Reflecting on the Core Values and Defining Moments of Public Library Directors

A Dissertation presented to the
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Abstract

This study, which contributes to the scant research on personal values in the library profession, examines the core values and the related defining moments of 12 public library directors who work in rural, suburban, and urban settings throughout the United States. The participants, recognized as managerial leaders in public libraries, oversee some of the highest use libraries per capita in the country. They share common values of benevolence, self-direction, and universalism as identified by the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQIV).

The second methodology, narrative inquiry, examined life stories to identify common critical incidents and defining moments that challenged and instilled values. Core values shared among participants include integrity, respect, loyalty, fairness, equity, learning, adaptation, and responsibility. Probing defining moments also revealed that the participants use three distinct paths to resolve critical incidents. In each case, the defining moments resulted in these individuals experiencing more self-confidence, deeper commitment to core values, and the able to find meaning and purpose in their work. Participants indicated that, as organizational leaders, public library directors are responsible for meeting the needs of various stakeholders, including library personnel, governing authorities, library users, and the public. These responsibilities are motivated by a core value of seeking to enhance the intellectual welfare of others.

Researching personal values is salient because these values, in essence, define who we are, and they influence us whether or not we are consciously aware of them. This research contributes to the literature in organizational development by identifying techniques managerial leaders use to reduce challenges to values (mindfulness and self-regulation) and strategies to successfully navigate values conflicts (reflection, paths to insight, courage, and persistence).
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Dr. Roger Greer (1928 – 2014) with whom I have experienced many moments of meaning. His core values, stories, and vision for what is possible because of libraries have uniquely resonated with and inspired me. I hope this work, in some small way, reflects aspects of his wisdom and passion for seeking meaning, purpose, and truth.
# Table of Contents

## CHAPTER ONE: SETTING UP THE STUDY ............................................................... 1

- Values and Conflict .................................................................................. 2
- Values Formulation .................................................................................. 3
- Work Values ............................................................................................ 3
- Values and Leadership ............................................................................. 5
- Values Congruence .................................................................................. 6
- Organizational Values ............................................................................. 7
- Problem Statement ................................................................................. 8

## Literature Review ...................................................................................... 10

- Life-Story Identification of Values ......................................................... 10
- Defining Moments .................................................................................. 11
- Types of Defining Moments ................................................................. 13
- Impacts of Values Formation ............................................................... 17
- Leading with Values .............................................................................. 19
- Challenges to Values-based Leadership ............................................. 21
- Public Sector Managerial Leadership and Values ................................ 22
- Core Values Identification .................................................................... 23
- Research on Values of Librarians and the Library Profession .............. 27
- Public Library Director Attributes ...................................................... 30
- Summary ............................................................................................... 31

## Study Objectives and Research Questions ............................................... 33

## Procedures ............................................................................................... 34

- Research Design .................................................................................... 35
- Methodology ........................................................................................... 38
  - Personal Interviews ........................................................................... 40
- Data Quality ........................................................................................... 42

## Conclusion ................................................................................................. 45

## References ................................................................................................. 46

## CHAPTER TWO: GENERAL FINDINGS ........................................................... 54

- PVQIV Results ....................................................................................... 56
- PVQIV Relational Values Reports ......................................................... 60
- Summary ............................................................................................... 63
CHAPTER FOUR: ANATOMY OF DEFINING MOMENTS: FROM CRITICAL INCIDENT TO COMMITMENT ................................................................. 131

Critical Incidents ............................................................................................................. 131
General Responses to Critical Incidents ......................................................................... 133
Moments of Clarity ............................................................................................. 134
Insight Problem-solving ...................................................................................... 137
   Literature on Insight Problem-solving ........................................................ 138
   Participant Strategies to Reach Insight ..................................................... 140
Complex Challenges Involving Relational Values Conflicts ............................. 142
Certainty and Confidence ................................................................................ 145
Courage ............................................................................................................... 146
Commitment and Persistence .............................................................................. 149
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 151
References ....................................................................................................................... 154

CHAPTER FIVE: RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTORSHIPS ...................................................................................................................... 158

Definitions of Responsibility and Accountability ..................................................... 158
Responsibility and Accountability to Whom .......................................................... 160
Responsibility and Accountability for What ............................................................. 161
   Financial Responsibility .................................................................................... 164
   Fair and Equitable Service .................................................................................. 165
   Performance Accountability and Responsibility .......................................... 167
Personnel Development ...................................................................................... 170
Balance of Responsibilities and Accountability ..................................................... 173
Accountability, Misconduct, and Mismanagement ................................................ 174
Self-Regulation ........................................................................................................ 176
Purposeful Nature of Responsibility ........................................................................ 179
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 181
References ....................................................................................................................... 183

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION ............................................................................................... 187

Personal Values ............................................................................................................... 187

References .......................................................................................................................... 128
Figures

Figure 1.1  Schwartz’s Theoretical Model of Relations among the 10 Values ............................ 27
Figure 2.1  Participants’ Relational Chart of Motivational Values .............................................. 62
Figure 3.1  Values Environments of Public Library Directors .................................................... 120
Figure 4.1  Types of Defining Moments of Participants ............................................................. 134

Tables

Table 1.1   Definitions of Motivational Types of Values ............................................................. 25
Table 2.1   Study Participants ....................................................................................................... 55
Table 2.2   PVQIV Results ........................................................................................................... 57
Table 2.3   Critical Incidents That Prompted Defining Moments of Study Participants .......... 65
Table 2.4   Participant Values Identified in Interview ................................................................. 83
Table 5.1   Stakeholders for Responsibilities.............................................................................. 160
Table 5.2   Public Library Director Areas of Responsibility ...................................................... 164
CHAPTER ONE

SETTING UP THE STUDY

Human values are fundamental beliefs, which function as a lens through which human beings perceive and respond to the world (Brown & Trevino, 2003; Gentile, 2010; Rokeach, 1973). They focus on preferred conduct (e.g., acting with honesty, prudence, or loyalty) or desired end-states, such as equality, justice, and wisdom (Rokeach, 1973). With desired end-states values, attainment is aspirational as there may be no clear end point when the value goal is met, yet a lofty value provides a sense of purpose and meaning in an individual’s life (Rokeach, 1973). In all cases, values are inherently desirable because of the benefits they offer the individual, others, and/or society.

Although people share common values, each individual prioritizes a specific set of personal values at a given time and the most important are referred to as one’s core values (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1996, 2011), which are an enduring set of principles (Schwartz, 2011) that influence daily and long-term behaviors, choices, and relationships with others (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Posner, 2010; Russell, 2001; Schwartz, 1996). These values also guide attitudes, judgments, and attempts to influence others (Rokeach, 1973). In addition, core values provide insight into oneself, which informs one’s sense of identity (Gentile, 2010). When people operate with congruence between their core values and their actions they gain a stronger sense of self-worth (Goldthwaite, 1996). Along with influencing conduct, these values impact interpersonal activities, including relationship choices and career actions, such as jobs chosen and overall career goals (Graf, van Quaquebeke, & van Dick, 2011; Russell, 2001; Schwartz, 1996). Thus, values are standards or principles which people employ to improve themselves or
life situations, and the very act of focusing on values provides a greater sense of self-worth, motivation, purpose, and meaning (Gentile, 2010; Rokeach, 1973).

**Values and Conflict**

Because core values are internalized and vary among people, conflict among these and other values is inevitable (King, Altman, & Lee, 2011; Rokeach, 1973). For example, in a conflict between two people, one person may think honesty is important and bluntly state facts which might offend the other person, who values courtesy above honesty. Another example of interpersonal conflict occurs when a person perceives someone else as demonstrating incongruence between values stated and actions taken, such as articulating the importance of loyalty yet gossiping behind another individual’s back. This perceived incongruence between stated values and behavior can lead to loss of respect and trust. In a third interpersonal example, one may profess belief in a particular value, for example, self-determination, but in further statements and behaviors demonstrate that this value is important personally but is not extended to others. In this instance, others may perceive this person as having double standards. In each of these examples, values conflicts get in the way of relationship development.

Conflicts in values also occur within individuals, such as when one values prudence, yet acts in a carefree way in certain circumstances. Conflicts also occur in a broader social setting in which some groups hold common personal values that conflict with other sectors of the community. The resolution of these various and complex dynamics of human values conflicts is part of the process of values evolution. In other words, although values are long-term beliefs, personal values may change based on a variety of developmental factors, relationships, and experiences (Rokeach, 1973).
Values Formulation

Values start to develop at a young age and are influenced by family, teachers, and mentors (Rokeach, 1973; Russell, 2001). For example, a child might learn the value of honesty from a parent and the value of fairness from a teacher; but these experiences are accompanied by situations in which context helps the child prioritize a set of personal values with a few of them at the core. As individuals continue to experience situations related to values, each encounter clarifies priorities and purpose.

One’s environment, including the culture in which one is raised, religious association, and other environmental factors, plays a foundational part in the development of personal values (Russell, 2001). The era in which one was born and raised also impacts personal values (Bennis & Thomas, 2002), as does one’s vocation and life experiences (King, Altman, & Lee, 2011). Further, the formation and reprioritization of core values are influenced by defining moments, also referred to as moments of meaning (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001, p. 63), which are singular instances in a person’s life which assume greater significance or personal meaning, and may result in epiphany-type insights. These insights reshape or reinforce core values (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Thus, although values evolve, that process is not random, but rather is based on life experiences (Schwartz, 2011).

Work Values

Maierhofer, Rafferty, and Kabanoff (2003) distinguish between an individual’s personal values and values in a work context. They contend that, although personal values apply broadly, work values are determined based on work situations, including the content and context of the general work undertaken, the role within the organization, and specific work activities. They maintain that the formation of work values can be analyzed on individual, group, and
organizational levels. Further, these values can be explored based on the three distinct periods of the development of those values: acquisition, maintenance, and change. For example, when an individual is a new employee, that person undergoes a socialization process of being oriented to the values of the organization. Similarly, as a group is formed, the members may establish a set of values that guide the work and goals of the group. The values acquisition process at the organizational level is parallel because of the need to establish a few foundational values and socialize all members to those values. In the maintenance period for individuals, groups, and organizations, values reinforce work behavior and goals. When the individual, group, or organization changes, new values can be introduced and they may shift priorities. On all levels (individual, group, and organizational) values engagement during acquisition, maintenance, and change is complex (Maierhofer et al., 2003).

Within the complex infrastructure of values dynamics in the workplace, Dolan and Raich (2013) state that, when managing with values, it is important to address the ambiguous business and economic environment. They note that business management is evolving from the early 20th century technique of providing instructions to the late 20th century focus on objectives that provide broader direction and strategies for employees. In the 21st century, with its rapid change and uncertainty, they maintain that organizations would be more effective if they are managed in adherence to three broad types of values: (1) economic values, (2) ethical and social values, and (3) emotional and spiritual values. Economic values (e.g., those related to good financial health, efficiency, quality standards for performance, accountability, quality assurance, and effective planning) are foundational to sustaining the organization. By contrast, ethical and social values (e.g., behaving with honesty, respect, and loyalty) are oriented toward interpersonal
relationships. Emotional and spiritual values (e.g., optimism, passion, freedom, and creativity) are intrinsic motivators.

Dolan and Raich (2013) posit that balancing these three types of values leads to optimal performance, enables systemic organizational change, and results in sustainable, innovative, and competitive organizations at a time of an uncertain and ambiguous business and economic environment. Carter and Greer (2013) argue that businesses are pressured not only to be responsible to company shareholders (economic value) but also to consider the demands of their customers and the impacts of their operations on the environment and society more broadly. This combination of using values to improve organizational performance, maintain relationships, and build sustainable, responsible practices requires values management and strategic leadership throughout the process.

**Values and Leadership**

The individual who has the most influence on work values is the leader who establishes the values of the organization (Schein, 2010), and uses select values as a blueprint, a compass, or a foundation for decision making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). A leader’s values can be detected in attitudes, stated preferences, decisions, and behaviors, which may be consciously or unconsciously exhibited. Because of the importance of a leader’s position in determining values, this individual needs to be aware of his or her personal values and idealized aspirations, as well as to be mindful of how these influence the way that person leads others (Powley & Taylor, 2006).

When a leader clearly articulates specific values and consistently demonstrates them in action, this person serves as a model for followers within the organization (Covey, 2004; DePree, 1989; Posner, 2010). In addition, when a leader is perceived as acting with congruence among
values stated, actions taken, and resulting outcomes, others think that person is authentic (King et al., 2011; Shamir & Eilam, 2005) and responsible (Freeman & Auster, 2011). Shamir and Eilam (2005) describe one aspect of authentic leaders as having a strong self-concept, self-knowledge, and clarity about their values. They base their actions on the values that have greatest meaning for them. Freeman and Auster (2011) further posit that, when leaders act based on their values, they live authentically through the persistent actions of talking about their values in relation to work and organizational aspirations.

The research on values commonly refers to the leader as the person who is in the position to both manage and lead the organization. This dissertation refers to such individuals as managerial leaders. Managerial leadership represents the intersection between management activities (administering and coordinating resources to accomplish organizational goals) and leadership actions (visioning, coaching, and inspiring others using various leadership styles) (Hernon, 2007).

Values Congruence

Just as values congruence is important to managerial leaders as individuals, it is also salient at an organizational level. When those in an organization share common values, there is congruence in their decisions, goals, and actions. Managerial leaders can use values congruence as a strategy to influence and motivate followers, as well as to gain commitment and to sustain or increase productivity in the organization (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Posner, 2010). The managerial leader might reward innovative activities by promoting workers known for successful innovation. By focusing on innovation and rewarding it in practice, the leader reinforces and instills the value on a regular and systemic basis (Schein, 2010). Conversely, when gaps in values congruence arise, the results among employees include suppressed motivation, hindered
performance, dissatisfaction, turnover, and stress (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Illies & Reiter-Palmon, 2008; Posner, 2010). Thus, a clearly defined vision and a consistent implementation of behavioral values results in greater productivity and positive organizational results (Carter & Greer, 2013).

**Organizational Values**

In organizations, values are shared and embedded in order to make decisions, guide work conduct, and determine goals (Schein, 2010). Values promote and sustain the organizational vision (Larsson & Lundholm, 2010), which is focused on a desired end-state to which all workers can aspire. This vision motivates workers by providing meaning and offering a sense of identity and structure for the development and solidification of organizational norms (Strange & Mumford, 2002). An organization’s managerial leaders articulate the meaning behind the vision, as well as how that vision is implemented (King et al., 2011). For example, if an organization values innovation, workers identify themselves as innovators and take more risks in developing products or services. The organizational norms might include time each week to explore new concepts or structures, and for workers to brainstorm regularly and across units to glean new ideas. The organization might reward activities, such as testing new products, and view failure as an acceptable component of risk and innovation. In this way, the value of innovation drives the vision, the perceived identity of the workers, and organizational norms. The managerial leaders, the organizational structure, and the workers embrace innovation as a lens through which decisions are made about priorities for work conduct. As all employees share this common value, they support each other in using the innovation lens, which reaffirms the value across the organization.
Values and Change

Even with a consistent values structure and the application of congruent values within an organization, managerial leaders might still shift organization values over time (Russell, 2001). For example, a public library prior to the emergence of the Internet might have valued the print collections as its core asset. In the current digital environment, the organization might place a higher value on access to collections in all formats. This shift in values’ focus is implemented in various ways including digitizing collections, procuring more resources online than in print, changing staff job descriptions to include teaching library users how to access online resources, and promoting both online and print collections.

As with personal values, organizational values are enduring yet they evolve dynamically as the environment changes. In fact, organizational change is facilitated when managerial leaders use values to influence followers to change (Brown & Trevino, 2003; Hess & Cameron, 2006; Maierhofer et al., 2003; O’Toole, 1996). For example, transformational leaders inspire followers to look beyond their self-interests and toward a higher ideal that motivates and instills commitment in the followers (Brown & Trevino, 2003). As change occurs with organizational values and vision, the managerial leader must articulate the new values in ways that are inclusive of followers in order to overcome resistance (O’Toole, 1996).

