazing human beings that I worked with, this program would not succeed. They come to me with questions. They express their gratitude towards me. And that's the library board down to the custodial staff, 110%. You have to have the support of the staff in order to make a program like this succeed. And I like I said, I'm very blessed that I have that. (P101)

Safety and Security

Participants brought up the concept of safety and the function of security in libraries. Participants specifically mentioned that safety and security should be approached from a social justice and inclusive perspective with not only staff safety taken into consideration but patron safety as well:

> I think that kind of reimagining what safety looks like in the library and what it means to have safety is a priority and kind of making sure that we're keeping everyone safe, not just the staff. It was important for the library to also have like a social justice lens specifically, for the rules of behavior, circulation, policy, and banning procedures. (P103)

Participants also described how their jobs intersected with security and the differences in professional philosophies within that field as well. Some libraries had embedded security guards and others contracted out. Particular challenges with contracted security is that those roles were governed by their agency and not the library: "They feel very separate, and not part of the culture at all, and that makes it even harder than when things are enforced evenly" (P106). Participants said that they also ran into a lot of issues with their contracted security surrounding staff not showing up for their shifts, not answering calls, or responding in a way that was incongruent with the library's values. Because of these reasons, some participants reported that the library decided to end their contract with these security firms. Regardless of security being embedded or contracted, participants reported that security largely acted as a "police response and presence" (P104) and was difficult to navigate. One participant highlighted the complications with inter-departmental relations, specifically that of security:

> How do you influence someone else's team? You know? You're not the supervisor. How do you try to make a change in a system where you're also trying not to be really rude or inappropriate? But say, telling someone else's team that they're doing it wrong, it's all those kind of nuances of how do you really try to make change in a system where you're they're not on your team. (P114)

Program Components

Resources are needed in order to support effective library social work programs. Participants consistently discussed the various financial and non-financial resources. These resources include making sure there is a physical space for the library social worker, engaging in some form of supervision, funding structures, support from staff, professional resources, outside collaborations, program flexibility, and marketing. Each of these resources will be explored in this section.

Space

One of the most commonly reported challenges to providing social services in the library was space. Participants reported the importance of their physical location to be visible enough to increase accessibility and for safety purposes but also private enough to have confidential conversations: "Confidentiality and safety are the two biggest things about why people should have an office" (P105). Because libraries are not built with social workers in mind, library social workers had to get creative. Though the vast majority of participants mentioned issues of space during their interviews, some spoke of feeling supported and overcoming the challenge.

> So, the most challenging aspect of my position, honestly, is not having my own office. But on the other hand, I don't want it because I like being part of the group. I like the integration into the staff. Like I mentioned earlier, I've talked to so many other colleagues around the country that don't get the support from staff. I felt like if I was in an office by myself, that wouldn't happen. So that's probably the most challenging part, but it's certainly a challenge I can overcome pretty easily. (P101)

A few participants reported that their libraries are about to get renovated and there are plans to make space for the social work program in the building design.

> They're doing a remodel this summer, so they're talking about trying to work in a place that would be um, not necessarily my office, but just like a room that I could take people into. That's kind of like my meeting room with people. (P112)

> Participants also noted the fine line between a confidential space and a safe space. This

participant had an office space but didn't always use it for safety reasons.

> I just didn't always utilize that space out of safety. Um, because I was tucked away. People weren't always able to see me in there or see who I was working with. So, it was just kind of a patron by patron basis. (P109)

Another participant noted that their office space was in the basement and was too isolated to utilize for meeting with patrons, so they also did not utilize that space.

Others reported feeling unsupported, with several describing their space as a literal closet. "I would just pick up the phone dial, get them on the line, hang on a second and go into that closet. Jokingly, I was like, I'll be in my office and then have a conversation in there because I could" (P115). Another participant said, "I have this space, which is kind of like I call it my Harry Potter closet, just because it's tiny" (P105).

Confidentiality in the library was reported as a big concern among participants: "It was a constant struggle to find a confidential space" (P108). Many social workers met with people out in the open and were worried about being overheard. Several participants mentioned that the meeting rooms in which they'd meet with patrons were completely glass. While conversations couldn't be heard, but it was very obvious when someone was meeting with the social worker.

> Patrons were meeting with me in that study room where everyone can see, you know, and it's just that idea of like dignity, and that their issues are important and valid enough to be held in a confidential space as opposed to like. Let's shout about a housing assessment out on the floor, you know? (P111)

In some office spaces where there were cubicles, there was a lot of in-and-out by other library staff which was noted as a disruption. One participant told a story:

> There is a patron, an ornery, older adult, uh, who was a daily user of the library and had a hard life, and after a few years of kind of saying, Hi! Hello, and just surface-level stuff, he, said, Can I talk to you? I said Sure. Again, not having a private office or any kind of designated space, took him to a classroom on the second floor of a two-story library. We sit down, and he starts to tell me a story, and it seems to be about a traumatic incident in his life, and although that's obviously terrible, you know, as social workers, there was part of me that was like, Yes, I've established trust with this guy and he's gonna tell me, you know, and this is like two years into knowing him. So a real sense of um optimism for what we might be able to accomplish together, now that we had kind of gotten to this point. And right at that moment another one of my coworkers knocked on the door and came in and said, You know, can I grab a cord, or whatever? And I said, Yeah, you know, Be fast, please, because we'd already been interrupted. At that point he grabs it, and meanwhile the patron stands up and walks out, and he takes the elevator down to the first floor, and I took the stairs to try and catch him, not knowing what I was going to say, and I caught him in the lobby, and before I could say anything. He shoved his finger in my face. He said that was a shitty thing to do to a person, and I said, I agree, and then he

walked out, and that's and anyway, he never spoke to me again. But he continued to come to the library, and I think that ultimately is the really important thing. But that's an example of the kind of you know, practice-level frustrations of not having a designated space in the library. (P108)

Supervision

Another important resource for library social workers was identified as access to clinical supervision. A few libraries were open to paying for clinical supervision, but the majority were not. For those participants who did not have access to clinical supervision, they noted that they got creative in meeting their needs, which is expanded further in this chapter under the section on professional support/resources. Ethical concerns about practicing without clinical oversight were a concern to some participants, particularly among participants right out of their master's programs because they were unlicensed and new to the field. For participants who were licensed, concerns over putting their license at risk were noted as a concern:

> Supervision is expensive. But also, those who are putting their license at risk because they're working, you know, you're working under them. So, all those things that they don't seem to understand, it's like it's more than just saying we want a social worker and actually being able to prove that you want them there by providing them with those supports that is needed for that role. (P115)

Of those who were able to receive clinical supervision, supervision structures included the library paying for social workers in private practice or consulting from a university. One program was structured through a mental health clinic where supervision was folded into the role and provided by the clinical team at the clinic. Another supervision structure included team meetings for those who worked on a team of social workers, though that was the circumstance for only one participant.

Funding

Funding library social work partnerships can be a difficult task. Library social work

programs have a variety of creative funding structures based on partnerships and the resources they have access to. Many library social work programs are structured through internal funding, where the library social worker is a library staff with their salary being paid by the library. Others are grant-based where the library, a government organization, or community-based organization received grants for a library social work program.

Challenges arose over both types of funding. Participants who were grant-based worried about job security and the longevity of the program: "We see these programs start up and die when they're grant funded" (P105); "It could be easier to have it embedded because then you don't have to worry about grants running out. You don't have to worry about how long you're going to have this program running for" (P115). Grant-based programs are also generally outcome focused. Several participants discussed how the types of outcomes that grants are focused on impact service delivery: "Does the grant want to see incident reports decrease like what is it? Or is there anything they want to see in terms of outcomes?" (P116). One participant stated that the data their grants required them to collect to continue to justify funding was disrupted by COVID and ultimately impacted securing that funding again. They also noted that their program changed based on which grants they were able to secure due to different funders looking for various outcomes. Another participant spoke of the longevity of grant-based programs:

> I guess is what I'm trying to say is, you know, get it in the budget. Get it permanent because as social workers, you know we're used to seeing our roles die out and not work out with grants. And this is not just unique to libraries by any means. There's tons of projects that get funded that don't end up making it. (P105)

Though programs that are embedded have an internal funding structure through the library and were noted as a more secure option for program longevity, challenges with that

funding structure were still identified. One such challenge was not having extra money for their program outside of salary, such that a grant would provide. For example, having a line item for bus passes for patrons or continuing education for practitioners. Several embedded program participants also noted being spread in other non-social work directions or feeling they had to justify their positions: "Sometimes I feel a little like they're questioning what all I do and like is this a good use of our money?" (P112).

Participants noted that libraries don't realize all the extra expenses of having a social worker outside of salary and benefits. Some participants pay their own liability insurance out of pocket to practice in a library setting. Continuing education units, license renewal expenses, and clinical supervision were all mentioned as extra expenses that should be considered in these programs. Participants also noted that patron resources such as bus passes, hand warmers, socks, food, and having a phone that people can use would be very beneficial. Further, enough money for basic office supplies such as printing, a computer or tablet, cell phone, etc., should be provided by the library.

Though the majority of participants reported challenges with their funding structure, several participants reported feeling supported. One participant, who was internally funded by the library, said that their library had applied to receive an extra grant to help support the other financial components of the program, mainly resources for patrons such as bus passes and food. Another participant who was funded internally expressed confidence in their program being more of a permanent position because of their funding structure. One more participant said that she felt supported by her library staff when they fought for her position:

> If you know you could pay less if you had a person that wasn't as experienced or skilled as myself say, we could get somebody different, and like you can pay us less, or you can have (participant name), and you can pay us more. And the library's response was like,

No, we want (participant name), so we'll pay more. So that really was affirming when I heard that. (P112)

Interns

Several participants mentioned having interns or having come from programs that were started by interns. A few participants reported that previous interns had piloted their program and assisted with the program becoming a paid position. One participant mentioned the previous intern even obtained grant funding for their program. Of the participants that mentioned having interns, they discussed how having another person with a social work perspective was a big help and even "re-invigorating" (P105) as they came in with new ideas.

It's really great to be able to have the extra, not only just supporting but also having someone else that has a social work background. It's really nice and given that different perspective as well. (P103)

A few other participants discussed that though it's nice to have extra support, interns are a lot of work. One participant even said that interns are more work than help and that their productivity did not decrease by having an intern. A few participants also noted that it was difficult to navigate role clarity along with them.