Problem Statement

Values, which are fundamental beliefs that guide individuals in life and in work, provide meaning and purpose. They can be desired end-states or preferred behaviors and in either case are guiding principles that refer to desirable goals. The formulation of personal values happens over a lifetime of experiences, including defining moments, which reinforce or fundamentally change one’s value system. In work situations, values guide teams and the overall organization,
and the organization’s managerial leader has the most influence on the values and vision for work. Values conflicts are inevitable, and efforts to be congruent with stated values and values in practice are important at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Although values are enduring, priorities in values change over time and, indeed, values can be used to guide organizational change.

The literature of library and information science (LIS) tends to portray the overall value of the public library in terms of enabling “every person in the community serviced to continue her or his education, to become more knowledgeable, and to live the life of the mind in the way in which she or he chooses” (Gorman, 2000, p. 29). To this end, specific library values include stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy and learning, equity of access to recorded knowledge and information, privacy, and democracy (Gorman, 2000). Library professionals prioritize some values over others when conflicts occur. In particular, library directors who function as managerial leaders face decisions with their governing authority, their staff, and the public, such as those related to user privacy versus security, intellectual freedom challenges, and strains on equal access when resources are constrained. Despite the salience of values in public library work, no study, except this one, examines the core values of public library directors, how their values inform their managerial leadership, how their life experiences, including defining moments, shape those values, and how values conflicts in the library alter their values priorities over time.

The study will be of interest to library directors and other managerial leaders, interested in values, how values impact work, and how these values can be leveraged to guide the organizational vision and accomplish the organization’s mission. It may also be of interest to directors wanting to reflect on their own core values and how to leverage them in their everyday
work. Those who oversee public library directors, including library board members, may gain ideas for assessing candidates for library director positions as well as evaluating the directors they do hire. This study may also be of interest to library employees who rely on the director for leadership and can gain insight on what motivates directors in the work they do. In addition, graduate programs in LIS that include coverage of leadership values, as well as library professional associations and conferences with leadership institutes that address values identification, awareness, and application, ought to find this study informative. State library staff who work with public library directors may gain insight into how values impact public library directors and use this knowledge to provide coaching, support, and training for library directors, trustees, and library personnel. Because values are universal, library professionals in other countries may also be interested in the study, and consider implications for library managerial leadership in their own countries.

**Literature Review**

**Life-Story Identification of Values**

Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, and Adler (2005) assert that life-story research is an effective method for studying leadership development, including the development of values, because the method explores leader self-concept and the extent to which values are expressed in leadership behavior. Through life-story reflection and analysis, the researcher discovers how personal values have formed and developed both iteratively, through repeated, cumulative family/life lessons, and, from moments of insight, or epiphanies, in which the individual has a new perspective and understanding about the importance of a particular value. Researchers have identified several distinctions about sudden insights which have been portrayed as *moments of meaning* (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001), *moments that matter* (Avolio & Luthans, 2006), *crucible*
moments (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Bennis & Thomas, 2007), and, most commonly, defining moments. For this research, the term defining moments describes the phenomena in which critical incidents occur and the individual is faced with moments that have special significance and long-term effects, including redefinition of values, identity, and life direction.

Defining Moments

Bennis and Thomas (2002, 2007) posit that defining moments are experiences in which one’s core values are challenged and tested. These moments lead a person to face a decision point, informed by new meaning that either strengthens existing values or replaces them with new core values. Badaracco (1997) asserts that “defining moments compel people to arrange their values in single file and reveal the priorities among them” (p. 75). Because defining moments are unpredictable, and unique to each individual, they can happen frequently, or less often, depending on the person. They can also happen in various situations, including those within the work environment. These important moments can be significant turning points in life or smaller insights that guide and instill values (Avolio & Luthans, 2006).

Life stories that probe defining moments identify more than just the specific core value; they also include the context, which reveals the influences that shape the value as well as the resulting decision to uphold that value over an extended period of time. Thus, defining moments reveal current values, test the individual’s dedication to particular core values, and shape values with the result of clarifying identity and purpose (Badaracco, 1997). Defining moments are triggered by critical incidents; events that do not fit into the present understanding. These conflicts force individuals to discover new meaning, novel understanding, or insight, which either reaffirms core values or reprioritizes values in congruence with the new meaning and understanding. A single moment can take on greater significance than other life moments, and it
not only defines values priorities but also acts as a pivot point in life that changes a person indefinitely.

Avolio and Luthans (2006) distinguish among three types of critical incidents that launch defining moments: trigger moments, jolts, and challenging dilemmas. They describe trigger moments as either negative or positive events that compel one to reflect on self and identity and consider changes. An example might be a mentor commenting on an individual’s strength in a way that redefines that person’s self-perCEPTION. Jolts are unanticipated crisis situations, tragedies, or extraordinary positive circumstances that unexpectedly arise and lead the individual to change beliefs and values. An example of a jolt is a serious illness that reframes priorities for what is important. Bennis and Thomas (2002, 2007) refer to these as crucible moments and state that they lead to essential questions, such as “Who am I?,” “Who should I be?,” and “How do I relate to others?” Challenging dilemmas can also be either self-imposed or thrust upon an individual, and, in either case, they lead to reorientation. However, the individual may only have limited awareness of this reorientation when it occurs, meaning that the moment may not be perceived as immediately significant. At times, it is only upon reflection that the individual becomes aware of how a moment and the subsequent values shift define a new path, a new identity, or a new priority (Badaracco, 1997). In other cases, the challenge is apparent; it can either be chosen by the individual or imposed, and the individual consciously reflects beyond the current moment, sees a bigger picture, and makes a new choice (Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007). These defining moments, according to Bennis and Thomas (2002, 2007), often are traumatic and sobering, as well as thrilling and empowering.

Mackoff and Wenet (2001) describe defining moments as a response to a critical incident that starts with reflection on the moment in order to discover new meaning and adopt a new
perspective. The second phase is to prioritize values in ways that instill a sense of purpose that guides decisions and behaviors. Mackoff and Wenet refer to this as developing a new habit of mind as the individual makes a commitment to the values and to new ways of thinking. This commitment to new values establishes a new direction and provides a sense of confidence and self-efficacy for the future (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001).

Because life-story studies of defining moments are primarily conducted with recognized leaders in business (Badaracco, 1997; Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Bennis & Thomas, 2007; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001), education (Dahlvig & Longman 2010; Flanagan, 2002), and religious organizations (Jolley, 2013), the circumstances of defining moments vary. The stories of values formation include iterative development through family and other influential people who model values or underscore characteristics that impact the individual’s values priorities.

**Types of Defining Moments**

This section illustrates various types of defining moments identified through stories told by subjects during life-story research. One of the fundamental iterative ways that personal values are established is through family. For example, one college president tells the story from her childhood in which she went along to work with her mother who was a domestic servant. Her mother took great pride in her duties and made it a point to show her daughter effective and thorough methods for ironing and other domestic work. The lesson learned over time was to value high quality work and to get the details right, which the college president could use regardless of her position (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001). In the same study of business and public sector leaders, others told stories of learning what not to do from a parent (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001). More than one subject mentioned an authoritarian parent who helped the person decide not to be an authoritarian leader, and, instead, focus on being inclusive of others when making
leadership decisions. The narratives of family often include specific incidents followed by the moral of the story as filtered through the narrator or subject. In turn, the learning experience takes on significant meaning and becomes a value that is instilled in the storyteller.

Along with family, mentors, teachers, and others can provide modeling or influential experiences that lead a person to adopt particular values. In fact, it is common in these narratives to find an authoritative figure who makes a comment that shifts the individual’s perception of self (Dahlvig & Longman 2010; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001). For example, Dahlvig and Longman (2010) interviewed 16 women identified as emerging leaders in Christian higher education about defining moments related to their leadership development. They used a leadership timeline to aid in the identification of defining moments in which values were clarified. Several women spoke of a person of authority or influence who pointed out to them that they had leadership potential, which reframed their own self-perceptions. In other instances, a respected person reframed the individual’s understanding of leadership in ways that helped her see herself as a leader.

As with other stories of values formation, the narrator, or subject, decides what meaning to extrapolate from encounters or situations. For example, when a teacher makes a disparaging comment, asserting that a student will never amount to anything, one student might interpret that as a fact, begin to redefine his or her image, and assume a negative identity. In Mackoff and Wenet’s (2001) leadership interviews, one chief executive officer (CEO) is described as becoming spiteful and deciding to succeed at any price in order to prove such a teacher wrong; another CEO interpreted a similar comment by a teacher as a challenge to succeed regardless of an authority figure’s opinion. Mackoff and Wenet (2001) refer to this interpretation of an experience as framing, and, through analysis of the leader interviews, they found that a common element of subjects’ life-stories was reframing negative encounters and circumstances in positive
ways. The subjects then use this interpretation to define how to make sense of the situation and determine which values get prioritized for the future.

Another type of story relates to an event in which a person stands up for a strongly held value. The circumstance emerges because the individual experiences internal conflict and becomes uncomfortable with the way a situation is evolving. Upon reflection, the individual realizes that some aspect of the circumstance does not align with his or her core values and the conflict is strong enough that he or she speaks up or takes action (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010). Because values are often subconsciously held beliefs, at times it is not until a strong value is challenged that the individual becomes aware of the importance of the value. Instances in which one stands up for a belief, or finds the courage to say no to a circumstance that conflicts with a core value, clarify the specific value. The value may have been a core component of a person’s belief system, but it was not until the value was challenged that the person became consciously aware of it.

One commonly described situation involves a subject who is faced with two “right” choices, and when the decision is made, it reveals the individual’s priority among values (Badaracco, 1997). Badaracco (1997) describes a young analyst who was asked to join a sales team temporarily because he was African American. The analyst was told that the client would look favorably on the bid knowing that he was on the team. On one hand, the analyst wanted to do his part as a team player and help the company succeed, but, on the other hand, he had been raised to believe that it was his performance, not his skin color, that should guide his opportunities. In the end, he went on the team sales trip, thereby establishing the values priorities of company success and being a team player over the value of standing up for the view that skin color should not be a factor in business decisions.
Another salient type of values story involves a particular life circumstance that creates a new way of thinking or, as Mackoff and Wenet (2001) describe it, a transformation of “a knowing moment into a guiding metaphor” (p. 73). One such example involves a boy who broke his back, and, although the medical professionals told his parents he would never walk again, nobody told him. One day after lying uncomfortably in bed for days, he decided to get up and go to the bathroom, which he did. Upon seeing the shock of others, and his father crying for the only time in his life, the boy realized that it is not necessarily what one does not know that holds one back, but sometimes it is what one does know that can be a barrier to success (Janson, 2008). This story illustrates a moment in the subject’s life when, through this challenge and the resulting insight, he discovered an extended metaphor which taught him the value of persistence.

Janson (2008), who interviewed senior leaders at a New Zealand leadership institute, reported that the majority of their Leadership Formative Experiences (LFE) occurred in adulthood, with more moments of development based on intentional strategies for self-improvement rather than situations of coping with struggle. Bennis and Thomas (2007) investigated moments of struggle to identify defining moments that lead to development of core values and leadership abilities.

In considering how values are formed through adversity, some studies identified what they termed crucible experiences (e.g., Bennis & Thomas, 2007), which are challenging, often traumatic situations, that are either self-imposed or externally thrust upon an individual. Bennis and Thomas (2007) identified business leaders of two generations (born 1908-1935; 1966-1979), and asked them about crucible moments which they described as an event or relationship in a person’s life that either reinforced or helped reprioritize core values. These events required the individual to reflect, find new meaning in life, and use that meaning to adapt and change. To
identify these crucible moments, each participant drew a line on a piece of paper that began with birth and ended at a point 10 years into the future, and placed “X” marks on points in the life line in which they thought major turning points occurred. These marks then provoked a conversation about the challenges the person faced in ways that revealed shifts in values priorities.

**Impacts of Values Formation**

Life-story research allows researchers to not only identify the personal values of individuals, but also gain an understanding of the context in which the situation occurs. The depth of probing also seeks to understand the meaning and the long-term impact of rich experiences on values development. In many of the studies, the long-term impact relates to how organizational leaders conduct themselves. Bennis and Thomas (2007) contend that what distinguishes effective organizational leaders from others is their response to defining moments. They found that study participants responded to incidents adaptively, focused on reframing potentially negative situations as learning opportunities, and engaged others to build shared meaning. Mackoff and Wenet (2001) also concluded that the most effective organizational leaders reframed experiences of adversity as beneficial paths and that defining moments made leaders more interested in engaging and learning from followers and others.

Flanagan (2002) studied eight women in higher education administration and their defining moments, early leadership lessons, the values they employ as leaders, and their specific experience and application of values. She concluded that administrators perceived the definition and application of values as a major factor in their leadership success. One finding was that values influenced their leadership style, including the choices they made, their focus on continuous learning, and leadership growth, as well as their commitment to mentoring and encouraging others who sought values-based leadership development. Leveraging their values
also gave some of them the courage to say *no* to others as well as the confidence to leave organizations that did not support their values and goals. The reflection on previous life experiences helped to identify values priorities that led to leadership strategies of inclusion (involvement, encouragement, support, and sensitivity); fairness (integrity and compassion); and respect (empathy and kindness). Flanagan concluded that clarifying values is salient in leadership, especially when the individual has a systematic understanding of how these values impact leadership choices. She also pointed out that, when leaders undergo an active process of connecting with their values through remembering, reflecting, analyzing, and learning, they are more capable of taking action on those values. Dahlvig and Longman (2010) added that, by reflecting on defining moments and leadership, the subjects of their study were more confident about their leadership potential.

Jolley (2013) conducted a narrative study of 11 male senior pastors of mega churches in the United States to examine the influence of crucible moments on their leadership. She concluded that these church leaders responded to the crucible moments by becoming more self-aware, being more receptive to assistance, reconstructing their perceptions of crucible moments as learning experiences, and choosing to be transparent about these experiences in order to articulate the lessons and model their preferred values for their followers. Further, by overcoming the crucible experiences, the participants had a stronger sense of purpose related to their role in the church.

The underlying theme in much of life-stories research is that values clarification, both in the moment and when the subjects reflect on their defining moments, provides them with a stronger sense of purpose. Through self-reflection subjects gain a learning orientation, and values often provide them with courage and a sense of conviction to stand up for what they believe in.
This conviction then instills confidence, which allows the individual to explore more broadly, be open to ambiguity (Bennis & Thomas, 2007), and take risks (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001). Bennis and Thomas (2007) assert that overcoming a significant challenge builds more adaptive capacity and resilience when future challenges arise. Many of the subjects in these studies also have stronger relational capacity after experiencing challenges, including the ability to mentor others successfully and to learn from followers in a symbiotic way.

**Leading with Values**

Mackoff and Wenet (2001) studied how national leaders develop a strong value system and find purpose in their work. They concluded that leadership consists of five specific thought patterns that leaders may employ: (1) reflecting, including self-examination; (2) reframing negative events with resilience; (3) attuning to and learning from followers; (4) possessing the conviction to trust their value and speak from their experience; and (5) replenishing themselves to restore perspective and renew resources.

Bennis and Thomas (2007) posit that adaptation to crucible experiences determines, among other things, one’s competence as a leader. In other words, the meaning that leaders make of crucible experiences and their new or affirmed values-orientation leads to articulation of meaning and a vision in ways that others seek to follow. This capacity to adapt, Bennis and Thomas (2007) conclude, manifests as creative problem-solving, flexibility in the face of challenges, increased hardiness, the ability to endure and sustain oneself to overcome adversity, and the navigation of timing and circumstances to seize opportunities proactively. After a crucible moment, organizational leaders can engage followers by articulating values and conveying meaning in ways that followers can understand and adopt. In addition, these leaders may empathize and encourage dissenting opinion from followers in order to establish dialogue.
and generate shared meaning and values priorities. This process requires leaders to have a sense of purpose, self-awareness, and self-confidence, as well as emotional intelligence in order to both demonstrate the way and exhibit strong characteristics that followers find compelling in a leader. Leader also need to exhibit integrity, which Bennis and Thomas (2007) describe as a balance between ambitious goals and competence in reaching those goals, as well as a moral compass to ensure the goals are morally desirable.

Along with using stories to determine values formation, leaders may also employ stories to convey values to followers for the purpose of influence and change. One method is through articulating formative life stories and the values and principles they have engendered (Gentile, 2010), while another method is to demonstrate congruence among these stories, values, and principles, and the actions of the leader, so that a leader is perceived as having integrity and is a role model for followers (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2007).

In reviewing how leaders employ stories to articulate values in work, Gentile (2010) interviewed leaders about times when their expressed values conflicted in the organization. She examined what they did, what motivated them to speak up, what they would have liked to do, and what would have made it easier for them to speak up. Through this investigation, Gentile concluded that articulating values at work requires incremental introduction of a well framed, compelling story that is well told to the appropriate audience(s) over time. A well framed story needs to include facts and framing or reframing of an issue in a way that influences the audience. The audience is chosen carefully with the initial values-story told first to perceived allies who might help to refine the story, provide strategy, or help develop a coalition. At times, asking questions rather than making statements is a method to gain clarity and build buy-in while also understanding the needs and concerns of the audience.
Bennis and Thomas (2007) state that essential to leadership is the ability to develop a compelling vision and to gain followers acceptance. The vision is developed with the leader’s own values, as well as in engagement with others, to establish shared meaning and build a common purpose (Avolio & Luthans, 2006).

**Challenges to Values-based Leadership**

At times, defining moments occur when organizational leaders face situations which Badaracco (1997) refers to as right versus right, circumstances in which there is no wrong option, but a clear need to choose among two competing and viable options. These work-related defining moments can include conflicts between personal values and organizational or professional values or between personal values and the values of supervisors or team members. Badaracco (1997) posits that, in such instances, these conflicts test the strength of leaders’ commitment to their own values as they take into account the influence from their organization’s values, power dynamics, and social pressures. These defining moments require the organizational leader to adapt, interpret, and customize basic values to meet the broader organizational context, and they may function over time as links in a chain that establish a leadership direction with new values priorities. In this way, values that are redefined lead to future situations in which those values then take priority in decision making and activities undertaken.

In considering how leaders use their values in organizations, research also points to situations in which values are not always leveraged. Quinn (2005) asserts that, although leaders do their best work when they draw on their fundamental values and capacities, this is not the “normal” state of leadership practice, but rather a “fundamental state of leadership” (p. 76). In situations of crisis or disruption, leaders focus on results and deploy internally-directed values
and confidence. However, this level of leadership, termed the excellence framework, is often a temporary state because the methods are demanding and can lead to leadership burn-out (Quinn, 2005). The more common situation, according to Quinn (2005), is when organizational leaders operate from a competence framework, rather than an excellence framework, by assuming that the organization is functioning well enough that simply maintaining the status quo is sufficient. Other components of the competence framework are compliance with others, focus on personal comfort and rewards, and risk avoidance. Quinn notes that organizational leaders can shift to a focus on excellence through attention to the moments in their everyday work when they can strive for organizational greatness. This shift requires daily focus on results, an internally-directed compass based on values and integrity, an orientation toward supporting followers, and attention to external signals and stimuli that point to the need for adaptive change. In this way, defining moments may occur on a daily basis and may be the impetus for an organizational leader to be self-aware, to self-regulate, and to leverage these moments and values to make meaningful decisions (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Badaracco, 1997).

**Public Sector Managerial Leadership and Values**

The previously mentioned studies were primarily conducted in the private sector; the public and not-for-profit sectors have been studied less. Orazi, Turrini, and Valott (2013) conducted a literature review of public sector leadership studies, specifically those in national, state, and city agencies. They found that, although public sector leaders share some of the same goals as private sector leaders (e.g., interest in goal achievement and follower development), they have distinctly different motivations. For example, public sector leaders value work that benefits others and society, thus choosing to work in an arena in which they can influence public policy. In exchange, they are willing to accept smaller salaries, fewer benefits and other perks
available in the private sector because they are motivated by achievement rather than power or wealth. In addition, public sector leaders recognize the importance of preserving integrity because they are not only accountable to the governing authority but also to the public. Orazi, Turrini, and Valott (2013) point out that legal requirements and ubiquitous technology require public sector leaders to be more transparent (e.g., make documentation and reports publicly available). They concluded that public sector leaders need to balance transactional leadership (monitoring, measuring to standards, and corrective action) and transformational leadership (articulating a compelling vision which offers meaning and a sense of purpose, while developing staff, providing challenging and rewarding work to aspiring employees, and modeling pro-social values and behavior). Because public library directors are public sector leaders, this additional context about this form of leadership is relevant to a study of core values and defining moments of public library directors.

**Core Values Identification**

Along with identifying values based on life experience, researchers have developed instruments to ascertain individual values priorities. One of the first instruments developed to measure personal values is the Study of Values (SOV), which is based on six ideal value types: (1) theoretical (discovery of truth and cognitive); (2) economic (what is most useful and self-preservation); (3) aesthetic (form, beauty, and harmony); (4) social (love and altruism); (5) political (power, influence, and renown); and (6) religious (unity) (Allport, Vernon, & Lindzay, 1970). The SOV, used in psychology and social science research, was updated by Kopelman, Rovenpor, and Guan (2003). The instrument consists of 120 questions, 20 for each value, divided in two parts: (1) situational questions, which require the participants to rank two different ways of responding, and (2) situational questions, with four values but only one may be selected.
Rokeach (1973), who developed non-comprehensive lists of 18 desired end-states (terminal) values and 18 behavioral (instrumental) values, asked study participants to prioritize each list by ranking the values from 1 to 18. This method requires them to consider and weigh each value against the others to determine their own unique prioritized list of values. Rokeach then asked questions related to how participants would respond to situations in order to determine how the values prioritized related to each subject’s behavior. Through this process, he concluded that prioritized values predict attitudes and/or behaviors. For example, those who prioritize equality also report that they are more likely to engage in interracial relationships. Those who prioritize salvation state that they are more likely to go to church regularly as well as to prioritize a specific religion; and those who indicate intellectual values, including imagination and logical thinking, are more likely to hold positions as college professors. In the later part of the 20th century many researchers used Rokeach’s instrument, often as a supplement to other research tools. Because at times it is difficult to distinguish an instrumental from a terminal value, a context is often provided to extract those values (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998).

In 1987, Schwartz and Bilsky asserted that 10 basic universal personal values underlie the motives of individuals regardless of culture. These personal values, they theorized, stem from three fundamental human motivations: meeting biological needs, engaging in social interaction, and being part of a group for survival and functioning. Each of the values has a defining goal with distinct motivation. Within each of the 10 universal values are more specific values that represent aspects of the overall motivational value. In addition, some single values are associated with more than one larger universal value (Schwartz, 2012) (see Table 1.1).
Table 1.1
Definitions of Motivational Types of Values:
Goals and the Single Values That Represent Them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivational Value</th>
<th>Defining Goal</th>
<th>Single Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards</td>
<td>Successful, capable, ambitious, influential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact</td>
<td>Helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms</td>
<td>Politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honoring parents and elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonism</td>
<td>Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself</td>
<td>Pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources</td>
<td>Social power, authority, wealth, preserving public image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of self</td>
<td>Family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-direction</td>
<td>Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring</td>
<td>Creativity, freedom, independent, curious, choosing own goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulation</td>
<td>Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life</td>
<td>Daring, a varied life, an exciting life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Respect, acceptance of and commitment to the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self</td>
<td>Humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalism</td>
<td>Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature</td>
<td>Broad-minded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Schwartz (2012) constructed two instruments to measure personal values: the Schwartz Values Survey (SVS) and the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ). The SVS has two sections in...
which the subjects rate each value. The first is a list of 30 nouns that describe distinct desired end-states; while the second list consists of 26 adjectives which describe desired ways of behaving. Each item describes an aspect of the larger motivational goal; for example, *equality* is listed with a brief description of “equal opportunity for all,” which is associated with the broader motivational value of *universalism*. Subjects rate each item on a nine-point scale ranging from extreme importance in personal life (7) to opposed to personal values (-1). The rating allows them to identify values that are important to them and those to which they are distinctly opposed. This design aids in measuring values across cultures to determine which are universal (Schwartz, 2012).

Schwartz (1996, 2012) also constructed the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) to identify and rate values. This instrument, now in its fourth version, measures values indirectly by offering a list of 40 brief portraits of individuals in order to elicit responses that imply a shared value. For example, “Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.” describes a person for whom self-direction values are important. The respondent determines the extent to which the person described in the portrait is like himself or herself by selecting from a scale of six choices: “not like me at all,” “not like me, a little like me,” “somewhat like me,” “like me,” and “very much like me.”

With the SVS and the PVQ, Schwartz (1996, 2003) and Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris, and Owens (2001), and others have tested the 10 values theory in 82 countries (Schwartz, 2012) to refine and clarify that these are the universal human values. Schwartz also posits that the motivational values relate to each other on a continuum in which some values share common interests; examples include power and achievement motivated by self-enhancement, and benevolence and universalism associated with self-transcendence and societal
enhancement. In addition, stimulation and self-direction are associated with broader tendencies: openness to change whereas security, conformity, and tradition align with conservation and maintenance of current infrastructure. Schwartz illustrates the relationship of each value to the others and depicts, in positions across from one another, those that have potentially opposing motivations (see Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1**  
Schwartz’s Theoretical Model of Relations among the 10 Values

![Schwartz’s Theoretical Model of Relations among the 10 Values](image)


**Research on Values of Librarians and the Library Profession**

Early research in the United States on the personal values of librarians was conducted as part of larger studies on the personality of librarians. In 1947, Bryan (1952) surveyed 3,107 public librarians and described their interests, motivations, attitudes, and characteristics. Using the SOV, she found that librarians emphasized artistic, literacy, and musical values rather than
scientific and sociological values. In a dissertation on the personality of the librarian, Douglass (1957), who used a truncated version of the SOV to evaluate 525 library school students, in 17 LIS schools in the United States, found that students overemphasized theoretical and aesthetic values, and underemphasized economic and political values. Religious and social values were not studied.

Igwe (1981) also used the SOV to survey students in Nigeria and the United States to identify and compare personal values across countries and by gender. He found that the majority of American students (both male and female) prioritized theoretical, aesthetic, and social values, and de-emphasized economic, political, and religious values. The Nigerian male students emphasized economic, theoretical, and social values, and the Nigerian female students emphasized economic, social, and religious values. One of his conclusions was that a lack of emphasis placed on economic and political values by U.S. students could lead to challenges to the financial health of libraries when librarians needed to compete for limited resources. It is conceivable that some of the subjects, as they entered the library workforce and management positions, changed to emphasize economic and political values; however, no follow-up or longitudinal study was conducted to determine change in values priorities over time.

Yerkey (1980) conducted a values study of North American library school students and faculty, as well as librarians, using the Rokeach terminal values survey. The list of terminal values includes a comfortable life, an exciting life, a sense of accomplishment, a world at peace, a world of beauty, equality, family security, freedom, happiness, inner harmony, mature love, national security, pleasure, salvation, self-respect, social recognition, true friendship, and wisdom. The subjects were asked to rank this values list from one (highest priority) to 18 (lowest priority). The results indicated that, in general, library school students and professionals
emphasized self-respect and freedom, and placed the lowest priority on comfort, pleasure, and security.

Studies have also examined the prioritized values of the library profession. Dole, Hurych, and Koehler (2000) conducted two multi-national studies in which library professionals selected the top three professional values from a list of 11. Although there were some differentiations in ranking based on type of library position (e.g., school librarians prioritized literacy, and those in underprivileged socioeconomic areas prioritized access for all), the top value in each study was service to the user, followed by the values of intellectual freedom, preservation of the public record, equity of access, and, to a lesser degree, information literacy.

Foster and McMenemy (2012) compared the language of codes of ethics from professional librarians’ associations in 36 countries using Gorman’s Enduring Values list. Using content analysis of the codes of ethics, they concluded that a majority included five of Gorman’s values; service, privacy, and equity of access were common, and stewardship and intellectual freedom were often present, but less emphasized than the first three.

Researchers also have investigated the work values of librarians within organizations, specifically personal values of academic librarians as they relate to work satisfaction (Burd, 2003). Hovenkamp (1994), who compared the work values of professionals in unionized and non-unionized academic libraries using job attribute values preferences, found little difference among librarians in these two types of libraries. Burd (2003), who measured four types of work values (relationship-oriented, goal- and change-oriented, professional career-oriented, and competence/achievement-oriented), found that, regardless of which of these was most prioritized, the primary value of service was always prominent. Librarians, Burd noted, were more satisfied and less likely to leave if they perceived the organization as supportive of
participatory management, open with communication, offering opportunities for achievement, and having relationships built on honesty and trust.

**Public Library Director Attributes**

Because this dissertation research examines core values of public library directors within the work context, a review of the literature on public library director attributes and competencies is relevant. Using the Delphi technique to determine a prioritized list of attributes (traits, skills, and knowledge required for future library leadership), Hernon, Powell, and Young (2003) studied academic and public library directors. For public library directors, the list of attributes is divided into three areas: managerial attributes, personal attributes, and areas of knowledge. Among managerial-related attributes, the highest ranking were the ability to work effectively with library boards as well as library staff; the ability to advocate for the library, including the ability to communicate the vital role of the library in the community; the ability to solve problems effectively as well as work with community and civic organizations; and the ability to communicate effectively with staff. Among personal attributes the highest ranking were demonstrating integrity, having a vision, communicating effectively, and having strong interpersonal skills. The highest ranking attributes related to knowledge included an understanding of trends of innovation in libraries and of current library practices; the ability to perform long-range planning, budgeting, and financial planning; and a grasp of both intellectual freedom and the laws and policies that govern public library operations.

Jordan (2012) used the Delphi technique to determine a prioritized list of competencies, which are defined as knowledge, skills, and attributes that underlie effective work for public library directors. The assumption is that these directors exercise these competencies on a daily basis in order to ensure effective library operations. She provided the subjects with a list of
possible competencies, which was based on previous research. Over successive rankings, the participants could suggest other competencies, which were incorporated into subsequent lists to be ranked by all participants. Through these multiple rankings of the competencies list, the resulting highest ranking competencies were integrity, which was defined as being honest, following the professional code of ethics, being a role model for others, and customer service, which incorporates both internal and external service and the concept that the library user is central to the library’s work. Along with these competencies, credibility, accountability, effective communication skills, and vision were ranked high; followed by demonstrating leadership by taking charge of situations and resolving them successfully, as well as political understanding of government relationships and organizational structure. Skills in interpersonal communications and advocacy were also highly ranked on the list.

These two studies, conducted nine years apart using separate lists and subjects, have complementary and overlapping areas of lists and subjects that suggest important public library director activities. In both cases, integrity was identified as a high priority as was the ability to develop and articulate a strong vision.

Summary

Research on public library directors identifies competencies and attributes, including integrity (Hernon et al., 2003; Jordan, 2012). Additional studies have used values instruments to determine personal values of librarians (Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981; Yerkey, 1980), though none have used the PVQ, which has been used in 82 countries and in other professions. Along with identifying values using instruments, life-story research provides rich detail about values formation and change over time, particularly through reflection on defining moments (Shamir et al., 2005). Defining moments include five characteristics:
1. They are meaningful life experiences in which one’s core values are challenged and tested, resulting in a clearer understanding of one’s values priorities (Bennis & Thomas, 2007).

2. They can be significant turning points or smaller insights that guide and instill values (Avolio & Luthans, 2006) and clarify meaning and purpose (Gentile, 2010).

3. Critical incidents, which trigger defining moments, are either self-imposed or externally prompted events, either positive or negative, that compel a person to stop and rethink his or her current values and perspective (Avolio & Luthans, 2006).

4. The stages of a defining moment are the (a) experience of critical incident (or event), (b) reflection on the conflict with current values priorities, (c) discovery of new meaning (also termed insight or epiphany), (d) decision to commit to new values priorities and direction, (e) new sense of identity, and, in the case of positive responses, a stronger sense of purpose, self-confidence, and self-efficacy (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001).