I felt very protective of them because in the same way that the degreed social workers show up at the library. They're like, Oh, can you do this? Can you do this? Can you do this social work? Students aren't social workers, they're learning. They don't know what's appropriate and what's not. I mean, they have good instincts, obviously. Um. And so it was a lot of work for me, figuring that out in a way. (P111)

Further, several participants were concerned over the ethics of having social work students as free labor in the library and how that free labor doesn't mean that it is going to need fewer resources or support. One participant stated "I would say it's probably not any easier, just maybe cheaper. Uh, because students need a lot of supervision. They're not just free labor" (P106).

Another participant said, "It's really gross from like a labor perspective too, because they're like oh, free labor" (P111).

Professional Support and Resources

Participants discussed other supports and resources that they accessed in their roles. Participants reported utilizing a lot of "unofficial clinical help" (P101) such as tapping into professional networks they had previously established. One particular resource that was mentioned was the direct service call. The direct service call is a library social work networking meeting that occurs every other week. The direct service call was created by the library social worker for Chicago Public Library in 2018 as a space for library social workers to connect, share resources, and provide support. The direct service call started out with only a few library social workers and has grown to a large network of library social workers across the United States.

Other professional resources that participants noted utilizing were NASW trainings and other continuing education opportunities, though these were generally not paid for by their libraries. Participants noted that the book *Whole Person Librarianship* (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019) and the associated listserv were very helpful resources and informed a lot of the work they did in their libraries. A few participants noted that their libraries paid for them to attend conferences and felt supported by being able to pursue those opportunities. Lastly, participants noted that there were a few research articles that they utilized as a professional resource, but also noted the lack of research that was available: "I did as much research as I could. I don't feel there is as much out there when I first started" (P114).

Participants noted that accessing and navigating library social work specific resources was particularly challenging. "I will be honest. When I first started, I was like so lost, especially with the discrepancies with social work and library practice" (P103). Another participant stated

that because library social work is such a small field, accessing resources on the profession is difficult: "We don't have a home right? We don't have a home in libraries, social workers when it comes to? Where do you find the research right? Where do you find support?" (P110). One participant noted the particular challenge of accessing and navigating resources at the beginning of starting a library social work program:

> I just see some people struggle. They're like I'm hired, and I'm really excited about it. But what do I do? And you know, how long does it take for people to get connected to the direct service calls or these other resources that exist, or other library social workers? It takes time, and that is precious time. That, you know, it just slows a lot of stuff down, especially when we're talking about people that are on a ticking clock with a grant or something like that. (P105)

Participants also noted feeling isolated from the profession which fueled the motivation to find extra professional resources. "It can be isolating, working as a social worker in the library" (P109). Libraries aren't completely informed about social work or what social work in libraries specifically looks like, and the profession of social work doesn't have a good grasp either: "We don't necessarily belong in the library world, but we don't necessarily have the guidance from our profession" (P111). One participant discussed the difficulties with professional isolation having started right out of their master's program and still learning about how to be a social worker: "Isolation of being the only one, but then leading to isolation of your social work career and your social work background and future knowledge of social work" (P115).

Flexibility

The ability of social workers and libraries to be equally flexible was noted as an important component of library social work partnerships. The library setting in itself offers flexibility for social work practice, providing low-barrier services in particular. Flexibility in

what the program looks like and what services are provided was identified as each library is

located within a specific community with different service needs:

> I think the biggest thing is the flexibility that a library social worker has. I think it enables them to really dig deep, to see what the needs are, and to determine what the needs of that specific library is because I think every library would have different needs. Every library has a different community, so I feel like the flexibility of it really allows you to kind of determine what that is. (P103)

Participants noted the importance of library staff and administration being open and

supportive of the flexibility to shape the program. Some participants felt that program flexibility

was supported by their staff, and others felt the opposite. Those who felt their library

administration wasn't supportive of flexibility noted the lack of flexibility as a need.

> I think that's at least from my experience like that's there needed to be more buy-in and more flexibility from leadership. Honestly because the staff were all on board, and so maybe there's some integration between leadership and staff and leadership listening to their more traditional library staff of what their needs are. And then, allowing those needs to be met a real practical way, instead of like sort of the lip service of like you have one social worker for this whole county. (P111)

Marketing

There are several ways that libraries let the public know how to access their social work

services. Some libraries have more marketing resources than others. For example, some libraries

have an entire marketing department that assists in getting the word out about their programs,

including the social work programs. Some library social work programs have appointment forms

online that patrons can complete requesting a meeting. Others utilize more word-of-mouth

strategies, such as having library staff refer patrons to the social workers or social workers

maintaining relationships with community-based organizations to provide referrals as well.

However, there is a back-and-forth between some libraries and marketing the program because

libraries don't want to "attract" certain populations so social workers in those programs feel that their services aren't marketed in the same way as other library programs or resources.

Lack of Community Resources

A significant challenge that participants reported was the general lack of community resources. All but two participants brought up struggles with navigating community resources because there were so few available in their communities. As stated in the sections of this paper on tasks and roles, one of the biggest micro tasks for library social workers was connecting patrons to resources and assisting in the navigation of those resources. In communities where resources are limited, so too are what social workers in libraries are able to do. One participant stated: "I'm only as good as the resources that this community offers, and the community offers so few resources" (P111).

One specific community resource that was cited as most challenging was housing: "And then for homelessness, I think, is the other biggest, you know, affordable housing, and even places that are shelters, and are always full, because we are a big city" (P114).

> There's just also not enough housing, not enough housing that is affordable, not enough programs that will help make housing affordable, not enough programs that are going to help support people to maintain their housing. So even if I can get someone into housing, well, what connections exist for that person so that they don't end up back on the street? (P105)

Another compounding factor in navigating the lack of community resources was the lack of public transportation. For participants whose libraries were in rural or suburban areas with limited public transportation, getting to those agency referrals was a struggle, including getting people into shelters. One participant noted even dangerousness: "Lack of public transportation is not only a frustration, it's dangerous, it puts people in harm's way. It's dangerous to be walking around outside in the middle of like July in Texas" (P108).

Community and University Collaborations

Oftentimes, library social work programs will incorporate some form of collaboration between different community organizations, including universities. Participants reported going out into the community and building relationships with other community-based organizations as a first step when they started:

> Yeah, that's also been key to just building the program. So, like I said, like the first two months that I started, my like top task was to just get out there in the community. So, I literally just like drove to different organizations, set up different scheduled meetings. So, we just talked about what the organization does, how to obtain their services, the languages they speak there how to access them, just like general information, so that we can have our own updated kind of like a resource guide. (P103)

One participant recommended continually incorporating networking with community-based organizations even after the initial stages to keep partnerships and resource information current. Community-based organizations are also called upon to help with programming. If there is a certain service or specialty that an organization provides, library social workers act as a liaison between the library and the organization to get the word out. In addition to programming, community-based organizations have also helped fill in the gap of extra program expenses such as providing food, bus passes, or even diapers to patrons. Participants got creative in accessing a wide variety of community resources and incorporating them into their library practice.

University partnerships were identified as being helpful as well, specifically in instances where a library social work program had interns. Not only can universities help with the intern aspect, but they can also help with the supervision aspect of programs. A few library participants that had partnerships with universities discussed utilizing social work faculty as support in providing the social work perspective:

> I think what makes a really good program is some type of partnership with the local university or college. Um, this program wouldn't exist without the partnership that we

have with the local college, and so that partnership not only can bring interns but also brings in the perspective of social work students and social work faculty to kind of help, especially if it's a library that has never had a social worker or an intern just to be able to get that input from them. (P103)

Endings

It is apparent that some libraries were not ready for social workers based on a lack of understanding of social work as well as not having the proper resources available for program longevity and success. Further, the lack of library readiness ties in with the theme of libraries having incongruent expectations of what social workers do and not being informed about the field of social work prior to starting the program. Participants discussed thoughts and feelings about program endings, whether it was their own or a colleague's program.

Buyer's Remorse

Several participants discussed libraries experiencing what they referred to as "buyer's remorse" in which libraries would back out of social work programs once they realize what the work actually looks like. The expectations that libraries had of what these programs would look like were very different than what participants would expect the work to look like. Once this was realized, libraries would either pivot and trust the expertise of the social workers or they would simply stop supporting the program's efforts.

> I say they get buyer's remorse. It's that they've bitten off more than they can chew. They think that they're hiring a nice, friendly social worker to help people, and although we're going to try to help people, we're really trying to work ourselves out of a job, and that requires not only assisting people and accessing the resources to which they are entitled, but also in reshaping the ways the communities meet the needs of people, and that is a bigger, more uncomfortable conversation that never really ends. (P108)

Further, a few participants felt that libraries are mainly interested in creating these types of programs just to appease the community and show that they are doing something to address concerns over how libraries are utilized: "A lot of libraries bring on a social worker just to like

check that off of their checklist right? To like look good. But they don't really know what it

entails to have a social worker at the library" (P105). Another participant expanded further

noting that these partnerships can feel performative:

> I feel like there are times where libraries or cities want to do this performative thing.
> They want to do the performative thing around me, like "Look, we have a social worker",
> you know, and then they don't really realize what that all encompasses. They're not ready
> for change. They're not ready for the things that are going to come along with it, but
> they're not ready to commit to it long term, and that isn't fair to a community, you know
> it's not fair to bring someone on just to remove that resource later. It's not fair to commit
> to it short-term and knowing that you might not commit to it long-term, it's not fair for
> people to expect a resource then leaving. How do you tell your clients that? (P111)

Program Endings

Based on this "buyer's remorse," a lot of these programs are ending across the country.

Of the fourteen people who were interviewed, five of them had been either laid off or left their

programs. Of those who left and felt "pushed out," they stated it was due to some form of their

"health and well-being" being at risk if they continued to work in libraries. All five programs

ended because the library was no longer interested in continuing these programs, not because of

lack of funding. Two library participants were laid off because the libraries did not want to

continue their programs for a variety of reasons. One of these two participants stated that their

library acted "hostile" towards their program from the beginning so it didn't surprise them that it

would end before the grant was even up. The other three participants reported being forced out of

their programs for going against policy changes and two of the libraries did not rehire or

continue their social work programs once they had left. One participant noted the lack of library

resources and support in contributing to her resignation:

> So since—the only other social worker left—I've been operating this department by
> myself, with no real support from my supervisor, because my theory is that they are kind
> of just hoping to wear me out. I've basically just been kind of asking for supervisory
> support, asking for more staff, asking for really any kind of support to keep this program

afloat. And I was like stonewalled up until I activated my union. And then, even then, I've just kind of faced retaliation. So I did resign. (P104)

Another participant resigned because their library required them to provide services that were more appropriate for a lawyer to provide and felt unethical practicing in that library based on that requirement. They stated that their library was really looking for "a bad social worker or a weak-willed social worker who they can boss around and tell what to do" (P115). Further, this participant is worried about who they will rehire and convince to provide services that are incongruent to the profession. Similarly, another participant was relieved that their library wouldn't rehire for fear of the same outcome: "Upon hearing that my system isn't rehiring, I'm kind of like great, because if anybody reached out to me, I would so strongly advise them away from it until we saw some change in the system" (P111).