5. When one responds to a critical incident by framing the meaning in a positive, constructivist way, the defining moment leads to a beneficial path which, in turn, results in more engagement and growth. Successful leaders tend to face critical incidents with positive reframing, and the resulting defining moments lead to greater adaptability to change (Bennis & Thomas, 2007).
### Study Objectives and Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Objectives</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To identify the core values of public library directors</td>
<td>What are their core values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify <em>two</em> critical incidents and the subsequent defining moments in their work with library boards, library staff, and the community</td>
<td>What two critical incidents prompted the defining moments? How did the events play out? Who was involved in the critical incidents? Did values conflicts arise? And if so, how? Were there decision points at which the directors chose to use core values to address the issue? What role did their values play? What did they learn from the experience? Did they experience any insights? If so, what were they? Did the critical incidents and the defining moments clarify their core values for the future? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify how their core values, used in their work, were formed, shaped, and refined</td>
<td>Which core values most influence their work, and how were those values formed? Were there role models that shaped or refined the values? If so, in what ways? What other influences and experiences shape or refine those values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify how their values relate to their leadership</td>
<td>Have their values informed their role as managerial leaders? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has their role as managerial leader impacted the values they have?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To identify how they define leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do they define leadership?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

This dissertation uses a quantitative method to identify core values and a qualitative one, under the umbrella of a phenomenological approach (the study of life phenomena as they are perceived by the subjects of the study),¹ to investigate core values use and formation. Hatch (2002) points out the importance of researchers articulating the fundamental philosophical framework, which underlies their thinking. First, from an ontological perspective, rather than having one agreed on reality, this research presumes that library directors may construct multiple realities. From an epistemological perspective, this research perceives knowledge as a human construction, which can be understood with the collaborative effort of the researcher and participants.

Phenomenological research is distinguished from other qualitative methods by the focus on a concept or phenomenon in order to seek to understand the meaning. Data to be analyzed may include critical incidents as framed by the participants to reveal the essence of the phenomena. In this study, the phenomena are the core values and defining moments of public library directors, and the phenomenological method is appropriate because the participants provide first-hand accounts of their values, how these values were formed, and how these values

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¹ Creswell (1998) and Moustakas (1994) describe the phenomenological approach.
are used and, potentially, changed by their work as library directors. The analysis seeks to reveal the meaning of critical incidents related to their values in the public library environment.

Seidman (2013) points out that many terms are used to discuss the subjects of qualitative studies, such as interviewees, respondents, subjects, informants, or co-researchers. He concludes the term “participants” is most appropriate because they reconstruct their experience actively within the context of the study and therefore are involved in the investigative process. For this reason, this dissertation uses the term participant to refer to study subjects.

While quantitative research employs deductive reasoning, qualitative research requires inductive reasoning because the details are collected and considered individually, then in larger groupings, and, finally, in a broader context to develop the conclusions. Inductive analysis can develop a comprehensive, holistic, expansive, and richly descriptive set of findings, and the researcher’s role is to discover what occurs, what those occurrences imply, and the relationships linking those occurrences (Merriam, 1998).

This research strategy requires the investigator to have direct engagement with the participants of the study, thus requiring this person to reflexivity (Hatch, 2002). Reflexivity is the ability of the investigator to focus consciously on neutrality by remaining alert to influences in the setting that may trigger personal bias, by diligently bracketing those perspectives, and by monitoring one’s emotions and remaining detached.

**Research Design**

With regard to the study population, Seidman (2013) suggests variation among participants in qualitative research in order that the results, though not generalizable, will be relatable to a broad audience. For example, if the study were limited to directors of the largest libraries in the country the findings may only be relatable to those directors that oversee libraries
of that type. Similarly, if the study were conducted within one state or a small geographic region, it narrows the population that can relate to the results. For this reason, a broad pool of library sizes and settings, in a wide geographic area, was identified for the study.

Patton (2002) articulates the importance of determining purposeful, non-probability sampling for qualitative research in order to acquire rich information and illuminate data that lead to insight about the phenomenon. Although there is no comprehensive and objective tool for identifying public library directors as outstanding, it is possible to compare public library output metrics to determine which libraries have the highest use. Those libraries are recognized each year with the star library designation,\(^2\) which comprised the first criteria to narrow the selection of libraries for this study. Specifically, libraries were selected for a three-year period (2008-2010), a timeframe indicating that the library directors have consistently employed strong managerial leadership over time in order to maintain the high library use by the public. Specifically, the timeframe includes the period of the Great Recession and the years just after the economic downturn in which public libraries throughout the country faced multiple years of budget cuts as well as pressures to reinvent services and modernize as they face 21st century demands (Lyons & Lance, 2012). This climate, in some cases, may have generated critical incidents for public library directors that challenged them to use values-driven decisions to maintain and improve library performances.

Lyons and Lance (2012) identify over 100 public libraries that ranked in the top category for their size within those three years. For further reduction to a manageable study size, the investigator reviewed the websites of the libraries for statements of vision and mission, strategic

\(^2\) Library Journal publishes an annual index, which compares U.S. public libraries in four per capita output areas (circulation, visits, program attendance, and computer use) among nine distinct library sizes, which range from expenditures of $30 million or more (largest systems) to those libraries with the expenditure range of $10,000 – 49,000 annually (smallest libraries). The top performing libraries in each expenditure category are labeled Star Libraries (Lyons & Lance, 2012).
plans, and other organizational documentation. Through this content analysis, the investigator sought evidence of public library director attributes and competencies as outlined by Hernon, Powell, and Young (2003) and Jordan (2012). When available, board minutes were reviewed to determine that the library director had been working at the library for the timeframe indicated. For other verification of employment dates, the investigator used LinkedIn to research library directors’ employment histories.

To further identify those directors who exhibited strong managerial leadership qualities, the investigator consulted with state-level library administrators (state librarians and development directors) to confirm that the library directors demonstrated the abilities to articulate a compelling vision and influence others to follow (Northouse, 2013), as well as to connect to the community, engage in the library profession, and work effectively with their boards and staff. When state library staff did not know the directors, indicated that the director had not been at the library for the timeframe, or did not confirm that the directors met the criteria above, those directors were removed from the potential participant list. In those cases in which state library staff did not respond, the libraries and their directors were eliminated, thus further reducing the list and number of states. Collectively, these criteria narrowed the list to 15 public library directors residing in 11 states, including the Northeast, Midwest, and western United States.

The study participants are directors of public libraries with budgets ranging from more than $30 million to less than $50,000, and serve varied communities including rural, suburban, and urban populations. No distinction was made to select based on the directors’ educational attainment because, though the master’s degree in library and information science (MLIS) is designed to create a “unifying identity with shared values and knowledge/skills” for the
profession (Simpson, 2011, p. 12), many public library directors, particularly in libraries serving populations of 25,000 or less, do not hold these degrees (Simpson, 2011). In this study most, but not all, have earned the MLIS. The library directors include a proportionally high number of women; however, the library profession is predominantly female, which accounts for the larger percentage of women.

**Methodology**

This study used two methods to investigate the research questions: a values questionnaire and a personal interview via telephone. All directors initially were sent an e-mail message (Appendix A), in December 2013, to make them aware of the study and encourage participation. Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggest that having someone with a social or professional connection vouch for the researcher by way of introduction helps gain trust and participation from potential participants. To this end, the investigator contacted state library colleagues and asked if they would be willing to contact the specific potential candidate(s) in their state to make them aware for the study. (Appendix B provides a copy of the e-mail content to the colleague liaisons.)

Many of the participants responded promptly, but in a few cases, the investigator called to inform the directors about the study, as well as to answer questions, to point them to the online values instrument, to schedule the interviews, and to begin to establish rapport. Seidman (2013) asserts that, when recruiting participants, telling them about the study rather than simply asking if they would like to be in the study, makes it more likely they will participate. To this end, a script was developed (see Appendix C) for the telephone call.

After the initial e-mail and telephone calls establishing participation, the investigator sent each participant (via e-mail and U.S. mail depending on the stated preference) the specific
instruments, including access to the values questionnaire, interview questions, and definitions of study terms as well as the informed consent form (see Appendix D). As recommended by Creswell (1998), and required by the Simmons Institutional Review Board (IRB), the participants were informed of the central purpose of the study, the procedures for gathering data, and their rights and responsibilities. They signed consent forms prior to starting the study. Moustakas (1994) and Hatch (2002) point out that, when conducting phenomenological studies that involve participants’ stories, and other personal information, the investigator has an obligation to provide clear information about how the stories will be used.3 The investigator informed the participants about how their material would be utilized in written communication and again via telephone prior to the narrative inquiry interview.

PVQ

In order to identify core values, each participant completed the Portrait Values Questionnaire IV (PVQIV) (S. H. Schwartz, personal correspondence, January 18, 2012) (Appendix E) either in print or online. The instrument and its predecessors have been used in values studies as diverse as those examining values congruence between employees and managers (Graf et al., 2011); values change in retired adults (Burr, 2009); and human values structure and function (Hoffman, 2009). The investigator obtained the PVQIV instrument as well as the coding instructions from Schwartz (personal correspondence, January 18, 2012).4 This instrument is designed for participants to compare only one distinct value of a character at a time with their own tendency in order to obtain a valid identification with one specific motivational value (Schwartz, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2001). The answers for degrees of “likeness” to another

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3 In the case of this study, the stories will be used for the dissertation and some or all of particular stories may also be used for follow-up presentations or future publication. Prior to any written publication, the participant will be contacted to confirm the use of the story and the continued confidentiality associated with it.

4 The investigator used the PVQIV in a previous, unpublished, pilot study and found the public library directors were able to relate to the results and use this as a starting point for discussing their values in their work.
person described in each of the 40 portraits are ranked on a six-point scale with a numeric value assigned to each for analysis. Because some respondents have a tendency to rate themselves higher in many categories, while others may have a response tendency to rank either in the middle for many questions, or low on most, Schwartz (2003) recommends a respondent’s mean scores for each motivational value be calculated and then compared to the respondent’s total mean for all the values (S. H. Schwartz, personal correspondence, January 18, 2012). This allows the investigator to compare mean scores across all participants regardless of the specific response tendency of each participant.

The investigator created a values report for each participant (Appendix F), customized by listing the 10 motivational values in order of highest to lowest respondent priority, as well as a pie chart with the respondent’s numeric result for each broader value. Upon receipt of the report, the participants were asked to reflect on the values chart and list as well as on interview questions related to defining moments, critical events, and values in their work.

**Personal Interviews**

The next method for collecting data was the interview (see Appendix G), which centered on narrative inquiry, a qualitative research method designed to probe critical events in human lives (Anfara & Mertz, 2006; Klenke, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Narrative inquiry requires detailed descriptions of the scene, plot, characters, and circumstances in order to develop a vivid portrait of the event. This method allows the investigator to explore complex human-centered issues, such as core values by honing in on critical events, as defined and described by the participants. During the inquiry process the investigator asks probing questions.

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5 See Appendix F for a sample of this report and preparatory instructions for the interview, which were sent to each participant prior to the interviews.
to elicit in-depth descriptions from the participants in order for them to find meaning and purpose which may not have been apparent at the time of the event.

Because narrative inquiry is event-driven, it was used to glean details of professional activities related to core values in two critical events identified by each participant. The investigator began the interviews by asking participants’ to describe two critical events and then shifted the conversation to formation and evolution of their core values, including any changes over time, role models who influenced values, and other shifts in values priorities. In addition, the participants discussed how they define leadership and if and how values relate to their role as a public library director. The interview, including narrative inquiry and additional questions related to values and leadership, was scheduled for up to 60 minutes.

The narrative inquiry section of the interview draws out the details of the scene, character, plot, and actions in order to determine patterns, themes, and qualities related to core values development and current use. Questions were asked in a semi-structured interview process (Klenke, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007), in order to have sufficient structure to focus the conversation but allow flexibility to gain more in-depth detail via follow-up questions, clarification, and other probing techniques. Open-ended questions were used to elicit details (Webster & Mertova, 2007), including phrases and language that might reveal more insight on core values. Follow-up questions were employed to ascertain more detail about why certain perceptions, interactions, and courses of action occurred. As recommended by Seidman (2013), the interviewer listened intensively, explored statements without sharing bias or assumptions, probed when laughter occurred, and asked the participants to reconstruct rather than remember incidents. A narrative inquiry interview guide was developed and used (Appendix H) (Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2013) to confirm that all research questions were
addressed and to remind the investigator of techniques for probing, listening, and deepening the narrative inquiry process. Techniques include phrases recommended in the interview literature to elicit more detail in a conversational and unintimidating way.

Because of the dispersed study population, the interviews were conducted via telephone with audio recording to produce a written transcript. The investigator made efforts to establish respectful rapport and connect in ways that would put the participants at ease in talking about their core values, life stories, and leadership perspective.

**Data Quality**

Webster and Mertova (2007) discuss integrity issues with narrative inquiry and state the importance of the trustworthiness of notes and transcripts. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the narratives, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. In addition, the researcher took notes during the calls, as recommended by Burke and Miller (2001) and others, in order to confirm all questions were answered and as a back-up data collection method in case the recording device or system did not work properly for some or all of the interview. The recording method was tested prior to use for data collection to ensure proper operation.

As suggested by Webster and Mertova (2007), transcriptions were sent to each participant so that each could correct errors and add more details prior to the analysis. This qualitative method of developing a relationship between the participants and the researcher is designed to ensure verisimilitude and authenticity of the stories, which are also key components of validity and reliability (Klenke, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007). In addition, efforts were made throughout the research process for relationship development. For example, the researcher e-mailed and called the participants to establish a rapport in an effort to build trust prior to the interview. The researcher focused on being prompt, clear, and respectful, even formal, in
communications (Seidman, 2013). This purposeful approach was designed to build trust so that
the resulting stories would be described thoroughly in order to have more reliable data and valid
results (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

This research required thoroughly documenting and analyzing story narratives told by the
public library directors. In order to analyze the data, the investigator used the method of restory
(Cresswell, 2008) to distill and arrange the plot, characters, and events chronologically in order
to clarify events, themes, and meaning. Restorying requires attention to the original narrative in
order to represent clearly the intent and meaning of the initial story told. To this end, all restory
work included re-listening to the original recording of the story to glean additional tone, vocal
emphasis, and language in order to ensure the retelling captured the original intent.

The interview instrument was pre-tested with Kathleen De Long, a graduate of the
Simmons College Managerial Leadership in Libraries (MLIP) doctoral program, who used
narrative inquiry in her research (De Long, 2012). She reviewed the study objectives and
research questions as well as the interview instrument, and suggested clarifying that critical
incidents can be positive as well as negative so that the participants would consider both types of
incidents. She also discussed the need to prompt the participants to clarify what event made them
rethink their values by asking a question about a decision point in which they consciously chose
to use their values. In addition, she suggested that the 60-minute timeframe was limiting, and a
plan needed to be in place if a participant was interested in continuing to talk at the time or at a
later date.

Additional pre-testing was conducted with two MLIP students, Renée Di Pilato and
Cynthia Landrum, as well as Debbi MacLeod, Director of the Colorado Talking Book Library.
They indicated that the questions and process were generally clear, although a few semantic
issues arose. For example, the term “critical incidents” was thought to be ambiguous and “critical events” was suggested as a clearer term. Although the defining moments literature refers to critical incidents and the study objectives do as well, in the interview instrument the term critical events is used to provoke stories using more common language. For this reason, both terms will be used in this study to refer to the same phenomenon. Another confusing term from the literature is “trigger,” which is used to identify critical incidents that provoke defining moments, so the question was reworded to remove the term trigger. In addition, as suggested by one pre-test participant, the word “story” was added to the instructions to clarify that the narrative inquiry process involves in-depth storytelling.

In the formation of values section of the interview, some of the pre-test interviewees talked about core values that were distinctly different from the values discussed in the section related to defining moments. For this reason, the values discussed in the section on defining moments are not necessarily those that most influence the directors’ work. The two sets of questions stand somewhat independent of each other, and the section including formation of values applies specifically to one value they identify as most informing their work.

The three pre-test interviews all were completed within 60 minutes. The first interviewee suggested that clear definitions of core values, critical events, and defining moments be provided along with the questions. In the subsequent pre-test interviews, the two test participants said the definitions aided them in preparing for the interview by clarifying the concepts and questions to be addressed. Based on pre-test feedback, the investigator revised the interview questions and process, including the study instructions, in order to prepare participants sufficiently for the interview portion of the data-gathering process.
MacLeod, who is not associated with the Simmons College doctoral program, completed the values questionnaire and stated that the online questionnaire was straight-forward, the results resonated and assisted her in identifying two defining moments, and the process of reflecting on the critical events and her values responses was beneficial and enjoyable. She had few suggestions for changing the process or the interview questions and was able to answer the questions thoroughly and address additional probing questions within an hour. Thus, this revised process was what the investigator used with study participants.

**Conclusion**

Values are enduring beliefs that influence human thoughts, decisions, and behaviors. Because they are deeply held, values are not always used consciously or purposefully. Nonetheless, research has not probed public library directors about their values and connected the values to defining moments. These moments provide a context for understanding how individuals prioritize and use values in their work. At the same time, there is an opportunity to examine the changes in values based on work contexts of managerial leaders. Because public library directors lead community institutions, their values may inform not only their role as library director but the values of the organization and their position as a community leader.

Through this process, study participants completed the values questionnaire and provided rich detail through narrative inquiry. The general findings, as revealed in the next chapter, indicate commonly held values in their work as well as common types of critical incidents, values conflicts, and strategies for overcoming challenges. These themes will be generally reported in chapter two with common themes analyzed in the subsequent chapters.
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CHAPTER TWO
GENERAL FINDINGS

Of the 15 public library directors approached to participate in the study, 12 did so for a response rate of 80%. The 12 participants work in eight states in the Northeast, Midwest, and western United States; 75% (nine) of the directors are women and 25% (three) are men. Four participants have served as library directors for more than 20 years, four between 10 and 20 years, and four for fewer than 10 years. With regard to education, seven of the directors have earned a master’s degree in library and information science (MLIS); and three hold master’s degrees in other disciplines, either in business administration (MBA), mathematics, or the arts. Two have bachelor degrees as their highest completed degree, one of whom attended a MLIS program for one semester. These two have attended library-related continuing education programs.

The 12 directors oversee public libraries that serve a variety of communities. One directs a combined school and public library in a rural town with a budget of less than $50,000; another directs a rural library with a budget between $100,000 and $200,000. Five directors oversee community libraries with one building and budgets ranging from $200,000 to $4.9 million. Three oversee multiple building library systems with budgets between $5 million and $29.9 million; and two oversee large urban library systems with budgets exceeding $30 million. Table 2.1 lists the study participants, their library budget ranges, educational attainment, and total number of years in the position of library director (in any public library).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Time as Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$10,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Less than 10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100,000 – $199,999</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>10 &gt; 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$200,000 – $399,999</td>
<td>BS/1 sem. MLS</td>
<td>+ 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$400,000 - $999,999</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Less than 10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$400,000 - $999,999</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>+20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1M - $4.9 M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>10 &gt; 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1M - $4.9 M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>10 &gt; 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$5 M - $9.9 M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>Less than 10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$10 M - $29.9 M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>+ 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$10 M - $29.9 M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>10 &gt; 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>+ $30 M</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>+ 20 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>+ $30 M</td>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>Less than 10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four participants are nearing retirement, and they welcomed the opportunity to reflect more deeply about core values and gain a richer perspective on the meaning of their work. For example, one stated that she had not thought much about her values and was looking forward to using the values lens not only to assess her accomplishments but also to understand her motivations. All participants expressed perceived benefits to being involved in the study, which will be described in more detail at the end of this chapter. Participants were thoughtful and thorough in answering the questionnaire, reflecting on the questions, and engaging in the
interview process. Many spoke of preparations they had made for the interview and referred to notes they had compiled.

**PVQIV Results**

All participants completed the PVQIV either online or in print. As described in chapter one, the instrument includes 40 portrait statements of particular people and requires the participants to rate to what extent each portrait is like them. Each portrait statement represents a person who holds a particular value, such as one who likes to be successful, honest, or polite, without stating the value associated with the statement (see Appendix E for questionnaire). Participants were given portrait statements using gender pronouns that coincided with their gender, and asked to rank, on a scale from “1” to “6,” how much they are like the person in the statement. One is equated with “not at all like me,” and six is equated with “very much like me.”

When totaling the numeric “likeness” scores, the specific portrait values rankings are combined into 10 overarching values, including achievement (successful, capable, ambitious, and influential); benevolence (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, and responsible); and conformity (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, and honoring parents) (Schwartz, 2012) (see Table 1.1 for the overarching value associated with each portrait value).

These overarching values are also referred to as motivational values. In the study, the investigator entered the numeric “likeness” scores for each participant into a customized spreadsheet developed based on coding instructions provided by Schwartz (personal correspondence, January 18, 2012). The data entry was reviewed three times for each participant to confirm accuracy and maintain reliability. The spreadsheet was constructed to calculate the respondent’s mean score for each motivational value by adding the individual’s numeric scores for each portrait related to that motivational value, and then dividing that sum by the total
number of portraits for that value. For example, the portrait statements 5, 14, 21, 31, and 35 are associated with elements of the motivational value “security.” The numeric values selected for these five portraits were totaled and divided by five to determine each respondent’s mean score for security. The respondent’s mean score for each motivational value was then subtracted from his or her mean score for all portrait answers. This calculation is a normalizing strategy because some participants answer the questions by selecting the highest and lowest ranges while others tend to answer in the middle range of options. Averaging all in relation to the total mean score is a mechanism Schwartz (S. H. Schwartz, personal correspondence, January 18, 2012) recommends to normalize scores.

The respondents’ totals for each motivational value, after being subtracted from their overall mean score, include values with positive numbers (above their average), and negative numbers (below their average). The highest numbers indicate the values most deeply held, and the lowest numbers indicate values that are not held, and in some cases disdained (those with the largest negative numbers). Table 2.2 lists the values calculations for each participant rounded to the second decimal. Bold scores indicate the top value for each participant, and the top value overall among all participants, and the italicized numbers represent the second highest scores.

Table 2.2
PVQIV Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conf</th>
<th>Trad</th>
<th>Bene</th>
<th>Univ</th>
<th>Self-Dir</th>
<th>Stim</th>
<th>Hed</th>
<th>Ach</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Sec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>-2.33</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.13</td>
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<td>-1.38</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>-0.98</td>
<td>-2.31</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The highest ranked value for six participants was benevolence, and a seventh scored it highest along with self-direction. An additional three participants had benevolence as their second highest ranking value, making this the highest ranked overall motivational value among the total values of all 12 participants, with a mean score of 1.2. One participant had a benevolence score below his average and therefore not it was among his top values.

The second highest scoring motivational value overall was self-direction (1.12), which was the highest value for four participants and the second highest for an additional two. All participants in the study have self-direction scores above their mean score, making it the most commonly held core value overall.

Universalism (1.02) was the third highest scoring motivational value. Two participants’ scores indicated this as their highest ranking value, and five scored it as their second highest
ranking value. As with self-direction, universalism was a value that all participants rated above their average score, making it the second highest ranking value among all participants.

The values of stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and conformity had mixed rankings among the participants. Stimulation was the fourth highest value among the total group with a score of 0.09; seven rated stimulation above their average score, and five had it below their mean. Half of the participants’ results placed hedonism above their average, including one participant who had a hedonism score second among his 10 motivational values. One third of the participants rated achievement above their average scores, and another third of participants gave conformity a rating above their average mean score.

With regard to the lowest ranking values among the participants, tradition was lowest with an overall mean score of -1.45, and power was also low at -1. The scores for these two values were low for nearly all participants; only two participants scored rated tradition or power above the average mean score for their values.

With regard to specific portrait statements, the highest overall score of 5.75 out of six (six indicating very much like me) was:

27. It is important to him/her to respond to the needs of others. He/she tries to support those he/she knows (benevolence).

All or most participants rated the following individual portraits high:

8. It is important to him/her to listen to people who are different from him/her. Even when he/she disagrees with them, he/she still wants to understand them (5.67, universalism).

19. He/she strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him/her (5.67, universalism).
22. *He/she thinks it's important to be interested in things. He/she likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things* (5.67, self-direction).

3. *He/she thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He/she believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life* (5.58, universalism).

29. *He/she wants everyone to be treated justly, even people he/she doesn’t know. It is important to him/her to protect the weak in society* (5.58, universalism)

(Based on S. H. Schwartz, personal correspondence, January 18, 2012).

**PVQIV Relational Values Reports**

Each participant received a report, which listed his or her values in order based on answers to the questionnaire. The report also included a pie chart, which displayed the motivational values in a visually relational way with the top/right values associated with self-transcendence, a motivation for societal enhancement (benevolence, universalism); the lower/right of the chart related to the values that conserve and preserve the current societal structure (conformity, tradition, and security); the lower/left relating to individual enhancement (power, achievement, and hedonism); and the upper left relating to openness to change (hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction) (see Figure 1.1 for the pie chart of Schwartz’s Theoretical Model of Relations among the 10 Values). Figure 2.1 displays a compilation of the motivational values charts of all 12 participants with their top values highlighted in yellow and lesser values priorities in light yellow.

The visual representation of the top values within the context of the overall chart of values illustrates the strong motivation among all participants for self-transcendence and openness to change. As visually indicated in Figure 2.1, all participants have the top right quadrant highlighted, and many have the upper left quadrant highlighted, which illustrates the
strong motivation for self-transcendence, motivation for societal change, and openness to change among all participants. In contrast, no participants had conservation values (security, tradition, conformity) as highly motivating to their work. Some participants had core values motivated by self-enhancement while others did not.
Figure 2.1

Participants’ Relational Chart of Motivational Values
Summary

The results of the standardized values questionnaire indicate that the 12 study participants share common motivations related to universal values, such as social justice, equality, tolerance, and protection of the environment. In addition, the results of all but one participant indicate motivation based on benevolence, specifically related to preserving and enhancing the welfare of those near to them. Self-direction, particularly as this value relates to being curious and learning new things, was also indicated as a strong motivating value for all participants. Although each of the participant’s responses and subsequent values report was unique, general motivational tendencies include enhancing the welfare of others and being open to change. No discernible values distinctions were found based on library budget size, educational degree, time as a director, or gender.

General Interview Findings

After answering the PVQIV questionnaire, participants received a report indicating their individual values results, and directions for the interview, including a series of definitions of values, critical events, and defining moments as well as the standardized questions for the interview (Appendix G). Then each engaged in an individual, one-hour telephone interview during which they described two critical incidents that led to defining moments, discussed how they formed their values and priorities (prompted by specific interview questions), and reflected on how those values related to their work.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Each transcription was re-read and corrected while listening to the audio recording and each participant was sent a revised transcript of his or her interview to make comments, additions, or changes. Two directors made
clarifications on their transcripts, and the other 10 indicated that their transcript accurately recorded the conversation.

The transcripts were imported into NVivo software and sections of each transcript were associated with 48 nodes, or unique themes, which were coded using the software (Appendix I). More specific values themes were identified through hand coding the values, critical incidents, and defining moments. To analyze the 12 transcripts (181 pages of single spaced text of interviews) thoroughly the investigator used concept mapping (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010) in which broad concepts, such as values and critical incidents, were drawn visually on large sheets of paper in order to reveal relationships and common themes. Concept mapping is a visual form of inquiry used as a nonlinear process for analysis. By listing, for example, the 24 critical incidents identified by each participant on a large sheet of paper, the investigator was able to analyze the graphically displayed lists and determine relational understanding and connections among the critical incidents.

**Critical Incidents and Defining Moments**

At the beginning of the interviews, each participant told two stories of critical incidents that led to defining moments in their work. Although they were asked to talk about defining moments in their roles as library directors, two reflected on incidents in their professional careers prior to becoming library directors because the impact of the events have had a major influence on the values they use in their current positions. Table 2.3 displays the types of critical incidents participants identified when describing defining moments and the context of these situations.

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6 NVivo is a qualitative software program that allows researchers to import, organize, and analyze large quantities of data, including interview transcripts and other text and non-text content.
Table 2.3

Critical Incidents That Prompted Defining Moments of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Incident</th>
<th># of Occurrences</th>
<th>New to Position*</th>
<th>Unexpected*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Resistance to Change</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Performance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Director Issues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Projects</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Reorganizations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with Governing Authority</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrongly Accused</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Freedom Challenges</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron Conflict</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Natural Disaster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note “New to Position” indicates critical incidents that occurred within the first year of beginning a new position. “Unexpected” refers to unanticipated critical incidents.

Participants identified a variety of critical incidents that prompted defining moments including seven stories requiring the director to resolve personnel issues related to either poor performance based on standard expectations (3) or unacceptable performance because library staff members were resistant to change initiatives in the library (4). Critical incidents also involved performance issues of previous library directors (3) and the activities involved in resolving legacy issues. Other situations that prompted defining moments of public library directors were library building projects (3), conflicts with the governing authority (2), being wrongly accused of inappropriate or illegal conduct (2), and intellectual freedom challenges by outspoken community members. The critical incidents in which more than one participant experienced the issue will be discussed in this section.

In addition to the specific types of critical incidents that prompted defining moments, Table 2.3 also displays the context of these situations. Thirteen of the 24 defining moments, 54%, occurred when participants were new to their positions; and 12 defining moments, 50%,
related to managing some type of changes in the library. Managing change prompted defining moments at different stages, including three participants who described the challenges of deciding which changes to make and/or how to make them. Four participants discussed staff resistance to change as the critical issue and two stories focused on disagreement with the governing authority on change methods. Also, three directors were involved in building projects which changed library services. Another contextual aspect was that nine of the 24 critical incidents (37.5%) were unexpected and often disruptive situations, which required urgent attention and/or prompt action.

Because participants spoke of critical incidents within the context of defining moments, the following section outlines participant narratives both to illustrate the experiences and highlight the values of these experiences.

**Personnel Issues**

In participant stories of defining moments, seven (29%) critical incidents related to personnel issues including staff resistance to the director’s preferred direction for the library and employees who were simply not doing the job they were hired to do. Participants described different methods to address these issues as outlined below.

**Staff Resistance to Change**

In managing organizational change, four participants possessed a clear understanding of what changes needed to occur and the critical incidents involved specific employees who resisted the way they were managing change or the ultimate goal of the change. One participant described a series of critical events that occurred when she accepted a youth services management position at a library with a culture focused on library procedures rather than on library services to the public. This participant’s critical incidents involved her direct reports who,
due to the library system’s focus on procedures rather than service, were resistant to her leading change initiatives in the library. She was frustrated and considered going back to a previous job with the values that more aligned with hers.

In talking with her husband, she realized that she had a vision for how services could be more vital in public libraries, and she realized she had the capacity to change the current library culture. She then began to make the changes she thought needed to be made. She explained, “I came back to my job and I looked at it very differently. I approached it at that point as how do I teach people here how to provide great service … I spent that next year doing that … and because of those choices and those decisions, it turns out in 18 months after that or a little longer, I was [named] director of the library.”

Her defining moment of deciding to remain at the library led her to strive for her vision and become more responsible, which, in turn, instilled confidence in her that allowed her to overcome resistance. For example, the librarians refused to weed the collection, including non-fiction, despite the fact that many materials were outdated. In response, she gathered volunteers and others to do the weeding. The librarians kept the boxes of outdated books and told her these would go on the shelf when she resigned. However, she remained and made changes, such as reducing a 12-page list of rules down to one and a half pages. This also upset the librarians who thought fewer rules would result in significant problems with children. Eventually, several of the librarians whom she stated, “valued the library profession more than library services” retired and she was able to hire others with values more aligned with her own. Ultimately, her choice to continue at the library and to make changes resulted in a library oriented toward innovative services that the community uses heavily.
Another participant explained that changes were already in place in the library system to increase access to popular materials, similar to a bookstore. The director realized that some of the managers were resistant to this service model and either needed to embrace the new ways or leave voluntarily or through personnel action. The director and other direct supervisors developed a communications plan to address the resistant employees with directed conversations, such as stating specific behaviors that needed to change. The participant explained that this was a defining moment because of the conscious choice to be direct, yet respectful, with personnel rather than being polite or placating. The shift also clarified the library vision and defined how personnel would be selected and managed in the future. The participant stated that these actions created a stronger library culture in which everyone felt more aligned in their work and overt about personnel issues.

Two additional participants described organizational change at the administrative level and the resistance of their director-level subordinates. One participant reorganized reporting lines so that the finance director reported to the library director rather than the board. In another case, the development director and board president attempted to restructure the library Friends and Foundation groups, while the director was on extended leave. Both participants described a process of communicating and coaching the resistant subordinates in an effort to align them with the way the director thought was more effective. After months of tension and conflict, in these two instances the administrative personnel who were in conflict with the directors chose to leave the organizations and the president of the board was not reappointed.