How Library Social Workers Felt About Programs Ending: "Library Social Work Didn't Love Me Back the Way I Loved It"

Participants expressed a lot of feelings about their programs ending. Some of these conversations were very emotional as participants had put a lot of work into making these programs happen over the course of multiple years. Several participants discussed sadness over their programs ending and feeling that they were "failing" their community because now there was one less resource in a community that was resource deficient to begin with:

> We served over three hundred clients just even with only having two, maybe three staff at the most. Um! So there's at least, you know, a couple of hundred folks who will not have the same access that they did in the community. They're not going to be able to come and grab a bus pass and make their way to their job, you know, or their job interview, or their hospital intake, or whatever. Um, there's a lot of people who like came to us to kind of follow up on stuff because they didn't have a cell phone. They don't have a way to check their email, and we were a large point of contact for them, and like a port of advocacy really, and that's gone. (P104)

Another participant expressed feeling passionate about the library as a venue for providing low-

barrier social service assistance but having to leave to take care of themselves:

> Library social work didn't love me back the way I loved it. So, it was just one of those things where I was like, my job just didn't love me back. It was just one of those things where I was like, Oh, I love me more than continuing to mold myself into something I'm not for the benefit of the library. (P115)

Lastly, this participant felt that the library was not ready for their work and felt unsupported by

library staff and administration:

> I feel like I'm supposed to say that hurts, but like it doesn't. I know I'm very confident in the work that I did and clearly, with everything I described to you they were not ready for a social worker, and so were probably waiting for me to leave. I don't think there were even though staff desperately want it. (P111)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

The practice of library social work is at a pivotal point in the profession, with immense opportunity for practice and research development. This study explored how library social work partnerships are developed, implemented, and practiced across the United States, with a focus on barriers and facilitators to practice. Through the meta theory of critical realism, this study was able to explore this topic from objective and subjective lenses (Baert, 2005). Further, it was clear that using ecological systems theory to conceptualize library social work practice was suitable as library social workers reported their experiences being impacted by various systems levels: micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono (Willig & Stainton, 2017). Ecological systems theory does not support one methodology over the other although the combination of the two is considered a strength as both confirming and exploratory questions are considered (Arcidiacono et al., 2009). This study used a mixed methods design to gather survey data from 39 library social workers and interview data from 14 social workers. This design enabled me to explore the characteristics and practices of library social workers across the United States and to gather rich information about the barriers and facilitators to developing, implementing, and practicing library social work. Study findings have implications for how community providers, libraries, schools of social work, and city, county, and state health and human service sectors can better partner to improve social worker integration into U.S. public libraries. This chapter provides a summary of the results of the current study; how those findings converge with or diverge from what is written in the

literature about library social work; and implications for library social work practice, policy, and future research.

Research Question:

1. What are the characteristics, practices, and experiences of library social workers across the United States?

    a. What are the barriers to developing, implementing, and practicing library social work?

    b. What are the facilitators to developing, implementing, and practicing library social work?

Research Question 1: Characteristics, Practices, and Experiences

Characteristics

Role Title. In this study, 18 participants reported that their title included "Social Worker," with 9 having the title of Library Social Worker and three having the title of Social Worker. The other 21 included some iteration of "community resource specialist." In the qualitative interviews, participants identified two reasons why titles matter. First, participants clarified that including the words "social worker" in their title might cause patrons to be hesitant to approach the social worker due to the stigmatization of the profession or if they had a bad experience with social workers in the past. Seeking out a resource specialist could provide more confidentiality in itself than meeting with or being referred to a professional with "social worker" in their title. Secondly, participants identified that "social worker" might not be used in a title because not all library social workers hold licenses which to some is the defining criteria to be considered a social worker. When an individual seeks services in a social service or mental health agency, the assumption is that everyone will be a trained mental health professional. In

those contexts, titles are often associated with budget lines, like caseworker I, II, or III. In contrast, when a social worker is in a host site, like a library, titles play an important role in signaling to the patron what type of professional they are interacting with because the assumption is that the professionals are librarians. In a host site, a social worker's title takes on added meaning. This finding represents a novel contribution to the literature as this is the first study to document the variety of role titles held by social workers employed in libraries.

Practitioner Professional Background. Library social worker's professional background, expertise, and previous experiences were explored in this study. The survey results indicated that prior to their current position as library social workers, most had been community mental health social workers. Similarly, the most common social work degree specialization among participants was mental health, community organizing, and advanced generalist. A practitioner's professional background and degree specialization may influence the structure and tasks of library social worker practice. If a library social worker's background is in community mental health, they might have the tendency to incorporate micro or mezzo practices into their work in libraries. If a library social worker's background is in community organizing, they might have more of a tendency to incorporate macro practices. As prior professional experience and degree specialization of library social workers have not been explored in previous research, these speculations are based on the absence of extant literature.

This study found that there is a divide between whether or not social workers should be licensed to practice in libraries. The participants who did not think that licenses should be required told me that because they don't have a caseload, are not providing therapy, and focus more on community-based mezzo/macro tasks, having a license is unnecessary. These participants, for the most part, were not licensed. In contrast, participants who argued in favor of

licensure noted that libraries should invest in hiring practitioners with degrees and licensures to ensure that social work professional values and ethics are carried out, especially in a setting with minimal professional oversight. Further, it was noted that because these positions require navigating professional differences, social workers who are just starting out might have a more difficult time than seasoned social workers as they are more familiar with the field. The lack of agreement on social work licensure poses a problem for library social work as differences in standards of practice might further confuse the roles of social workers.

Practice Setting. This study included the representation of a national sample. Almost half of library social work participants practiced in libraries in the Midwest. A quarter were located in the West, and a quarter in the Southeast, Northeast, and Southwest (Figure 2). The authors of *Whole Person Librarianship* (2019) created a website where they attempt to provide an updated map of current library social work programs. The distribution of these programs and this sample were similar. As of 2023, there were no published articles from either library sciences or social work to give insight into why library social work positions were concentrated in the Midwest.

Library social workers in both the survey and the interviews noted that library social work programs were funded through a variety of sources. In the surveys, library social work participants identified funding structures as through the city or local government, internally by the library, through grants, and/or through outside community organizations. The most popular funding structures were through local or city government, internally by the library, and/or through grants. In the qualitative section, library social work programs were reported as structured through internal funding, where the library social worker is a library staff with program expenses, including salary, paid by the library. Others are grant-based, where the

library, a government organization, or community-based organization received grants for the library social work program. Findings are consistent with prior literature that outlines the same possible funding structures (Zettervall & Neinow, 2019).

Consistent with previous literature, the library social workers in the current study reported working with library patrons with varying psychosocial needs: poverty, housing instability, employment instability, food insecurity/apartheid, and mental illness (Provence et al., 2020; Wahler et al., 2021). Almost every single participant reported working with people experiencing homelessness, a population that Geisler (2017 & 2019) and Provence (2019) noted as being particularly prevalent in libraries. Social work participants also frequently mentioned the lack of affordable housing and difficulty assisting patrons experiencing homelessness with connecting to housing. A few participants mentioned the library's misunderstanding of how difficult it is to get someone housed when librarians expressed surprise that it takes so long. Further, just as recommendations were made by Provence (2019), participants also discussed the importance of incorporating humanizing practices in libraries that have patrons experiencing homelessness, as some libraries were reported to have struggled with carrying out inclusive policies.

Practices

Practice Tasks and Duties. Participants in this study identified their job duties as being split between serving patrons and working with library staff, administration, and community-based organizations. As noted above, they provided a variety of services based on the needs of individual patrons. This mix of micro- and mezzo-level services is consistent with the literature. Several authors identified practice tasks of library social workers and interns as a mix between

micro, mezzo, and macro tasks and can look different based on the needs of the community (Cuseglio, 2020; Lee et al., 2022; Lloyd, 2020; Luo et al., 2012; Zettervall & Nienow, 2019).

Experiences

Experience in the Practice Setting. This study investigated the experiences of library social workers, focusing on the structure, hierarchy, and administration of their programs. Participants reported high levels of access and collaboration with library administration. However, they identified a lack of buy-in from library staff as a significant issue. The success of these programs, according to the library social workers, depends on support from both administration and staff. Programs with strong belief and backing from both groups have better chances of permanency. Interviews revealed that a shared vision between librarians and social workers is crucial, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, library social workers emphasized the importance of assuming leadership roles to ensure social work values are well-represented. This not only validates their expertise but also aligns with Lee's (2009) assertion that librarian and social worker collaboration should aim for community growth through social action, leadership, and advocacy.

This study found that the most challenging, important, and lacking components were all aligned. The lack of community resources emerged as the most significant challenge, as confirmed by both survey results and qualitative interviews. Previous research, including Lloyd (2020), has also recognized this issue as particularly difficult for library social workers. As the primary task for social workers is to connect library patrons to community resources (Lloyd, 2020; Zettervall & Nienow, 2019), insufficient resources pose a barrier to practice. Consequently, access to community resources is not only the most challenging aspect but also the most important component, emphasizing its critical role in library social work.

Endings. As noted above, an unexpected finding was how many of these programs have

ended. Five of fourteen participants in the qualitative section reported that their programs had

closed or they had left their position, effectively ending the library social work program. In these

interviews, several participants became tearful while recounting their experiences, not because

they were sad to lose a job but because it meant that one of the only, if not the only, services

addressing the variety of issues noted above had been taken from their community. Participants

described a hostile work environment in which the library realized that the social worker(s)

weren't going to meet their inflated or incorrect expectations, leading to what some participants

called "buyer's remorse." In these libraries, library staff and social workers had different ideas

about what social work in the library looks like. Participants felt their role could not only include

working with individuals on the micro level, like the library had hoped, without advocating for

the change of oppressive library practices. According to participants, these libraries were not

open to or ready to engage in those types of conversations. Based on these participants'

responses, these programs ending is a direct effect of a lack of understanding about the

profession of social work, inflated expectations, lack of buy-in, and lack of a shared vision.

Research Questions 1a and 1b: Barriers and Facilitators to Developing, Implementing, and Practicing Library Social Work

Library social workers spoke of challenges to making these programs and partnerships

successful, which are defined as barriers to practice. These barriers made social work practice in

libraries particularly difficult in this host setting. Library social workers also voiced key

ingredients to make these programs and partnerships successful, which are defined as facilitators

to practice. These facilitators were in alignment with the barriers as they were generally the

direct opposite: if barriers to practice are addressed, then they become facilitators of library social work practice.