In the previous four situations, the directors were involved in power struggles, which ended in resistant employees leaving the organizations. In all cases, the library directors stated that they were clear about what needed to occur and attempted to persuade employees to follow
their leadership. The defining aspect in common was that the directors persisted even when it meant losing the relationships with the staff members. Also in each of these cases, the decision and commitment to specific values were not only defining for the directors but also defined the future direction of these organizations. Although these staff issues involved philosophical differences about the fundamental values of the library as well as how those values get implemented, other issues with employees occurred in this study that required personnel action.

**Poor Staff Performance**

Three participants described critical incidents in which they had to address personnel performance issues and the negative impact on the library. One director explained the challenge of working with staff members who were not providing friendly, helpful service, which is one of her core values for the library. She was uncomfortable with confronting these staff members and discussed the awkwardness of having these conversations. In other situations the participants described stronger confidence in managing these personnel issues.

In another account of a defining moment involving employee performance, the participant transitioned from being one of the staff to becoming the library director. At that time, one of the library staff members was not performing satisfactorily, and the new director realized she needed to act. The participant explained, “For me, that was a big deal because that’s when I stepped out of the room, so to speak, and became separate, and the leader of everyone; and therefore, I had different rules I had to play by that were much more exacting of me than anyone else here.” This experience instilled the value of responsibility in this participant, who stated, One person who wasn’t performing and refusing to perform couldn’t be here if it meant the rest of us weren’t going to be able to perform. And it was my responsibility to take care of that. No one else could do that. So I stepped up
and did it. And ever since then, I’ve been able to do those things when they’ve needed to be done. And people who work here trust that I will, and they’re calm about it because I don’t do it in a cavalier way and I’m not a destructive person.

Another participant described a long-time employee who, for various reasons, was missing too much work, reporting work time when she had not been at work, and not doing her work at the level expected. When confronted with these behaviors and asked to improve, the employee was hostile and proceeded to spread rumors about the director throughout the community. The director of this small town library described the difficulty of having to reprimand this staff member in an effort to see performance change while community members were becoming aware of the internal staff issue. However, the infractions became so blatant that with counsel from the town manager and support from the library board, the director proceeded with disciplinary action. The participant described the values conflict as a feeling of loyalty toward the staff member, whom she had worked with and mentored over time, versus a strong commitment to honesty and integrity toward library services and the community. She said, “I’m loyal to the library and the people that look at the institution for integrity and all the people in the town that work really hard and don’t take advantage. So it’s been a good lesson in trying to find inner strength.”

In each of these narratives, values were central to the work as well as to personnel conflicts. At times, library workers were simply not performing as needed and the directors felt conflicted between the values of loyalty (to staff) and responsibility (to the needs of the community). In all cases, the directors maintained authority to make changes, committed to specific values priorities, articulated why the changes needed to be made, and removed people
from or coached people out of the organization who did not adapt to the changes. The professional values of quality service, accountability to the public, and service for all were underlying motivational themes in the narratives of all participants. Additional values themes articulated by the participants were responsibility, courage, adaptability, and respect.

**Previous Director Issues**

Three study participants discussed defining moments related to previous directors’ mismanagement. One participant described a circumstance in which a previous director was secretive and removed by the board. Another spoke of a former director who mishandled situations without board knowledge, and a third conveyed a story of a former director who pressured staff to accommodate her requests that they work on her personal projects after she had retired from the library.

One participant explained how she responded to being named the director after the removal of the former director who left under clouded circumstances, which were not disclosed in the interview. She described her approach as follows,

The first thing that I did when I came in was I took down the walls so everybody could see everything that I was doing, and so that the level of trust could be reestablished because trust was really taken away. The trustees lost their faith in themselves because they hired a person who shouldn’t have been in that position. And it’s a small town; when somebody presented themselves in a certain way, they believed that person. So it was really rebuilding that sense of trust and also letting the trustees rebuild their confidence in themselves and knowing that they could trust the person that they put in place to run the department.
In addition, she realized that the library board meetings were “like tea parties” in which everyone agreed without discussion. She provided trustee training on their roles and responsibilities, and she stated, “I taught them how to read a budget and to go line by line down and to question me when there was something that they didn’t understand. And now they are very comfortable doing that. So I have a group of trustees that take their responsibilities seriously and communicate that to the rest of the community.” She summed up that the values she brought to her position were “dedication and hard work and honesty and transparency because the previous director had left under bad circumstances.”

In another case, after the study participant became the new director, she learned of the previous director’s mishandling of issues. The participant did not provide specific details about the issues yet indicated that both the former director and the board had acted either with incompetence or misconduct. “The conflict that I had was protecting the board and the community from the knowledge versus protecting the board and the community from the consequences if the issues weren't fixed.” The circumstances were further challenging because the former director was well liked, and the board ultimately was responsible for the results of the previous director’s actions, and therefore learning of this situation might make them defensive and angry.

The study participant described weighing both options before deciding to inform the board and seek legal counsel in order to resolve the issues with integrity. She explained,

I hurt them and I made them feel incompetent, but I made the decision that it was my role …my role was to protect them from litigation. Also part of that issue was that that [decision] hurt me in their eyes. Because if anybody read
between the lines they realized that they had not picked up on these things and
nobody likes to be told that they did something wrong.

The director indicated that the values conflict was between being responsible in her role as the
library director and to the library board, and being in good standing with the board. She felt this
action would jeopardize her position, but she decided her actions were the right course.
Ultimately, the values this incident reinforced in the director was a commitment to responsibility
and taking the job duties seriously.

Another study participant explained a defining moment in which the former director,
well-loved in the community and profession, asked a staff member to work on her personal
projects after she had retired from the library. The staff person felt conflicted, and approached
the new director, one of this study’s participants. He contacted the former director, his previous
mentor, and informed her that the library personnel would not devote time and resources to her
project. In the interview, the participant explained that, although he felt loyalty to the previous
director, he was conscious of the responsibility the library had to the taxpayers and did not
believe it was legal or ethical to be using tax-funded personnel and resources for this personal
project. The value of integrity and responsibility for the library resources outweighed the value
of loyalty to a former mentor and employee.

**Building Projects**

Three participants described library building construction projects as critical incidents
that prompted defining moments. In one case, a director, who has an MBA rather than an MLIS,
described acquiring funding for a new building project. She worked with architects, contractors,
and construction workers on the library building using her skills and knowledge of business
practices, negotiations, and project management. In the process, she understood why she had
accepted the position of library director. She realized that she was uniquely qualified for the position as library director, and that she applied her skills and talents in ways that fundamentally made a difference to the community. The process of the building project helped instill confidence in her role as library director.

Another director described a defining moment related to a building project that occurred in her first five years as director. The project involved planning and building a new library, and the final step was to coordinate approximately 100 community volunteers to move the collection from the old building to the new one. This was a challenging project to manage with a lot of people. She explained,

So the day of the move was such an extraordinary community event. And the plan worked, but it also was open enough that different volunteers came up with ingenious ways to enhance the whole process. And I felt that that day we – the library belongs to the community – but I felt like that day, we really gave the library to the community and it created this atmosphere and environment of ownership on a very personal basis for people.

She explained that this event strengthened her confidence to manage large community projects but also created an experience in which members of the community really felt ownership of the library. In this way, the experience was defining in terms of the confidence she had in her abilities and the result also was defining for the way the community viewed the library. She described that, from that point forward, community ownership has been the focus of library operations and has confirmed her strong belief in the role of the library to enhance the community and improve lives.
A third library director reached a different conclusion while working on a library building project. She also was a new director, and previously had managed initiatives on her own, taking credit for them. In this case, she was working with a team that included someone skilled at negotiation and another member who was experienced with overseeing construction details. The participant added her skills in fundraising and relationship building to the team. In one instance, she was not copied on an e-mail message about the construction and became upset because she believed that, as the director, she should have been included in the communication. However, she had an insight that this really was not the right response, and that she could let go of certain aspects of the project and trust her team members to take care of their responsibilities. She explained, “It was that moment of understanding that everybody had something incredible to contribute that was going to make this a success. That was the ‘aha’ moment for me.” She changed her method from tracking all aspects of the project to trusting those with other strengths to manage certain elements of it. More importantly, her insight was that leadership needs to be shared throughout the team, and she has applied this value of collaboration and shared responsibility and recognition to other initiatives. She explained, “Leaders do best when they understand that they’re not running the whole show, and they can’t take credit for everything; and everything should not just be a reflection on them as individuals, but what is really important is how it reflects on the institution.” This focus on institutional impact shifted her to lead the organization differently, to grow the talent of employees, and to use the unique strengths of trustees and other high level library stakeholders.

Library Reorganization

Three narratives identified the critical incident at the beginning of the process of changing the organization. In these cases, the participants recognized that change was needed
and they had to determine how to reorganize the library to achieve better performance. The participant at the smallest library described how she chose to overlook circulation rules in order to encourage at-risk poor children to use the library. Although this might not appear to be a major reorganization to a library, she stated, “My goal was to change the thinking here that we have to be so concerned about a $12 book, or replacing a book, or sticking to the rules versus the impact it has on that child’s learning, or their future love of learning, or just having a place that they feel safe and comfortable.” Because this is a major philosophical shift from rules to encouraging learning in a library in a situation with few employees serving a small community, this change was described and is categorized as library reorganization.

She explained, “I did meet a little resistance, but I mean, in general, since my staff is so small, it was a pretty easy thing.” She summarized,

The defining moment was realizing my role as a librarian can be so much more than just someone who checks in and out books. It’s someone who’s more of a service to the community. Really, in any job you have that opportunity to have that impact. But I don’t think I realized until I started dealing and working with a lot of kids, especially the ones that didn’t have anywhere to go, or that were afraid to check out books, that you can have an impact.

Library change in a small library can be easier because of the small staff, yet the values shift that occurred with this director had the potential to create a culture change in which children were more welcome and prioritized over rules.

In another story a participant described being new to a large library system and realizing that the strategies he used in previous smaller libraries systems would not be effective. He
described that the critical question was how to establish the type of culture and values that encourage consistent, quality conduct among employees across the organization. After many conversations with community leaders, reading and investigation, including a tour of a library system in another country, and writing several versions of strategic plans, he became clear on the way to proceed. The library system developed clear expectations through values statements, training, and systemic processes for monitoring staff performance in order to ensure consistent adherence to four key values. He stated, “I spend a lot of time on values in this organization. It is rare that an enterprise-wide communication from me goes out without some mention of one of the … values [of the organization].” The process of determining the values as well as establishing them as norms was defining both for him and for the organization.

A third director spoke of a defining moment after she had been at the library for many years and library use began to decrease. She explained that she always felt the library should be the hub of the community, and when the number of visitors and items checked out began to drop, she felt an urgency to make changes in order for the library to remain relevant to community members. She read professional blogs, attended conferences, and engaged in meetings to discuss library trends. After a particularly compelling conference, she realized that library services needed to shift from a primary focus on providing access to books and information and to becoming a community center for interactions, meaningful learning experiences, and idea generation. To this end, library personnel removed older books, rearranged furniture, provided more open spaces for people to meet to share ideas, and offered increased programming with interactive activities. She explained the challenge of making these changes this way, “I could put together a logical argument for why the world is changing and how we had to change with it. And I will say I didn’t bring most of my staff along. My staff just were not interested.” She felt
certain of the need for change, which resulted in the cataloger and reference librarian resigning, allowing her to hire new people whose values aligned with her new vision of the library. Although this defining moment includes library personnel resistance, similar to the stories above, the director did not identify this challenge as defining. She spoke of the issue of needing to make changes that engaged the community in library use as the compelling critical incident and defining challenge she overcame.

**Conflict with Governing Authority**

Although participants spoke confidently about making changes among employees whom they supervise, different challenges arose when the critical incident involved their supervisors. Public library governing authorities vary and, in the case of the two stories about conflict, one participant’s supervisor is the county manager, and in the other a library board of trustees is the governing authority over the library and the supervisor of the director. In both cases, the participants discussed defining moments of values conflicts with supervisors, and specifically scenarios in which they planned changes that involved more risk than their supervisors would tolerate. In one case, the library was launching a campaign to renew temporary funding, but the director and many other library staff and supporters had been working on a larger ballot initiative that would have made the library a permanent taxing district. The county manager who oversaw the library believed the renewal, a less risky approach, was the appropriate path. The director and many community stakeholders disagreed. Additionally, the director disagreed with the lack of stakeholder input on the county manager’s final decision to refer the renewal. The participant described several values conflicts including,

… the conflict in my values and specifically in the supervisor’s values. And I think even a little bit between my own, the need to be responsible to him …
And then feeling so strongly about transparency and honesty with my staff but having to toe a line that I didn't want to toe.

When faced with these values conflicts with the county manager, the director had to follow his directives even though she did not agree. In the second case, the director had received a grant to establish a computer lab in the library. The library board members were angry that the director accepted the grant because they believed the library’s role was to provide books and that offering computer access did not apply to its mission. The participant explained,

I knew that we should be doing better for the community; that we needed to be in the Internet age. And the way it played out was eventually I kept talking and they grudgingly allowed me to go ahead and get the lab, which we did, which set a standard for technology for our library that we’ve maintained.

The defining moment for this director involved standing up to the board and articulating what the community really needed. In this case she left the library in protest, but later returned to the directorship. This approach established how she has worked with the board ever since. She talked about how this incident gave her the confidence to continue to be a change agent.

Wrongly Accused

Two study participants spoke of defining moments in which they were wrongly accused of misconduct and how those experiences inform the way they now conduct themselves at work. In one case, the participant was in a middle management position and was falsely accused by the finance director of not submitting financial materials. It was the financial director who had not completed her work and instead reported to the library board that the participant was in the wrong. The current library director believed the finance director rather than the middle manager without further investigation. It was not until later when the finance director again was in error,
and in this circumstance told the library board that it was the director’s fault, that the director became aware of the pattern. The finance director was forced out, and eventually, when the director retired, the middle manager became director. He explained that he reflects on this incident when disagreements occur within the library. He carefully investigates and verifies information prior to taking action to resolve the situation and reprimand staff. The participant identified the values of integrity and fairness as primary to this defining moment.

In another case, the participant was selected for the position and then accused of having inappropriate inside connections that allowed her to be named director. The subsequent months of public scrutiny ended when it was apparent that the new director had acted with integrity, and the accusations were false. Public scrutiny and mistrust had a significant impact on the director’s orientation toward her work. She understood that her role included public, and even political, scrutiny at a level she had not anticipated. Because of this, she articulated the importance of balancing transparency with personal privacy. She stated that openness is important to being an authentic leader, yet the director has to maintain a public persona because many equate her personally with the institution of the library.

**Intellectual Freedom Challenges**

Two directors spoke of intellectual freedom challenges as critical incidents that led to defining moments in their roles as directors. One described a situation in which an influential member of the community complained about a book his daughter was allowed to check out from the library. After the children’s librarian and director both explained the policy and procedures for materials reconsideration, the community leader refused to accept these methods and sought to circumvent the process in order to have the book removed. So certain was he of his views, he started threatening to make difficulties for the library, such as advocating for library funding
reductions. The director undertook the reconsideration process, informed other community leaders of the issues, and gathered community support for the library’s role as a community center for all ideas. She explained that this series of threats only gave her more courage to stand up for the fundamental value of intellectual freedom and to educate the community proactively about the public library’s role to offer open and free access to a diverse variety of materials.

This event and her response were defining in that she became an outspoken leader on intellectual freedom issues in the community, as well as in the state association and, later, in the American Library Association. Prior to this incident, she had never thought of herself as a leader, but by speaking up, and because of the response she received from those in the community and the library profession, she began to understand her potential as a spokesperson for intellectual freedom. The result was a clear sense of purpose, confidence, and understanding that, when her values are threatened, she will fight for what she believes in. She stated that the experience made her realize, “I just couldn’t remain silent and that I can’t fear — the opposite happens with me now that if someone threatens me it just makes me dig my heels in and gives me more courage to speak out.” In summary, she said, “I think the legacy is that my community knows how important intellectual freedom and privacy and confidentiality are in the library, and what that institution means, and that really feels good.”