Role Clarity

In considering host site challenges and a lack of professional guidelines, it is unsurprising that library social workers consistently reported role clarity as a struggle. It was apparent that library social work is conceptualized differently by librarians and social workers. In the qualitative interviews, social workers commented that librarians thought of social workers as a "magic bullet" to cure the library of all social ails, whereas social workers were excited at the prospect of being able to provide services in a low-barrier, accessible venue. Participants reported that librarians wanted the roles of social workers to remain within the library, but social workers conceptualized their roles as community work targeted at incorporating micro, mezzo, and macro tasks inside and outside of the library. Social workers' roles are also determined, in part, by the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics and values (National Association of Social Workers, 2017) which libraries were uninformed of; at times, libraries would ask social workers to engage in tasks that were in direct violation of NASW code of ethics. This study also highlighted library social work partnerships ending due to conflicting ideas of what precisely a library social worker does. Participants reported libraries that were expecting social workers to be a "magic bullet" were disappointed when social workers focused their role on making changes in library practices to be more equitable spaces versus solving homelessness, for example. Establishing role clarity is essential in successful library social work partnerships and must include not only agreement among social workers of program standards but a joint understanding of similarities and differences among both professions.

Lack of Understanding of Social Work. A contributing factor to the confusion about library social worker roles was the libraries' lack of understanding of the field of social work. Participants reported that librarians had a false and/or inflated sense of what social work could do for libraries. Participants reported that libraries thought that even the mere presence of a social worker would be enough to solve societal issues like homelessness. While social workers understood the limitations of their work, they still incorporated mezzo and macro work to attend to these issues, but the library didn't always understand or support any work that took place outside of the library. The findings in this study were consistent with Lloyd's (2020) study which found that library social workers wanted to be seen as experts and trusted with library social work program design and service delivery. Participants in this study provided training to library staff on trauma-informed approaches or social work codes of ethics to increase insight, buy-in, and trust in social work philosophy and practice. To the dismay of the participants, training and educating librarians was not only an added burden but, from their perspective, it did not lead to a better understanding of a social worker's scope of practice. Participants noted the absence of collaborative partnerships, which made it difficult to develop a shared vision and understanding of the scope of practice between library leadership and staff, and the social worker. Lloyd (2020) noted this phenomenon as well, attesting that social workers practicing in libraries have limitations in their ability to solve larger societal issues that librarians are not aware of. If social workers are to be successfully integrated into libraries, both social worker expectations and library expectations must be discussed and aligned for improved collaboration. The participants whose programs ended highlighted the lack of these qualities as contributing to their programs ending. If librarians had been more informed of what social workers can—and cannot—do, then

they might have had a more realistic expectation of these programs, including mediating the chances of libraries experiencing "buyer's remorse."

Differences in Professional Philosophies. Another finding that impacted the clarity of the roles of library social workers was the differences between the professional philosophies of librarians and social workers. Participants spoke of "library culture" as being different than social work culture in that it considers a very narrow scope that was described as "white, middle-class norms" whereas social work operates out of an understanding of systemic influences on individuals. This finding is consistent with extant literature (Giesler, 2017; Gustina & Guinnee, 2017; Lloyd, 2020). Lloyd (2020) and Giesler (2017) hinted at differences in professional philosophies when discussing libraries' lack of understanding of social work. In Gustina and Guinnee's 2017 study, library social workers noted the library's hesitancy to pursue social justice efforts. Giesler (2017) had an expanded critique of these professional differences. They criticized certain library practices as a form of social control, for example, "criminalizing homeless survival tactics" (p. 188) through rules that banish sleeping, washing in the bathrooms, and having more than three bags. Participants in this study whose libraries had similar policies commented that these practices and policies were not in alignment with social work values. In order to meet clients where they were, library social workers in this study advocated for policy changes within the library. This was one of several examples of the intersection between micro- and mezzo-level practice; to provide micro-level services, library social workers had to advocate for mezzo-level changes.

The advocacy by social workers within libraries described by study participants is consistent with the idea that Moxley & Abbas (2016) espouse that libraries are the center of communities and act as community anchors, meaning that they are already positioned as actors

for social justice, a central professional value within the field of social work. Because of libraries' positionality within the community, they are able to provide an anchor to community resources, like access to heating/cooling, public restrooms, educational materials, etc. All of these act as protective factors for the community (Lloyd, 2020) which in itself can be a tool for community resilience. Social work participants in this study consistently mentioned their passion for work in libraries due to the library's positionality within the community as having potential for social change and/or fostering community resilience. However, based on participant responses describing the library's hesitancy to embrace their positionality, this highlights a tension in professional philosophies.

Expertise. Participants reported feeling that the library's lack of understanding of social work contributed to the diminishment of their expertise which ultimately impacted what roles they had in their libraries. If libraries are not informed of the field of social work, then it could be difficult for libraries to honor social work expertise. Obviously, social workers are the experts in social work, but participants reported tensions surrounding non-social workers (in this case, librarians) making decisions about their programs and how social work is practiced. This finding represents a novel contribution to the literature as this is the first study to document social workers not feeling their expertise is valued in the library.

Buy-In and Support. One of the main challenges for social workers in host sites, such as libraries, is securing support for social work practice from the primary professional group, in this case, librarians. Both survey and interview results revealed that buy-in and support from administrators and librarians are crucial for successful social work practice in libraries. However, some participants reported insufficient buy-in from library staff. Library staff buy-in is as important as administrative buy-in since they are the frontline workers interacting with social

workers daily. Therefore, library social workers need strong partnerships and understanding with both library administration and staff. This study supports Lee's (2009) argument that the goal of librarian and social worker collaboration is to provide community growth through social action by way of leadership and advocacy. Library social work participants reported that when library administration and staff really believe in these programs their chances of program permanency are greater. A lack of shared vision among these groups can create confusion in role clarity, leading to reduced buy-in due to inconsistent role expectations. Factors such as limited understanding of social work, differences in professional philosophy, and undervaluing social workers' expertise may also impact buy-in from staff and administration. Ultimately, these factors can affect the clarity of the social worker's role within the library.

Space

Social workers in libraries struggled with the balance of having access to space to meet with patrons that is private enough to have confidential conversations but not so isolated that they can't be seen by other staff for safety reasons. Several participants noted that confidentiality in conversations is a professional social work value and ethical consideration that librarians did not share, and some might not have known about due to a lack of understanding of the field of social work. Congruent with the literature, it was apparent that the concept of space was multidimensional and a challenge to navigate in public library settings (Aykanian, et al., 2020; Wahler, et al., 2022). Some library social workers felt supported, including incorporating a designated social workspace in remodel plans. Others reported only having a literal closet to use as their space to have confidential phone conversations. If social workers in libraries do not have access to physical space to perform their basic job functions, then it is a clear barrier to practice.

Appropriate space for a library social worker to have confidential conversations was identified as a facilitator to practice. In addition to having a confidential space, social work accessibility and visibility to patrons was also identified as a facilitator. When offices are in basements or somewhere isolated, library social workers reported being less likely to be visible to the public. Library social workers found that visibility is important to have a further reach and reinforce the social worker's presence in the library.

Supervision

Supervision is an important practice within the field of library social work (Fook, 1996). Supervision provides a chance for one social worker to meet with another social worker, often one in the position of supervisor and the other supervisee. The purpose of supervision is to provide a space for practice oversight through discussion of ethics and values via case consultation. In the quantitative section, almost two-thirds of library social workers reported they did not receive supervision or professional oversight from their field. In the qualitative section, social workers reported that they get creative in meeting this need through informal discussions with colleagues to accommodate for the lack of access to clinical supervision. Consistent with this study's findings, library social workers in the Zettervall and Nienow (2019) text were isolated from the field as they were often the only social workers in the host setting (the library). Especially for social workers who are practicing in host sites where they are isolated from the profession in a setting with minimal practice guidelines, supervision is a fundamental and ethical practice.

This study made clear that library social workers do not have access to supervision in the same ways that social workers practicing in traditional settings do. Supervision is a valuable and important part of social work practice and is embedded in social work ethics and values (Fook,

1996). Supervision is considered a facilitator to practice as it can provide professional oversight to these programs as well as mediate professional isolation in a host site setting. Some library social workers who were new to the field expressed that access to supervision would have helped guide them better. Because of their novice status, there were situations that would come up in the library they were unsure how to navigate from a social work perspective and wished that they had a supervisor to guide them. Further, social workers that had access to supervision, which was very few, felt strongly about supervision facilitating practice, especially those who were licensed and didn't want to put their licenses at risk.

Funding

In this study, social workers expressed struggles with existing funding structures and identified certain structures as a barrier to program longevity. Social workers who were grant-based worried about their job security and the permanency of their programs. Grants were focused on outcomes, as determined by funders, which wasn't always congruent with social work practice in libraries. Participants wanted their programs to be part of the library budget as a way of establishing program security and demonstrating the library's commitment to a social work program. However, there were also challenges with internal funding structures through libraries, such as not having extra money for non-salary related program expenses, including social work practice expenses and patron expenses. Social work practice expenses include licensure, liability, supervision, continuing education units, and professional memberships such as to the NASW. Social work program expenses can also include basic office supplies like a phone, computer, printers, etc. Patron expenses include bus passes, food, or toiletry packs. Most participants did not have access to all of the above and struggled to get these items in their program budgets. However, one participant overcame funding challenges by combining funding

structures, being internally funded by the library but applying for grants for extra program expenses, including resources for patrons. Though the literature has outlined various potential funding structures (Zettervall & Nienow, 2019), the opinions and experiences of library social workers under these structures have not yet been previously explored, making this finding a novel contribution to the literature.

Secure funding was noted as a facilitator to practice. Library social work participants want their positions to be "in the budget" in order to maintain program longevity. Library social workers reported that they are used to seeing their positions "die out" when only being funded through grants and call for program funding structures to include more permanent arrangements. Successful library social work partnerships have a combination of funding, such as funding internally from the library and receiving grants for extra program expenses. Again, library social work programs are not just a salary; they require funding for professional, practice, and patron needs which secure funding can facilitate.