In the second story of an intellectual freedom challenge, the director explained that a group formed in the community in order to pressure the library to remove materials that it deemed inappropriate. This group met at the library and recruited members in order to organize a systematic campaign to meet its goals. The director attended the meetings, explaining, “I began with this very watchful, and I think, suspicious attention on my part. I didn’t trust them and I suppose, unconsciously, I thought of them as the enemy.”
The director’s feeling changed when he realized that the group also had the right to meet and discuss what they wished to discuss. Thus, rather than removing materials, the library began purchasing materials that met the needs and interests of this group. As this situation played out over months, the director, much like the participant discussed in the previous example, became vocal in the community to raise awareness about intellectual freedom. He wrote newspaper articles and became known in the library community as an advocate for intellectual freedom. Ultimately, the participant described the defining moment this way, “Instead of being a defender of intellectual freedom, I was more a sympathetic voice to say, ‘I hear your complaint, but let me talk to you about what the role of the library is, why we are an asset to your family and to your child.’” In this circumstance, the participant described this defining moment as instilling the value of respect for intellectual pursuits applied both to those who use the library as well as those who challenge it.

Summary

During the interviews, participants discussed defining moments in which values they held personally became more relevant for the organization. The incidents that prompted defining moments varied yet those related to change and resolving poor performance were addressed primarily internally. In the cases of construction projects and intellectual freedom challenges, the public was aware of the circumstances, which placed added pressure on the directors involved. In all cases, the defining moments illuminate several core values among the participants regardless of size of library, number of years of experience, and educational background.

Values

During the interviews, participants discussed their values in three contexts. First, they identified values that they affirmed or changed because of defining moments. After that initial
discussion, the participants described the values that most influence their work and how those were formed. In the final part of the interview, participants identified how the role of public library director may have influenced their values priorities in their work. All participants discussed specific values associated with defining moments, formative experiences, and the position as library director by distinguishing different values for each section. Table 2.4 lists the values each participant identified during the three sections of the interview.

**Table 2.4**

**Participant Values Identified in Interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>From defining moments</th>
<th>That most influence work</th>
<th>As library director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Inspire a love of reading, respectful interactions in library</td>
<td>Fairness in service</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Access for all, respect everyone’s interests</td>
<td>Community focus, value education, learning</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Speaking truth to power: intellectual freedom, social justice, democracy, integrity (rather than loyalty)</td>
<td>Courage, passion, respect for everyone’s opinions</td>
<td>Respect, courage, community leadership in intellectual freedom cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Dedication, hard work, honesty, integrity, transparency, passion, responsibility, appreciation of staff</td>
<td>Equality, customer service, respect for all learning interests</td>
<td>Respect for diverse perspectives and people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Openness to others, community engagement, respect for learning</td>
<td>Customized customer service, respect for learning, privacy</td>
<td>Equality of access to resources, community involvement, social justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>Public welfare, courage, responsibility, integrity</td>
<td>Empower others through knowledge and opportunity</td>
<td>Consciousness of values, mindfulness</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>From defining moments</td>
<td>That most influence work</td>
<td>As library director</td>
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<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Consensus with change management, library effectiveness, transparency, honesty, shared leadership</td>
<td>Honesty and integrity</td>
<td>Improve people’s lives through libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Organizational effectiveness, fairness, balanced treatment of staff, integrity</td>
<td>Service to the public, responsibility: stewardship with public funds, take care of staff</td>
<td>Support and get the most out of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P9</td>
<td>Respect, accountability</td>
<td>Accountability, curiosity, independent thought, empathy, accepting others</td>
<td>Understand first, responsibility, accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P10</td>
<td>Public service, access to all, responsibility</td>
<td>Responsible to public and staff</td>
<td>Change from seeing black and white to gray, free choice, courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>Importance of values throughout large organization: respect: open to all, honor diverse nature of others; trust: character and integrity, excellence, passion and dedication, organizational effectiveness</td>
<td>Courage with values, diligence to hold staff accountable to values, strive to be better: excellence</td>
<td>Self-awareness, self-regulation especially regarding respect, personal integrity, access for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>Privacy, personal integrity, self-respect, credibility, transparency, honesty, consensus, risk, loyalty versus integrity, relationships</td>
<td>Integrity, relationships, equity of opportunity for all, social justice</td>
<td>Responsibility, mindfulness, accountability</td>
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The values most discussed were professional values, such as intellectual freedom, access for all, and privacy; interpersonal values, such as honesty, respect, fairness, and loyalty; and ethical, organizational values, such as integrity, transparency, and commitment to library performance excellence. Many participants stated that the values discussed had been present
throughout their lives and strengthened through work experiences, including defining moments. Among participants, certain interpersonal values, such as loyalty, came into conflict with ethical values of honesty, integrity, and commitment to organizational effectiveness. The interviews underscored that these values are employed internally when making decisions and considering behavior, as well as in the organization with personnel and other stakeholders related to the library.

The most commonly discussed professional values were customer service, learning and literacy, intellectual freedom, and access for all. Three directors briefly discussed privacy, one in great detail. One mentioned stewardship and several participants spoke of accountability as it related to stewardship. The overarching value, common among all library directors, was the commitment to being responsible in their role as the organizational leader and as a civic leader.

Several participants also talked about the key role of courage for staying true to values during conflicts. They discussed the need to commit to their values consistently, to model them through their actions, to self-regulate behavior, and to be flexible and adapt when change was necessary. To further understand the primary values of the participants as identified in the interviews, the following sections describe the conversations related to the values of honesty and integrity, respect, fairness and equality, loyalty, learning and adaptability, and responsibility.

**Honesty and Integrity**

The most common value identified by participants was honesty. Typically, the concept of honesty related to how they conducted themselves at work and what they expected from others, including library personnel. Statements about honesty often were accompanied by comments about the significance of integrity, transparency, and accountability. For example, a participant summed up one of her decisions about a defining moment in this way: “It was about honesty and
integrity and loyalty to an institution that I really believe in.” Three directors stated the importance of being honest publicly, open, and transparent. Another participant stated that, when deciding on a resolution to a critical incident, “Integrity was a huge one. Self-respect was a huge one and … [a] sense of credibility … was a big part of the transparency.” One participant stated, “If you don’t have integrity, you have nothing; you know, that honesty is so important.”

While honesty and integrity were discussed with regard to how the directors and other library personnel interacted in specific situations, the related concepts of transparency and accountability also were applied to library performance. One participant stated, “Excellence and striving for the ideal outcome in everything that we do means certainly being supportive of people but also being crystal clear about expectations and holding them accountable to deliver on performance.”

Another explained his goals for rigorous accountability in this way,

I think it is a lot of checking in with people around you because it is so easy to deceive yourself; all of the ways that you trick yourself into doing things that are not all that good for you or good for the organization. So that is part of it – keep checking with people who see things differently from you. I think that the second one is a big discussion that I have had within my organization about what are the measures that matter.

Participants stated that they think a lot about how they and their organization are perceived in terms of accountability. One director explained,

I was in an interesting session a few weeks back at a conference about transparency. They were talking about the tension between being transparent and getting the work done. It was an interesting conversation because I have a
strong value for transparency; and I know for a fact there are times when I hold back or I don't share all the details in the interest of progress or sometimes in the interest of just strategy, and that's been a big one for me to wrestle with.

In discussing the need to maintain accountability, some directors expressed a commitment to being self-reflective and to self-regulate their behavior in an effort to have both integrity and effective performance. One summed up this thought by saying, “It is not enough to be good and know what you are about, but you have to live the values, and you have to hold yourself accountable and things are supposed to get better at the end.”

Respect

Respect was another often mentioned value, though the participants spoke about it in a variety of forms, including respectful interactions, respect for others’ interests and opinions, and respect for individuals’ rights to inquire and learn whatever they choose. With regard to one defining moment, one participant explained the dynamic with staff as a new director which gave her,

… the affirmation that people need to be treated with respect. And that these are people that clearly loved the community and were serving their community but, yet, weren’t respected by their [previous] boss. They respected each other and loved each other and supported each other. Just to let people have joy in the work that they do and value and be valued.

Other study participants mentioned their priority to hire personnel who exhibited respectful behavior. One said, “I’ve hired people that respect the level of learning, they respect people. … We all try to positively affect the quality of the day for anybody that comes in the library.”
Along with seeking and encouraging respect among the employees and toward the public, some director discussed upholding a respectful environment in the library by addressing rude staff and, in some cases, rude patron behavior. One mentioned a perpetually rude elderly gentleman whom she approached when he was yelling at a library employee. She calmly and respectfully confirmed that he had the right to be angry but clarified that everyone needs to be respectful. She stated that she expected people to be respectful with each other, with library materials, and with library spaces.

In handling staff issues, respect was also a theme. One participant stated, “I think ultimately we decided that being nice was disrespectful; that [by being nice] we were encouraging people to engage in bad behavior that was destructive not only to themselves and made them unhappy, but it really was destructive to the organization.” Rather than continue to placate people who were not improving performance, the director held direct, respectful conversations about what was and was not acceptable behavior.

Another director explained that he is intentional about being respectful to staff and others because he holds a public position and needs to model respectful behavior for others. In addition, the performance evaluation of each employee includes ratings based on the level of respect exhibited both internally, with other employees, and with the public. In this way, respect is a value interwoven into the organizational culture and the behavior of personnel.

Participants also spoke of respect in terms of how they engage with library users’ information needs and interests. One stated, “I think the respect for our community – that’s always been important to me. I actually hear what people are saying even if they’re not saying it directly, and I can synthesize it. This isn’t about what I want; it is about what the community wants. … I have respect for the wisdom of my community.” This quote mirrors many directors’
comments about customer service and captures the widely shared notion among participants that the library should be a welcoming place in which people are treated with respect and encouraged to pursue their various interests.

Other directors spoke specifically about respect as it related to diversity. Several discussed the importance of the library as being an institution that respects the diversity of people in the community. The discussions centered on respect both for people who were not like them as well as respect for divergent interests and questions. Several participants articulated the value of respect and tolerance for diverse viewpoints as fundamental to their library work.

**Fairness and Equality**

Five participants discussed the value of fairness from various perspectives. In three cases, participants spoke of fairness in terms of focusing services to provide greater access to library collections and services for low income patrons, minorities, and children with little parental support. Two participants framed the concept of access for all in terms of social justice. Two other participants described the importance of fairness with regard to staff. In one case, the director explained that all staff needed to be treated equally. Another explained that, when issues arise, he considers all perspectives in order to make fair and balanced decisions. In discussions about fairness, participants associated it with equality and/or equitable access for all. Five directors emphasized the importance of access to all information, particularly to ensure that all people, regardless of their background or ability, have equitable access to all information through public libraries. In the case of access for all, depending on the participant, the value was discussed either as one of fairness or one of respect.
Loyalty

Participants spoke of loyalty on several occasions when they described conflicts among values. In general, the participants expressed strong loyalty to personnel and to their supervisors as well as the community at large. Many of them stated that their position includes behaving in loyal ways, such as being honest and open with staff, asking for their input to gather consensus, and engaging in respectful and fair interactions. In addition, some participants described coaching individual personnel and encouraging their professional development.

Some participants described how loyalty conflicted with other values, such as when specific personnel were not doing the required work with integrity, or when change was implemented for organizational effectiveness and staff members were resistant. In these cases, individual loyalty to personnel was superseded by organizational accountability. One director explained, “I felt myself being tested every day in the sense that my loyalty, my support of that staff member, began to diminish and … so my feelings about her work and about her loyalty to me began to feel very much in question.” Three other directors spoke of similar circumstances in which they transitioned from months of supporting and coaching specific personnel to having to decide if there was any longer a fit. In most cases, the staff members left the organization; however, in two circumstances the directors took more formal disciplinary action.

In addition, participants discussed loyalty as it related to the library board trustees and county officials. Two participants told stories about being in disagreements about decisions made by these governing authorities. Not only was there conflict about what to change, but values conflicts arose in response to the way the change was managed. The directors wanted to elicit feedback from stakeholders, staff, and a broader constituency in order to gain consensus about the changes. However, the reporting authorities were more authoritative. These values conflicts
occurred when the loyalty the directors felt to those they reported to was pitted against their loyalty to the staff and community stakeholders who would be affected by the changes. In both cases, the directors had to negotiate and reflect on loyalties while remaining as honest and transparent as possible. One participant stated, “You take your time in finding a solution and an accommodation that’s going to work for everybody.”

**Learning and Adaptability**

An underlying value among all directors was learning and inquiry with regard to the general public who use the library and library employees. As discussed earlier, the professional value of learning included inspiring children to love reading, encouraging community members to pursue a wide variety of subjects for inquiry and discovery, and creating a library culture that is open to learning and engagement. Regarding staff, participants spoke of listening to ideas and appreciating the talents of those who work in the library. They also discussed coaching and supporting individuals in ways that develop the skills of those that work for them. Participants described the responsibility of supervision as encouraging others to strive for improvement and excellence in their work in the library and, ultimately, for the community.

The participants discussed approaches to their personal learning and development as well. For example, one pointed out,

It’s a learning process. The job is constantly evolving. If you’re not changing constantly, then you’re not doing something right. Because the way technology’s changing—I mean, a current book might not be something that’s around 20, 25 years from now. So, if you’re not willing to look at these things and constantly be willing to change the way you lead, or change the way you think, then you might take yourself out of the game.
Another said, “Any time something doesn't work, or I see a staff member in distress, and it is not necessary, I change it.” A third director spoke about the importance of considering the professional and personal circumstances of those involved as well as the environment and timing when making changes. She said,

So being situational and really being aware of what’s going on in people’s lives, having the ability to know when it is the right time to challenge somebody to take on some new leadership or to get out of their comfort zone is a really important role of a leader. And, because it’s too easy to just fall into this kind of rut of let’s just do the same thing over and over and over again because it’s easy and it doesn’t challenge me and I can go home and deal with all the other stuff in my life. So it’s always a constant balance.

All participants reflected on learning in terms of their own striving to be better, encouraging their employees to excel, and establishing services so that community members embrace learning, growth, and change. The theme of continuous improvements was prominent among participants.

**Responsibility**

As indicated in Table 2.3, responsibility was a common theme among the participants. Many spoke of taking their job “very seriously” because they were responsible to the staff, their governing authority, the public, and the professional values in which they so strongly believed. One said, “I really feel responsible for providing what we need and want in our community – services for all people, which is a wide range of things. And I think it slows me down, makes me think more about consequences.” In another case, the participant described his experiences as “a feeling of responsibility that we provide the very best service we possibly can.”
Through their defining moments, participants spoke of taking ultimate responsibility for their organizations and projects, and that this was crucial to their role as directors. For example, one director decided to take responsibility to address an issue with the library board of trustees even if it meant losing her job. She stated, “In this case, I think it was honoring my role more than I honored the security of myself in the position. And maybe I take myself too seriously, but that's me.” Another participant said,

So I think I stepped up to this role of not just being a conscious person but being far more focused on performance. I think the role of leadership ultimately is this assumption of responsibility. If you are paid to be the director then you are supposed to get something to happen. You are supposed to institute change in a positive direction. So I think that the value that I got out of that experience was the sense that I really am responsible for these values. It’s not enough to know them; I have to live them. … I think that the primary responsibility of library leaders is that you are making things better for your community, stakeholders of the institution.

In addition, one participant spoke of the result of a defining moment in this way,

Suddenly I realized that I had to look at my job from the point of view of all the other people whose jobs were dependent on how well I did mine. And that was what happened. I realized that my responsibility here was bigger than I had imagined, and it mattered a lot in the everyday lives of a lot of other people in ways that I just hadn’t counted on and hadn’t thought about, and that’s what did it for me.
Similarly, another participant summed up how her role as library director has impacted her values in this way,

I take very seriously the fact that I am in this position to impact people's lives, my staff and people in the community, in both positive and negative ways; and that's very real for me, and I think about that all the time. … There is an enormous responsibility that comes with being in a leadership role, and it is around being accountable, all those things that we have talked about. … And I think you have to remember that every day when you are in that position of exercising leadership, that it's not just about power and authority, it is about responsibility and accountability.

**Intentionality of Values**

As indicated above, many participants stated that they consider their values in their everyday work. The two urban library directors with over 400 employees dispersed throughout their cities, emphasized the importance of articulating core values at work, modeling them, and holding employees accountable for those values. One stated that the shift from directing smaller library systems to becoming the managerial leader of a very large one was a challenge. He had thought that he could manage and lead the way he had in smaller library systems, but the size of the staff and dispersed nature of the larger library system compelled him to develop clear values priorities for the organization and expectations of all staff. This values-based leadership was designed to align a large group of library personnel to achieve consistently excellent and effective service to the community.