Lack of Community Resources

Access to community resources was identified as the most important, challenging, and the biggest lack in library social work practice. Social workers continually mentioned that they were "only as good as the resources" that were available in their community and expressed their frustrations with the scarcity of resources available. This is congruent with previous literature, as Lloyd (2020) discussed his struggles with navigating resources with patrons in his practice as a library social worker due to the lack of resources. Social workers stated that they are not a "magic bullet" and that there are multiple factors leading to resource availability, oftentimes outside of the scope of direct social work practice. As library social workers' main micro task was providing resource linkage and referral to patrons, not having enough resources in their

communities to refer to made their work particularly difficult. Social workers reported that they felt constrained by the lack of resources in their communities as they were not able to come up with solutions for patrons if there were no resources or ways to access them, such as transportation. Ironically, the lack of community resources is the reason why libraries are being utilized in non-traditional ways in the first place, including places to access basic needs like shelter (Giesler, 2019; Provence, 2019; Provence et al., 2020).

One specific resource that was identified as being particularly lacking and challenging to obtain was housing for people experiencing homelessness. Further, social workers reported libraries' lack of understanding of these processes, also leading to inaccurate expectations of what library social workers can do in their roles. In expressing this frustration, one library social worker specifically noted that she couldn't simply "build houses" for these patrons. This confirms not only the importance of role clarity for the library social worker but also the importance that the library social worker is engaged in all levels of practice—micro, mezzo, and macro in order to serve library patrons best.

Access to community resources is considered to be a facilitator to practice. Library social workers noting the importance of community resources is corroborated in a previous study on positive outcomes based on resource availability. Metraux and colleagues (2012) found that persons with serious mental illness had better outcomes based on the availability of a variety of community resources. Not only were the resources that were considered in the study solely focused on mental health but also included resources such as access to food, hospitals, public transportation, etc. However, resource availability doesn't necessarily mean that individuals don't need help navigating those resources, which is the predominant micro task of library social workers.

Theoretical Integration

Host Setting Vs. Interdisciplinary Practice

The data collected in this study through the survey and the interviews suggests that library social work is currently not an interdisciplinary practice but rather social work practice in a host site. This distinction has important theoretical and practical implications. Interdisciplinary practice consists of "interdependent collaboration, open communication, and shared decision-making" (Nancarrow, et al., 2013, p. 2). Library social workers in this study describe the very opposite experiences in the libraries where they sought to practice social work through feeling a lack of understanding of the social work profession, differences in professional philosophies, and diminishment of their expertise. This was not a phenomenon tied to a few libraries in a certain region in the U.S., it was consistent across the country. More appropriately, this practice can be defined as social work practice in a host setting, where social work is practiced in a non-traditional social work setting (Dane & Simon, 1991). This study's novel and important finding illuminated how library culture, philosophy, practice, and structure all present major challenges to social work practice in libraries. But most glaringly is the lack of intentional program development, planning, and implementation by the fields of social work and library science. There is real opportunity for scholars from both fields to partner with libraries and community members to design effective "library social work practice" and to evaluate and refine this practice. However, in order to get to the place of designing an integrated interdisciplinary approach between library science and social work, the fields will need to address the many challenges uncovered by this study.

As library social work is a host-setting form of social work and not an interdisciplinary practice, there are clear parallels between library social work and social work practice in a

variety of institutional "host" settings, including schools and hospitals (Dane & Simon, 1991; Gherardi & Whittlesey-Jerome, 2018; Heenan & Birrell, 2019; Villarreal-Sosa, 2022). Tensions and challenges surrounding social work practice in host settings have been identified as "(1) value discrepancies between hosts and guests; (2) the marginality of social workers' token status; (3) role ambiguity and role strain within the cluster of roles that social workers enact as resident guests" (Dane & Simon, 1991, p. 208). Participants in the current study identified similar challenges: (1) differences in professional philosophies within the field of social work and library science are apparent, including (2) inflated expectations of social workers based on their token status, and (3) because of the lack of practice guidance in this field and lack of libraries understanding social work, role clarity has been particularly challenging for library social workers to navigate.

School social workers have reported similar challenges: feelings of marginalization as a result of working in settings that are not entirely interdisciplinary even though both fields, education, and social work, have some overlapping values (Gherardi & Whittlesey-Jerome, 2018). School social workers have also noted austerity constraints where the objectives of their programs are decided upon by contracted funding sources, which in turn uphold structural oppression rather than attempt to dismantle it (Villarreal-Sosa, 2022). Similarly, hospital or medical social work has noted that true interdisciplinary practice is also lacking, and although other professions might recognize the value, they do not understand the hurdles to the work, resulting in inflated expectations and results (Heenan & Birrell, 2019). Hospital social work has also noted neoliberal influences, particularly on the focus on discharge planning versus direct patient care, as discharge planning had a more direct correlation to outcomes (Heenan & Birrell,

2019). Hospital social workers report feeling committed to their values even though they didn't align with austerity measures that occur in the hospital setting (Heenan & Birrell, 2019).

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory provides a valuable framework for understanding participant descriptions of the work they do in libraries. Ecological systems theory conceptualizes the interaction of systems and how they influence each other (Langer & Lietz, 2015). As previously discussed, there are five levels of systems in ecosystems theory: micro (the individual), meso (the individual's work, school, friends, and family), exo (local government, community-based organizations), macro (policies), and chrono (history and/or time). This framework assists in providing an understanding of how various systems influence and impact how library social work is practiced. Within the context of library social work, the microsystem encompasses the individual experiences of patrons, library staff, and social workers. The mesosystem incorporates how these individuals interact with each other. The exosystem is comprised of the library and local community-based organizations and the resources they have available. The macrosystem encompasses the influence of politics on available community resources and funding. The chronosystem is historical influences over time that have impacted how libraries are situated in communities and shifts in services they provide.

Library staff, patrons, and social workers are all individuals in the microsystem. Each library staff, patron, and social worker all have their own personal and professional experiences influencing how they interact with others. Library social work participants discussed their professional values and expertise which influenced how they practiced social work in libraries. Of course, library staff do not have the same education as social workers and bring with them their own set of professional values and expertise. With an understanding of differences in

microsystems, the result of how these different systems interact in the mesosystem is clear: the library's lack of understanding of the profession of social work, differences in professional philosophies, and valuing expertise influence social workers' roles in libraries. Though this study did not investigate the experiences of library patrons, the way in which social work participants approached patron services was with consideration of impacting systems on the individual. This highlights another mesosystem interaction, the differences in professional philosophies influence the role of the social worker and ultimately what services the patron is receiving. In addition, these mesosystem tensions can influence what program resources are available to the library social worker such as space and supervision, which were identified as important facilitators to practice by library social work participants.

The library as an institution is on the exosystem. Institution hierarchy, practices, policies, and culture all impact the levels below, ultimately affecting how patrons experience the library. Library social workers discussed frustrations with library policies that felt to counter the work they were doing. For example, policies "criminalizing homeless survival tactics" (Giesler, 2017 p. 188) such as limiting the number of bags people can bring in and not allowing patrons to sleep. Participants envisioned the work that they were doing as helping library patrons be successful inside and outside of the library, but these policies made that goal difficult and ultimately resulted in library social workers taking on the role of advocating for these policies to be reconsidered. Not only does the library interact with the systems below, but it also interacts with other institutions on the exo level, such as community-based organizations and resources available. Participants suggested more collaboration between the library and these other exosystem institutions to make changes to serve the needs of patrons better.

Several social workers expressed their programs being directly impacted by macro systems, particularly changes in local political power. Several social workers discussed the impact of local government on what the library can and cannot provide, with services being significantly cut back under a newer conservative city administration. The library is funded primarily through tax dollars, and funding levels vary depending on which political party is in power. This can also be used as leverage to control what happens in public institutions. Further, politics control what resources are available in a community. Social workers repeatedly mentioned that they were only as good as the resources that were available in their community and expressed their frustrations with the scarcity of resources available. Similarly, the chronosystem—time and history—certainly influences changes in political power. The chronosystem also can conceptualize the role that time and history have played in shaping exosystem library culture and practices of the library as a longstanding institution.

Limitations

There were several limitations that should be noted in this study. To start, this study only sampled library social workers, not library administrators or staff, or library patrons. Future research that aims to deeply examine library-social work partnerships must include library staff and patrons. A library social worker developed the tool, but in the future additional data collection methods and measures should be devised by library staff and patrons to ensure a deeper understanding of social work practice in libraries—and related barriers and facilitators.

As the quantitative portion was used to collect descriptive statistics and to inform the qualitative portion, limitations were minimal: the only guide to developing the survey was the use of prior research. However, this study sought to get a general idea about how library social work is practiced first and then expand further through interviews, making it congruent with and

appropriate in answering the research questions. Small sample size, lack of standardized measurement tools, and minimal comparison among variables are all limitations to the quantitative portion of this research (Creswell & Clark, 2018). To address the above limitations, the qualitative portion of this study was intended to complement fulfilling the research questions.

Qualitative findings are subject to researcher and response bias (Padgett, 2017). The researcher was formerly a library social worker, and the participants were library social workers—and together the mutual bonding and positionality may have impacted the research interview experience, as well as data analysis and interpretation, thus biasing results. However, practitioners as researchers can enable participants to feel more comfortable in disclosing information regarding their practice (Quinney et al., 2016). Interviewing participants that the researcher is familiar with is a common occurrence in small, specialized fields in which library social work is identified (Mcconnell-Henry et al., 2009). Member checking (Padgett, 2017) was utilized to clarify the researcher's understanding of participant responses by reviewing findings with several participants and social work practice and research experts. Data analysis triangulation was achieved by enlisting the assistance of research peers to read interviews and suggest and review codes, as well as review dissertation findings and generate meaningful discussion for both practice and policy. Additionally, another response bias could be through the self-selection process (Padgett, 2017). Individuals who decided to participate may have been motivated to participate because of having a really good experience or a really bad experience.

Implications and Recommendations

Though library social work is a promising practice, there appears to be a greater opportunity for library science and social work integration. This study highlights the current challenges of successfully implementing and sustaining social work programming in libraries. To

study the impact of library social work, practice specification and the development of guidelines are necessary. In the meantime, without clear practice guidelines, study findings highlight practical suggestions immediately improving the conditions and experiences of library social workers. Based on the findings in this study and previous research, it is recommended that libraries should be fully informed about every component that makes a library social work partnership successful, such as role clarity, supervision, adequate space, funding, and access to community resources. Further, recommendations for future research are identified.

Practice and Policy

As this study uncovered the ambiguity of the definition of "social worker," it became clear that who is practicing social work needs to fit a specific definition and standard of practice. Some social workers practicing in libraries were unlicensed or only had their Bachelor's in Social Work degrees. Some participants did not use the title of "social worker" in their roles because they were unlicensed and were under the impression that only licensed individuals were able to call themselves social workers. The field of library social work must delineate who qualifies as a social worker and who exactly practices social work in libraries.

If libraries are more informed of the field of social work, are committed to working through differences in professional philosophies -and adopt a more interdisciplinary approach, and value the expertise of the social worker, then overall program support and staff buy-in are likely to be higher. If libraries are to incorporate the above, then initial commitment must first be in place, modeled by the administration, and trickle down to the frontline staff. Though getting libraries onboard to attend to these from the beginning is something that should be explored.

Role Clarity

This study also found that there were unclear boundaries in relation to what and where social workers could provide services—and what their focus should be. Study participants all described their goal of helping people to be successful inside as well as outside of the library— literally holding the social work mantra "meeting people where they are at" within the library setting and doing everything in their power to connect patrons to community resources. It is clear that libraries should become fully informed of the field of social work prior to program implementation to have realistic expectations and a better understanding of the roles of social workers within libraries. Before librarians and social workers collaborate and create a shared vision of the program, libraries should learn more about social work by reading over NASW's code of ethics and guiding social work values. A better understanding of social work professional values and ethics could potentially help libraries understand the expertise of the social worker within the library setting. Libraries can also speak with other social workers who practice in community settings to get a sense of the work that they do. They can also reach out to universities with social work programs to learn more about the curriculum.

Supervision

Another route to ensuring the longevity of these programs is to incorporate the practice of supervision. Most of the library social workers in this study did not receive supervision, oversight, or support from more experienced professionals in their field. Study participants reported engaging in informal discussions with social work colleagues, largely outside of the library social work community, to consult on challenges they face in providing support to library patrons and advocating for change in libraries. However, supervision is a critical foundation in social work professional development, and it is arguably even more important in settings where

social work practice is new and in a non-traditional host setting. Ethically, the field must reckon with the real issue that social workers are experiencing harm in their roles in libraries, in part because they are not receiving quality (nor tailored to library social work) supervision. Social workers reported that because supervision is so expensive, their libraries would not consider this form of professional support. By providing professional resources, specifically supervision, library social workers will be practicing in line with professional values, and it might even lead to library social workers feeling more supported by libraries.

Space

Both library science and social work fields must resolve the confounds of the physical design of the library including accessibility and quality of space. Of course, most libraries are not able to accommodate a space for social workers by rebuilding the layout of the library, but there are ways to get creative with issues of space in libraries. As uncovered in this study, library social workers require a space where confidential conversations can occur but are still visible. Confidential spaces can be auditoriums, study rooms, or other office areas. Spaces that are too isolated should not be used because of safety issues as well as for program visibility. Social workers reported a fine line between the two but emphasized the need for the primary social worker space to be easily accessible to patrons. Further, libraries embracing and working with social workers to address issues of space is a more collaborative practice that could mediate negative experiences of social workers feeling that they are not valued or understood. Simply having a space for a library social worker is one way of showing validation and buy-in.

Funding

It was clear that libraries overlooked aspects of social work practice prior to program development, including fees associated with licensure, liability, supervision, continuing

education units, and professional memberships such as NASW. Having a social worker on staff is more than just a salary; the presence of a social worker is indeed a major investment that future perspective libraries should be aware of and consider. If library social workers are receiving the proper funding for the above professional resources, libraries will truly be able to facilitate social work practice. Libraries should consider multiple streams of revenue to get funding for every aspect of the program that is needed. One participant reported having funding through the library but would apply for additional grants to pay for auxiliary expenses. Zettervall & Nienow (2019) note grant possibilities from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), library foundations, and local foundations such as mental health foundations.

Community Resources

With library social workers reporting a dearth of community resources to support these populations, other ways that the library can explore creation or advocacy of the creation of these resources within the community should be explored. Many participants expressed frustrations with the scarcity of community resources available to truly meet the needs of library patrons that their unique role was to serve. This is critical for the field of social work to reckon with—without community resources to link patrons to, social workers' roles can be limited. To resolve this real issue, the library could partner with community providers (and local government) to lead community initiatives to increase improve and increase resources and social services for their patrons. If library social work strives to be a truly interdisciplinary practice, then both library social workers and libraries should engage in advocacy for more resources within their communities, including partnering with the local government and community-based organizations.

Research

Future research efforts should consist of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative studies on library social work could consist of correlation-based studies examining what factors are correlated to accessing more resources for programs or what resources are available to lasting programs. Qualitative methods could be utilized to continue to explore program endings or barriers to true interdisciplinary practice in libraries. Other studies should include samples that not only consist of library social workers but library staff, administration, patrons, and community members. It is essential to know how library staff and administration perceive these programs. In addition, exploring the experiences of patrons who are receiving services from social workers in libraries is important to consider.

This study made it clear that library social work is not an interdisciplinary practice. Future research could assess library social work practice from an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to identify areas of improvement. Future research could also incorporate prior research about the experiences of social workers in other host settings, such as schools, hospitals, police stations, etc. Because a main theme in this research was navigating differences in professional philosophies, exploring how social workers in other host settings are navigating differences in their host's professional philosophies would be an important phenomenon to consider.

Future evaluation efforts should focus on creating standardization of program components, such as creating a practice profile or a fidelity scale. The first step would be attempting to replicate existing profiles or scales of other host-setting social work practices but tailoring them to social work in the library. Creating a practice profile to identify essential elements in successful library social work programs can help to streamline practice guidelines,

essentially creating a multidimensional guide on how to achieve the gold standard of practice. The next step would be to create a fidelity scale that library social work programs can use to evaluate the implementation of their practice. Practice profiles and fidelity scales should be created with input from both researchers and practitioners, including librarians, to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach fully. Further, creating clear practice guidelines and evaluation measures can make important components for successful implementation explicit.

Conclusion

Social work practice in libraries is unique, low-barrier, community-based, and contemporary. Library social work truly "meets people where they are at." The practice of library social work is at a pivotal and important tipping point in time for the profession as programs are either continuing and growing or suddenly ending. This study illuminates the tensions between library science and social work from the perspective of library social workers. Study findings complement and build upon library social work research in the past decade. Library social workers struggled with navigating differences in professional values, physical space, lack of community resources, and lack of professional resources. Library social work was found not to be an interdisciplinary practice—yet social workers are in libraries, and social work researchers like me remain energized and will continue to study library social work. Library social work is a promising practice with ample opportunity for theory, practice, policy, and research development—all of which I intend to contribute to in my career as a social work scholar.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Practitioner Professional Background

1. What is the title of your position?

2. How long have you been in this role?

3. What is your highest level of education?

   a. Bachelor's Degree in Social Work

   b. Bachelor's Degree in other field

   c. Master's Degree in Social Work

   d. Master's Degree in other field

   e. Other

4. If you received your master's degree in social work, which track or specialization, if any, did you have?

   a. Advanced generalist

   b. Clinical

   c. Mental Health

   d. Community Organizing/Macro

   e. Medical/Health

   f. School

   g. No Specialization

   h. Other

5. What is your current license if any?

   a. Bachelor's License (LSW)

   b. Master's License (LMSW)

   c. Clinical License (LCSW, LICSW)

d. Other

e. N/A

6. What area of social work did you practice (or hold a field placement in) before working at the library? Check all that apply.

a. Community mental health

b. Community organizing/Macro

c. Clinical practice

d. Health/Hospital

e. School

f. Other

Practice Setting

7. What geographic area is your library located?

a. West (WA, OR, ID, MT, CA, NV, UT, CO, WY, AK, HI)

b. Southeast (AR, LA, MS, AL, GA, FL, SC, NC, TN, KY, VA, WV, VA, DC, MD, DE)

c. Southwest (AZ, NM, TX, OK)

d. Midwest (ND, SD, NE, KS, MO, IA, MN, WI, IL, IN, MI, OH)

e. Northeast (PA, NJ, CT, RI, MA, NH, NY, VT, ME)

8. What is the setting of the library branch/branches you serve?

a. Urban

b. Suburban

c. Rural

9. Were you the first library social worker, or did someone hold this position before you?

a. I was the first library social worker to hold this position

b. There was one library social worker before me

c. There were more than one library social workers before me

d. There was a library social work intern before me, but no practitioner

e. Other

10. How long has your library social work program existed?

   a. Less than one year

   b. More than one year

   c. 2-3 years

   d. 4-5 years

   e. 5+ years

11. What is the funding structure for your program? Check all that apply.

   a. Grant-based

   b. Position funded through the city or local government

   c. Position funded through outside community organization, i.e. community mental health agency, hospital, etc.

   d. Internally funded through the library

   e. Other

12. Where do you receive your clinical supervision, if applicable?

   a. Social worker employed through library

   b. Social worker from community agency

   c. Social worker from a university

   d. Private/Independent paid social worker

   e. I don't receive clinical supervision

f. Other

13. Do you work with any other social workers at the library?

   a. Yes

   b. No

14. Does your library host interns?

   a. Yes

   b. No

15. Which of the following populations do you serve at your library? Check all that apply.

   a. People experiencing housing insecurity, including homelessness

   b. People experiencing food insecurity

   c. Immigrants or refugees

   d. Older adults

   e. Persons with serious and persistent mental illness

   f. Children

   g. Teens/young adults

   h. Parents

   i. Other

   j. N/A

Practice Tasks & Duties

16. Who do you serve and interface with at your library? Check all that apply.

   a. Library patrons

   b. Library staff

   c. Library administration

d. Community based organizations

e. Other

17. Indicate on the slider, the percentage of time you engaged in the following tasks.

   a. (0-100% slider) Individual assistance to library patrons

   b. (0-100% slider) Outreach to community-based organizations

   c. (0-100% slider) Individual support for library staff

   d. (0-100% slider) Library staff trainings

   e. (0-100% slider) Library programming

18. Indicate on the slider, the percentage of assistance to library patrons do you provide from most to least?

   a. (0-100% slider) Resource linkage: basic needs

   b. (0-100% slider) Resource linkage: behavioral health/substance use

   c. (0-100% slider) Assistance with government applications (i.e. SNAP, Medicaid, SSI)

   d. (0-100% slider) Crisis intervention

   e. (0-100% slider) Emotional support

   f. Other

19. How were the services you provide decided on? (check all that apply)

   a. Service need identified by library social worker

   b. Service need identified by library

   c. Service need identified by collaboration between library and social worker

   d. Community needs assessment

   e. Patron needs assessment or input

   f. Other

20. How do you keep track of your patron interactions? Check all that apply.

    a. An excel or word document

    b. Computer program for client interactions such as Charity Tracker

    c. Electronic health or medical records

    d. Other

21. How does your library evaluate the social work program/partnership? Check all that apply.

    a. Yearly employee reviews

    b. Library social work program included in annual report

    c. Grant requirements

    d. Program evaluation through a university or outside agency

    e. Other

    f. My program does not have a formal evaluation structure

Experience in Practice Setting

22. On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate your relationship with library administration? 1 being limited access. 10 being a great collaborative relationship with library administration.

23. Please rate the extent to which you or another social worker was involved in the initial development of your program.

Not at all>>> A Great deal

24. Who is the person in charge of your program at the library?

    a. Branch manager

    b. Library administration

    c. Head of adult services

    d. Head of children's services

e. Other

25. What is the most challenging aspect of your position? Check all that apply.

   a. Assisting library patrons

   b. Assisting library staff, including providing trainings

   c. Achieving buy in from library staff about your program

   d. Getting the word out about your program/visibility of services

   e. Lack of community resources available to patrons

   f. Obtaining regular supervision

   g. Developing programs or trainings

   h. Navigating confidentiality

   i. Keeping track of patron interactions

   j. Other

26. On a scale from 1-5 (not at all important to most important), please rate the following based on what you believe is most important for library social work programs to have?

   a. Access to administration (1-5)

   b. Better visibility/marketing (1-5)

   c. Library staff buy-in (1-5)

   d. Easy and useful data tracking (1-5)

   e. Supervision or outside social work support (1-5)

   f. Access to community resources (1-5)

   g. Opportunities for macro work (1-5)

   h. Opportunities for micro work (1-5)

   i. Funding opportunities/secure funding (1-5)

j. Other

27. On a scale from 1-5 (not at all lacking to most lacking), please rate the following based on what you believe your program is lacking?

    a. Access to administration (1-5)

    b. Better visibility/marketing (1-5)

    c. Library staff buy-in (1-5)

    d. Easy and useful data tracking (1-5)

    e. Supervision or outside social work support (1-5)

    f. Access to community resources (1-5)

    g. Opportunities for macro work (1-5)

    h. Opportunities for micro work (1-5)

    i. Funding opportunities/secure funding (1-5)

    j. Other

28. Is there any other information you would like to share about your experience practicing in a library?

Open ended, long answer

00. If you are interested in participating in a 60-90 minute follow up interview, please provide your name and email below:

APPENDIX B

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Opening script: Thank you for your agreement to participate in this research study. The purpose of this study is to learn more about how library social work is practiced across the United States. This interview will remain confidential throughout the study and the results will not include any identifiable information. Please feel free to share what you feel comfortable sharing and ask questions. This interview will be recorded to provide the opportunity to revisit this information and accurately collect direct quotes. As a participant in this study, you have the right to withdraw consent at any point. You can also refuse to answer any questions if you wish to do so. Do you have any questions for me regarding this study before we begin?

1. I'm really interested in learning more about your social work practice background and how that led you to this position. What were you doing before the library? How did you find out about the position?

2. What tasks or duties do you have in your position? What does a typical day look like?

3. What type of populations do you work with the most in your community?

4. What is the most challenging aspect of your position?

5. Should these programs be embraced? What are the key ingredients to a successful library social work program?

6. Tell me more about the funding structures with your program. Do you have any funding concerns or think that funding should be structured differently?

7. Are there any professional resources that you aren't getting or are difficult to access because you are a library social worker? An example might be clinical supervision, networking groups, continuing education units, trainings, etc.

8. Did you feel like your university prepared you for this type of role and if so, in what ways?

9. Tell me about the type of support you receive at the library, among library staff and administration?

10. Tell me about existing research or resources on library social work practice that were helpful to you when you first started. What type of research or other resources do you wish there were?

11. What advice would you give to those who are starting a library social work program?

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM-SURVEY

<div align="center">

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Loyola University in Chicago

820 N. Michigan Ave. Maguire Hall 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611

(Tel): 312-915-7447 / (Fax): 312-915-7645

</div>

Project Title: Library Social Work: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

Principle Investigator: Margaret Ann Paauw, LCSW, PhD Candidate, School of Social Work

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Jonathan Singer

Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Margaret Ann Paauw, LCSW, for their dissertation project under the supervision of Dr. Jonathan Singer through the School of Social Work at Loyola University of Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you have been identified as a social work practitioner working in a paid position providing social services at a public library in the United States. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how library social work partnerships are implemented and practiced in the United States. Further, this study aims to investigate barriers and facilitators to practice in this field. As the field of library social work grows, research regarding practice is minimal. This study hopes to contribute to research on library social work with the goal of informing practice.

Procedures

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:

- Complete an online survey via a confidential link that will take approximately 20-25 minutes. Survey questions will center around your experience practicing social work in libraries. There are approximately 25 questions on this survey.

- Optional qualitative interview: At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to be contacted for a follow up 60-90 minute interview. If you decline, you survey data will remain anonymous. If you agree, your survey data will be linked to the interview but will remain confidential.

Discomforts or Risks

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There are no direct benefits to you from participation, however, the results of this study will be used to inform and grow library social work practice.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

If you agree to participate in the survey only, your identity will remain anonymous. If you agree to take part in the qualitative interview as well, you will be asked for your name, but your survey data will not be linked to your name. Instead, we will use an identification number to replace your name and your survey data will be confidential. All data collected in this study will be kept safe in Loyola protected cloud storage. The survey will only be available and accessed by the principal investigator, dissertation committee, and research team.

.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Margaret Ann Paauw at mpaauw@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor at jsinger1@luc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Consent to participate in the survey:

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM—INTERVIEWS

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Loyola University in Chicago

820 N. Michigan Ave. Maguire Hall 4th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611

(Tel): 312-915-7447 / (Fax): 312-915-7645

Project Title: Library Social Work: Barriers and Facilitators to Practice

Principle Investigator: Margaret Ann Paauw, LCSW, Doctoral Student, School of Social Work

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Jonathan Singer

Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Margaret Ann Paauw, LCSW, for their dissertation project under the supervision of Dr. Jonathan Singer through the School of Social Work at Loyola University of Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you have been identified as a social work practitioner working in a paid position providing social services at a public library in the United States. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how library social work partnerships are implemented and practiced in the United States. Further, this study aims to investigate barriers and facilitators to practice in this field. As the field of library social work grows, research regarding practice is minimal. This study hopes to contribute to research on library social work with the goal of informing practice.

Procedures

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 60-90 minute virtual interview via zoom or phone with questions pertaining to your practice experience in libraries as well as follow up questions to survey responses

- This interview will be recorded through Zoom and transcribed through a professional transcription service with consent of the participant

Discomforts or Risks

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There are no direct benefits to you from participation, however, the results of this study will be used to inform and grow library social work practice.

Confidentiality

The data collected in this study will be kept confidential and safe in Loyola protected cloud storage. Though the transcription service will be used to transcribe the interview, the interviewer will refrain from using any names during the interviews and on interview files. After transcribed, the interviews will only be available and accessed by the principal investigator, dissertation committee, and research team. By participating in the interview, survey data from the quantitative portion of this study will be linked to contact information but will remain confidential.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Margaret Ann Paauw at mpaauw@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor at jsinger1@luc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Consent to participate in the interview:

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

Consent for the interview to be audio recorded:

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

APPENDIX E

RECRUITMENT PROMPT FOR QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

SUBJECT HEADING: Invitation for Library Social Workers to Participate in Research Study

Greetings,

My name is Margaret Ann Paauw and I am a Ph.D. student at Loyola University Chicago's School for Social Work working on a dissertation on library social work. I am reaching out because I am looking for participants for my research study. If you are a current or former library social worker in the United States, please consider completing the survey below. The aim of this study is to get a better understanding of barriers and facilitators to the development, implementation, and practice of library social work from the perspectives of library social workers. This is an IRB-approved study, the findings of which will be used in publications and presentations. The expected time to complete the survey is approximately 10-15 minutes.

If you agree to participate, please complete the survey below:

https://luc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bPdJgMaEKTpaxMy

Please complete the survey by April 25th as the link will expire.

This study will also include a qualitative portion where I plan on interviewing library social workers to get a deeper understanding of the practice of library social work. If you are interested in participating in the qualitative portion of this study, please complete the survey and leave your contact information in the last question or email me directly to set up an interview.

If you have questions, please contact me at mpaauw@luc.edu.

Thanks for your interest in this project and I look forward to hearing from you!

Margaret Ann Paauw, LCSW
Ph.D. Candidate & Research Assistant
Loyola University Chicago
mpaauw@luc.edu

APPENDIX F

RECRUITMENT PROMPT FOR QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

SUBJECT HEADING: Follow Up Invitation: Qualitative Research Study about your experience as a library Social Worker

Greetings,

Thank you for completing the online survey about your experiences as a library social worker. You provided your email address at the end of the survey, indicating that you would be interested in participating in a follow up interview about your practice experience. If you are still interested, **please respond to this email** and together we can arrange a time and mode (Zoom or phone) through which the interview will take place. The interview should take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete.

The interview questions and subsequent discussion aims to follow up on what was gathered from the survey. The overall goal of this research is to learn more about barriers and facilitators to library social work development, implementation, and practice from the perspective of library social workers.

With your permission, the phone or Zoom call (camera optional) will be audio recorded so it can be transcribed and reviewed by myself during the analysis process. This is an IRB approved study, the findings of which will be used in publications and presentations. Research findings will anonymize all content from respondents and not allow for individuals to be identified by name or by institution.

If you have questions, please contact me at mpaauw@luc.edu.

Thanks for your interest in this project and I look forward to hearing from you!

Margaret Ann Paauw, LCSW
Ph.D. Candidate & Research Assistant
Loyola University Chicago
mpaauw@luc.edu

REFERENCE LIST

Abramovitz, M. (1998). Social work and social reform: An arena of struggle. *Social Work, 43*(6), 512–526.

American Library Association. (2020). In S. Zalusky (Ed.), *The state of America's libraries 20. Report from the American Library Association*. http://www.ala.org/news/state-americas-libraries-report-2020 20: A 2020

Arcidiacono, C., Procentese, F., & Di Napoli, I. (2009). Qualitative and quantitative research: An ecological approach. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 3*(2), 163-176.

Aykanian, A., Morton, P., Trawver, K., Victorson, L., Preskitt, S., & Street, K. (2020). Library-based field placements: Meeting the diverse needs of patrons, including those experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Social Work Education, 56*(sup1), S72–S80. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2020.1723757

Baert, P. (2005). *Philosophy of the social sciences: towards pragmatism*. Polity Press.

Barber, P. (2013). *Becoming a practitioner researcher: A gestalt approach to holistic inquiry*. Libri Publishing.

Barclay, D. A. (2017). Space and the social worth of public libraries. *Public Library Quarterly, 36*(4), 267–273. https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2017.1327767

Beagle, D., & Lacy, D. (1982). Outreach services for Public Library I&R: Measuring effectiveness. *Public Library Quarterly*, *3*(4), 33–47. https://doi.org/10.1300/J118v03n04_05

Butina, M. (2015). A narrative approach to qualitative inquiry. *American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, 28*(3), 190-196. https://doi.org/10.29074/ascls.28.3.190

Cathcart, R. (2008). Librarian or social worker: Time to look at the blurring line? *The Reference Librarian*, *49*(1), 87–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/02763870802103845

Chamberlain, C. (1991). The gatekeeper and information. *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory, 15*(3), 265–269. https://doi.org/10.1016/0364-6408(91)90025-A

Childers, T. (1984). Is I&R social work? *American Libraries, 15*(4), 222–222.

Christians, C., & Carey, J. (1989). The logic and aims of qualitative research. In G. H. Stempel III, & B. H. Westley (Eds.), *Research methods in mass communication* (pp. 354-374). Prentice Hall.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2017). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 297–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613

Collier, A. (1994). *Critical realism: An introduction to Roy Bhaskar's philosophy.* Verso.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J., & Clark, V. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. SAGE.

Cuseglio, R. (2020). MSW interns in the public library: A case study in community partnership. *Social Work Education*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2020.1791066

Dane, B. O., & Simon, B. L. (1991). Resident guests: Social workers in host settings. *Social Work* (New York), 36(3), 208–213. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/36.3.208

DeRoos, Y. S. (1990). The development of practice wisdom through human problem-solving processes. *The Social Service Review (Chicago), 64*(2), 276–287. https://doi.org/10.1086/603763

De Souza, D. E. (2022). A critical realist approach to systems thinking in evaluation. *Evaluation*, *28*(1), 72–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/13563890211064639

Dillman, D., Smyth, J., & Christian, L. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). Wiley Publishing.

Edwards, J., & Williams, P. (2010). The role of libraries in helping adolescents and their families juggle the demands of work and life. *Aplis, 23*(3), 84–89.

Fink, A. (2014). *Conducting research literature reviews: From the internet to paper* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Fook, J. (1996). *The reflective researcher: Social workers' theories of practice research.* Allen & Unwin.

Gehner, J. (2010). Libraries, low-income people, and social exclusion. *Public Library Quarterly*, *29*(1), 39–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/01616840903562976

Gherardi, & Whittlesey-Jerome, W. K. (2018). Role integration through the practice of social work with schools. *Children & Schools, 40*(1), 35–44. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdx028

Giesler, M. A. (2017). A place to call home?: A qualitative exploration of public librarians' response to homelessness. *Journal of Access Services, 14*(4), 188–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2017.1395704

Giesler, M. A. (2019). The collaboration between homeless shelters and public libraries in addressing homelessness: A multiple case study. *Journal of Library Administration*, 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2018.1549405

Gomory, T. (2001). Critical rationalism (Gomory's Blurry Theory) or positivism (Thyer's Theoretical Myopia): Which is the prescription for social work research? *Journal of Social Work Education, 37*(1), 67–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2001.10779037

Grace, D., & Sen, B. (2013). Community resilience and the role of the public library. *Library Trends, 61*(3), 513–541. https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2013.0008

Gustina, M., & Guinnee, E. (2017). Why social justice in the library? *Library Journal, 142*(10), 52.

Heenan, & Birrell, D. (2019). Hospital-based social work: Challenges at the interface between health and social care. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *49*(7), 1741–1758. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcy114

Hines, S. S. (2015). Connecting individuals with social services: The library's role. *International Federation of Library Associations*.

Hodgetts, D., Stolte, O., Chamberlain, K., Radley, A., Nikora, L., Nabalarua, E., & Groot, S. (2008). A trip to the library: Homelessness and social inclusion. *Social and Cultural Geography, 9*(8), 933–953. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360802441432

Huzar, T. (2014). Neoliberalism, democracy and the library as a radically inclusive space. *International Federation of Library Associations*.

Johnson, C. (2012). How do public libraries create social capital? An analysis of interactions between library staff and patrons. *Library and Information Science Research, 34*(1), 52–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.07.009

Johnson, S. C. (2019). MSW interns and public libraries: Enhancing services through interdisciplinary collaboration. *Public Services Quarterly, 15*(1), 13–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228959.2018.1541332

Johnson, S. C. (2021). Innovative social work field placements in public libraries. *Social Work Education.* https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2021.1908987

Kranich, N. (2001). Libraries create social capital. *Library Journal*. https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=libraries-create-socialcapital

134

Langer, C. L., & Lietz, C. A. (2015). *Applying theory to generalist social work practice: A case study approach.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lee, P. R. (2009). The social worker and social action: Address delivered before the New York State Conference on Social Work, 1935. *Journal of Community Practice, 17*(3), 327–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705420903118450

Lee, S., Bae, J., Sharkey, C. N., Bakare, O. H., Embrey, J., & Ager, M. (2022). Professional social work and public libraries in the United States: A scoping review. *Social Work* (New York), *67*(3), 249–265. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swac025

Lloyd, P. (2020). The public library as a protective factor: An introduction to library social work. *Public Library Quarterly, 39*(1), 50–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2019.1581872

Lohr, S. L. (1999). *Sampling: Design and analysis.* Duxbury Press.

Luo, L., Estreicher, D., Lee, P. A., Thomas, C., & Thomas, G. (2012). Social workers in the library: An innovative approach to address library patrons' social service needs. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries, 1*(1), 73-82.

Mcconnell-Henry, T., James, A., Chapman, Y., & Francis, K. (2009). Researching with people you know: Issues in interviewing. *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*, *34*(1), 2–9.

Metraux, S., Brusilovskiy, E., Prvu-Bettger, J. A., Irene Wong, Y.-L., & Salzer, M. S. (2012). Geographic access to and availability of community resources for persons diagnosed with severe mental illness in Philadelphia, USA. *Health & Place*, 18(3), 621–629. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2011.12.011

Moxley, D. P., & Abbas, J. M. (2016). Envisioning libraries as collaborative community anchors for social service provision to vulnerable populations. *Practice, 28*(5), 311–330. https://doi.org/10.1080/09503153.2015.1135891

Nancarrow, S. A., Booth, A., Ariss, S., Smith, T., Enderby, P., & Roots, A. (2013). Ten principles of good interdisciplinary teamwork. *Human Resources for Health, 11,* 19. https://doi.org/10.1186/1478-4491-11-19

National Association of Social Workers. (2017). NASW code of ethics. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English

Oldenburg, R. (1999). *The great good place: Cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community* (2nd ed.). Da Capo Press.

Padgett, D. (2017). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. SAGE.

Pressley, T. (2017). Public libraries, serious mental illness, and homelessness: A survey of public librarians. *Public Library Quarterly, 36*(1), 61–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2017.1275772

Provence, M. A. (2019). From nuisances to neighbors. *Advances in Social Work, 18*(4), 1053-1067.

Provence, M., Wahler, E., Helling, J., & Williams, M. (2020). Public library quarterly self-reported psychosocial needs of public library patrons: Comparisons based on housing status. *Public Library Quarterly, 40*. https://doi/org/10.1080/01616846.2020.1730738

Qualtrics. (2021, April 10). How to determine the correct survey sample size. *Qualtrics*. https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/research/determine-sample-size/.

Quinney, L., Dwyer, T., & Chapman, Y. (2016). Who, where, and how of interviewing peers: Implications for a phenomenological study. *SAGE Open*, *6*(3), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016659688

Rea, L., & Parker, R. (2014). *Designing and conducting survey research: A comprehensive guide*. Jossey-Bass.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2015). *Research methods for social work.* Thomson/Brooks/Cole.

Schweizer, E. (2018). *Social workers within Canadian public libraries: A multicase study* [Unpublished master's thesis, University of Calgary, Alberta].

Seattle Public Library. (n.d.). Immigrant and refugee services. https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/civics-and-social-services/immigrant-and refugee-services

Sharkey, C. N., Elkins, J., & Johnson, Z. (2021). Field note-creating trauma-informed library spaces: Lessons learned from a pilot program. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2021.1978913

Terrile, V. C. (2016). Public library support of families experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Children and Poverty, 22*(2), 133–146. https://doi.org/10.1080/10796126.2016.1209166

Thyer, B. (2001). *The handbook of social work research.* Sage.

Uggerhøj, L. (2011). What is practice research in social work—Definitions, barriers and possibilities. *Social Work and Society*, *9*, 45-59.

Villarreal-Sosa, L. (2022). School social work: Challenges and opportunities. *Children & Schools*, *44*(2), 67–69. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdac005

Wahler, E. A., Provence, M. A., Johnson, S. C., Helling, J., & Williams, M. (2021). Library patrons' psychosocial needs: Perceptions of need and reasons for accessing social work services. *Social Work* (New York), *66*(4), 297–305. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swab032

Wahler, E., Ressler, J., Johnson, S., Rortvedt, C., Saecker, T., Helling, J., Williams, M., & Hoover, D. (2022). Public library-based social work field placements: Guidance for public libraries planning to become a social work practicum site. *Public Library Quarterly, 42,* 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2022.2044264

Westbrook, L. (2015). "I'm not a social worker": an information service model for working with patrons in crisis. *The Library Quarterly* (Chicago), *85*(1), 6–25. https://doi.org/10.1086/679023

Whole Person Librarianship Map. (2023, March 30). https://wholepersonlibrarianship.com/map/

Wiegand, W. (2015). *Part of our lives*: *A peoples history of the American public library.* Oxford University Press.

Willig, C., & Stainton, R. W. (2017). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. SAGE Publications.

Zettervall, S. K., & Nienow, M. C. (2019). *Whole person librarianship: A social work approach to patron services*. Libraries Unlimited, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

VITA

Margaret Ann Paauw completed their undergraduate education from The Evergreen State College in 2011. Then, Margaret Ann graduated with their MSW from Loyola University Chicago in 2015 and has been a licensed clinical social worker since 2017. Margaret Ann's clinical background has been working in social service settings with youth and young adults experiencing psychosocial disruptions, adults with special needs, and adults with serious and persistent mental illness in both inpatient and outpatient settings. From 2019-2021 Margaret Ann Paauw worked as one of two library social workers at the Chicago Public Library. Most recently, Margaret Ann Paauw has been working as a clinical supervisor for a homeless street outreach team in Chicago, consulting for public libraries on trauma-informed approaches, working on several research studies surrounding third places, and adjunct teaching at Loyola University Chicago and Elmhurst University.