Another participant stated that the shift to becoming the director was what prompted her to become more aware of her values and understand them more clearly. She explained, “I think it
has just made me attend to some [values] and maybe consciously realize why they are important. … It is easier to see the impact of your values when you are a public library director.” A third director spoke of consciously deciding which values to employ based on the circumstance. She stated that often she reflects on “how to be aware of your values and your feelings about your values in a way that allows you to either suppress them on a particular project or adjust them so that what you’re trying to achieve is the most important principle and guides what you’re doing.”

In other cases, three participants stated that they were not as consciously aware of their values. One said,

I cannot say that I’m quite that deliberate about it in my decision making process. Now, since I’ve read these things and stuff, I have actually thought about it a little more here in the last three weeks since we’ve been talking and I took the evaluation and you gave me the results back. It kind of creeps around on the outside edge, but it’s more just – I just decide. I can see how the different values play into what I do, but it’s not as intentional.

Two other directors also spoke of how being involved in this dissertation research helped them to be more conscious of their values. They had previously acted without awareness or reflection about their core values.

Whether intentionally applied, or unconsciously motivated, all participants stated that values are integral to the way they think, make decisions, and lead their organizations. While each interview included specifics of how values, such as integrity and respect informed library services and interactions, several participants also spoke of deeper motivational values for why they specifically chose the library profession. For example, one participant stated, “I feel like the world is getting less and less equitable, and that the library has a real opportunity to impact that
and, I would argue, responsibility to try to impact that. And that is a real primary core value for me.” Another said,

I work in libraries because I believe they change people’s lives. And that everything we do is directed towards that overall goal of making libraries an essential part of people’s ability to live, to prosper, to grow intellectually, and to be in a better place than they would be if we didn’t have them. So that’s just kind of an underlying value, and I think I have to, you know, sometimes we lose sight of it, and we all tend to get really busy and lose sight of the “why” part of what we’re doing; but … stepping back periodically and saying why and being able to say that in a way that propels us forward is really important.

While these interviews illuminated how values inform the specific work of public library directors, it is clear that some directors apply values consciously and with intention. Others recognized in hindsight that they made decisions and behaved in their work based on their core values. A few participants expressed the importance of acting mindfully in their work in order to be aware of the complex interplay of people and values, and they behave with self-regulation when necessary. This additional focus on awareness is a theme that will be returned to in subsequent chapters.

Values Formation

Participants discussed how the values that most influence their work were developed. In discussing values formation, a few stated that they do not remember a time when they did not have the specific core values they employ. In the majority of interviews, the participants stated that their values were instilled from a young age by parents, grandparents, siblings, and other family influences. One said, “I would definitely say that the values that I hold … [and] I live by
are the ones that I was raised with.” Another explained a value that came from her mother by stating, “I had an amazing mother who was always curious, always learning, but, yet, really accepting of people.” A third participant explained, “One of my grandfathers, who was an immigrant from Italy, came here as a young man, had an eighth-grade education but loved to read. [He] became a very successful businessman; but he was also a citizen of the world … He had a huge influence on me.”

A fourth participant explained,

I grew up being taught to be responsible for my actions, that there’s nothing you do that doesn’t impact on someone else somehow. … I don’t remember not having that explicit in my childhood. And the people around me, my parents and my grandparents, they live that way. So it was acted out in front of me and I saw it happening and that’s where it came from. It was just always was there as an expectation. So it’s who I am, and that’s why I am that way.

Most participants spoke of family members from childhood who instilled positive values. Two participants indicated that their husbands had significant influence on the values they possess, such as taking risks and being courageous in making necessary changes personally and professionally.

Some participants also discussed library-related influences on their values. One spoke of having a traumatic experience in youth and finding understanding and resolution through using the public library. This experience instilled the value that the library should be available to and accepting of all inquiries. Three spoke of books that were early influences on their values. For example, one spoke of comic books and television shows this way, “We had Batman, Superman, [and] Spiderman, and these are all people who tried to help people and who always tried to do
the right thing.” This influences her belief that she needs to conduct herself in ways that have positive impacts on people’s lives. Two other participants spoke of books that were influential in their values development when they were young adults by making them more accepting and tolerant of those different from themselves.

Participants also told stories of mentors in the profession or colleagues in other professions who helped them gain confidence in their values and clarity about how they should use values in their work. Other influences were discussed including three directors who mentioned that growing up in the 1960s influenced them to prioritize tolerance and equitability. Two participants talked about experiences running businesses as influencing how they manage libraries. They described the management of the library as similar to running a small business in terms of the fiscal and reporting responsibilities. Overall, the values that most influence respondents’ work were formed in youth and continue to be strengthened through library work experiences.

**Leadership**

Study participants discussed how they define leadership. Some directors gave short definitions, and others provided a long list of what leadership means to them. The director of the smallest library stated, “Leadership is being connected with those that you are so-called leading and setting an example. Lead by example.” She clarified that she did not feel like she was in charge but rather was of service to those she was leading. Four discussed leadership as setting an example or modeling the behaviors they want to see in others. In fact, all but one participant spoke of the importance of engaging with followers in some way, including connecting with staff, supporting and empowering them, and inspiring them to action.
Six directors spoke of the importance of having a vision or clear direction and being able to articulate that to others. One stated, “… there’s two sides to [leadership]. There’s one of knowing where you’re going, and the other part is being able to get people to go with you.”

Four participants discussed the leader’s role in being responsible to the organization and the community in ways that improve community life and produce quality results. One also pointed out the role of the leader in resolving issues when conflicts arise. She stated, “… taking responsibility for the organization, so when something goes wrong that everybody in the group knows that they just need to call me or get me out of whatever I am doing. I’m the one that is supposed to fight for things; that responsibility is not on them.”

Two participants discussed the need for the leader to be decisive; another two pointed out the importance of being curious or open-minded, and two participants discussed the importance of timing, such as knowing when to move forward urgently and when to hold back. In addition, some participants identified other aspects of leadership, these being striving for excellence, being self-aware, respectful, confident, innovative, and visible. One director stated that her leadership is situational and responsive to the environment and the needs of followers in context.

In defining leadership, the overarching themes of supporting followers, having a vision, and being responsible for results were most apparent. One participant provided this pithy definition, “It is really about inspiring a group of people to do great things together.” Whether brief or expansive, the descriptions of leadership covered a variety of themes, indicating that the participants had differing styles of leadership. However, in all cases, the participants discussed how values informed their work as a leader and pointed out how their role as a library director changed their values priorities. Values play a complex role for library directors regardless of the size of the library and other variables.
Conclusion

Through this investigation of public library directors’ values, using a questionnaire and an interview, several themes emerged among the participants regardless of size of library and other personal variables, such as educational background and length of time as a director. Whether using values consciously or unconsciously in their work, all participants, upon reflection, identified core values and discussed how these inform their work. Stories of defining moments differed based on the size of library and director’s role. For example, one library director working in a small town told stories related to direct service to the public and directors of larger library systems described situations with complex, multi-library organizational change. Most directors spoke of the need for accountability in their positions. Five respondents discussed that they are personally equated with the library in the community, and take this role seriously. They chose self-regulation, at times, to maintain a positive public persona. They spoke about paying attention and one participant spoke of the importance of mindfulness in the moment to choose wisely.

Participants have common professional values and share a deep commitment to encouraging independent inquiry, inspiring learning, ensuring access for all, and defending intellectual freedom. These values, as well as other common values, such as honesty, integrity, respect, and loyalty, will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

In addition to descriptions of how childhood values were instilled at a deeper level through library work experience, some participants also described values conflicts in which they had to make difficult choices in prioritizing values. These two types of values responses will be explored in more depth in the next chapter.
The participants expressed appreciation for being selected for this dissertation research and commented on the benefits of being involved. As noted above, four are nearing retirement and stated that they welcomed the opportunity to reflect more deeply on their values and find more meaning in their careers. One participant said that being in the study helped her to look back at her career with a different lens, to assess her accomplishments, and to understand her deeper motivations. In another case, the director was in the midst of a defining moment and appreciated the values report and questions because they illuminated her understanding of her priorities and gave her the confidence to proceed in resolving a values conflict in her library. A fourth participant said that, reflecting on his values, defining moments, and the interview transcript allowed him to see deeper patterns about his own values development thereby aiding him in understanding his motivations and convictions.

Some participants stated that their values are so ingrained that they do not think of them on a daily basis; however, others are intentional about using values in their everyday work. Two in the latter group of participants said that they were eager to see the results of the study, stating that they believed so strongly in the importance of values that they not only wanted to be in the study, but also believed values in libraries need more research and emphasis with their peers.

The conversations required the participants to share stories and beliefs about values that a few participants indicated to be uncomfortable. One participant wrote on the values questionnaire, “This question made me uncomfortable.” He later described how the process had opened his eyes to some of his values priorities in ways he had not anticipated. During the interview, another participant said, “This is actually a really unnerving process now that I have actually done it with you. It makes me feel a little naked, but I think it was also valuable for me, so thank you.” The investigator was sensitive to these issues and took precautions to ensure each
director was clear about the various aspects of participation and aware they could leave the study at any time.

Because values are so deeply held, defining moments allowed the participants to reflect and gain new insight on their values. Their stories include lessons in which they either recommitted to or changed values. These processes of defining moments, described in the literature review, will be explored in more depth in chapter four.

Finally, a value the participants identified frequently was responsibility. While professional values, such as intellectual freedom and interpersonal values, such as honesty and respect could be shared by any person who may work in a library, the statements about responsibility were described specifically with regard to the role as the public library director. Several aspects of managerial leadership emerged as themes including the responsibility to be accountable to several stakeholders including governing authorities, community members, and personnel, which is the subject of chapter five.
References


CHAPTER THREE
COMMON THEMES AMONG CORE VALUES

Personal values fundamentally inform how individuals perceive the world, make decisions, and behave. This process can occur with conscious intention, such as when one purposely chooses a direction for an organization based on core values; or subconsciously, when an individual is motivated by values at a subconscious level of awareness. In this study, some participants stated that they used their values purposefully, and others said they became more aware of their values priorities through their participation in this research. In either case, all participants stated that understanding values is important, particularly as an organizational leader.

In the library profession, studies have sought to ascertain the personal values of librarians (Bryan, 1952; Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981; Yerkey, 1980) as well as to determine their professional values priorities (Burd, 2003; Dole, Hurych, & Koehler, 2000; Foster & McMenemy, 2012; Hovenkamp, 1994), yet this is the first inquiry to employ the internationally tested and validated PVQIV. The instrument, which illuminates common values among the 12 study participants, are discussed in this chapter. Initially, this chapter describes participants’ responses to the experience of taking the test and the results of the test, which provides insight into the value of the instrument for further use with librarians. Then, the top three motivational values identified through the PVQIV are compared with the professional literature on values in librarianship to determine values priorities that may be held more broadly than by the study participants.
Although identifying values using the PVQIV was informative, the instrument has limited ability to provide insight into how values are formed, developed, and used by public library directors. This study also used narrative inquiry to probe the specific development and use of values in public library directors’ work. The interviews produced common themes among participants related to core values, conflicts between competing values, and ways in which values were either instilled or reprioritized through work experiences. This chapter delves into participant experiences and uses a figure (3.1) to consider values at multiple levels of intrapersonal (self), interpersonal, organizational, community-level, and broader societal application. This multi-level figure aids in illustrating how values may be developed and instilled for different purposes and in various environments.

**Participants and PVQIV Results**

Study participants responded to the results of the PVQIV with varying degrees of interest. Those who indicated that they tend not to think consciously about their values used the PVQIV report and language as a guide to describing their defining moments and core values in the study. For example, one participant said, “I was looking under universalism, you know, understanding, appreciation, tolerance, protection for the welfare of people and nature; I didn’t have these words for these things before, but I’m taking this [test] and getting this chart in front of me, being able to apply, well, I guess that’s where that comes from or why I feel this way.” Another director stated,

> When I read through these – the things you’ve got listed here – and I think about them in terms of decision making … I can absolutely see myself in these things and where I scored. But I don’t know that I’m quite that
deliberate about them as far as being able to say, when I made this decision it was really based on benevolence and universalism.

These participants indicated they were less consciously aware of their values and how to articulate them prior to the interview. The process of reflecting on the values report and interview questions ahead of the interview prepared them to discuss values in the narrative inquiry process.

In other cases, directors were clear about their values and considered the results of the test to be accurate. One participant stated, “I looked at my report and I laughed out loud because I don’t remember not being that girl.” Another participant said, “[The values report] did really identify the things that were important to me. When I looked at it, I just thought, this is so accurate.” In these cases, the participants found the test accurately reported their values.

Although some found the test results to be helpful in identifying and discussing their values, a few were critical of the test, particularly those who stated that they use their values intentionally in their work. One stated,

I don’t know if I found anything in it that was illuminating for me. Looking at it now, I think that universalism was supposed to be my big defining goal, understanding, appreciation, okay, maybe so. Stimulation is a defining goal, excitement and challenge in life, well maybe, curiosity, self-direction maybe. It is not that I so much disagree with them, but none of these particular words tend to be the language that I use.

As with this participant, a few others were skeptical, as they are of any test that categorizes people based on types. They were dismissive of the notion that a standardized test could identify something as personal as core values.
While the top values among all study respondents identified by the PVQIV seemed to resonate for all participants, some directors discussed values ranked in fourth, fifth, or sixth place that did not align with their own understanding of themselves and their priorities. One participant said, “The one that surprised me a little bit was conformity. I’m not one to think that I’m more of a conformist. I guess I don’t really like that word. I guess I don’t really like labels in general.” A few other participants also stated that some of the lesser values that ranked either above or below their mean may not have been an accurate depiction of them. One participant stated, “I was surprised that achievement is that low.” She also said,

It’s the way I view myself except for the power one. That bothered me that that [value] would be fourth on the list. I want people to do what I want them to do. I admit that. But the social status and prestige and social power and wealth and preserving public image don’t fit. And power sounds like I’m ambitious for myself. But I am pretty—quite a mother hen with my library.

And I can say that I want all those things for the library.

Upon further probing, this participant stated that, although her results indicate that the value of power was higher than other values, she is not as ambitious for herself but for the organization and results on the community. These observations may indicate that Schwartz’s (2012) conclusion that power is related to self-enhancement rather than societal enhancement may not always apply. As in this case, in a work setting, an individual may prioritize power to advance initiatives that are in the interest of organizational stakeholders, such as employees, customers, the community, and/or society rather than self.

This distinction of motivation to benefit the library rather than self-benefit could relate to how the instrument portrays each value. Two statements describe a value and a motivation in
ways that some participants found contradictory in particular statement sets. One participant explained,

I actually found them difficult to answer. Because in about seven or eight of the examples, I really felt the two short sentences [of each portrait] were two very different things; and I wasn’t sure which one to lead with. I will give you an example: number 13 says, “Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people.” It is very important for me to be successful, but I have little interest in impressing other people.

In this case, the participant explained that success relates to how well the library serves community needs. The secondary aspect of impressing others does not apply. This observation that may indicate a weakness in the instrument in that some participants may not know which part of the portrait to relate to or that the portrait has conflicting aspects that may compromise the reliability of the results.

Because the questionnaire is based on personal values, inconsistencies may arise when applying the instrument within the work context because, at times, personal values do not align specifically with the way an individual performs at work. One participant observed that selecting how much she was like another person was challenging and potentially could be misleading because she might choose one answer when considering the statements from a personal perspective, but choose differently when considering them in the context of her work as a library director.

In some cases, the core values used in work are prioritized differently than in personal lives. For example, in the area of self-direction versus conformity, two directors explained that, although each tends to be self-directed and independent-minded in the role of public library
director, they also tend to regulate their behavior or conform to the norms of the town in order to positively represent the library. One potentially valuable modification to the PVQIV would be a series of values portraits that overtly relates to one’s professional role and organizational aspirations.

Although the PVQIV has limitations, the instrument engaged participants in reflecting on and discussing their values. The results in this study, particularly regarding the top three values, were accurate as confirmed by participants, as will be discussed later in this chapter. In addition, the top three values identified also align with the prioritized values of the library profession.

**PVQIV and Library Professional Values**

The study participants, having taken the Schwartz PVQIV questionnaire, scored highest overall in the areas of self-direction, benevolence, and universalism. Schwartz (1996, 2003, 2012) states that self-direction indicates an openness to change accompanied by goals of seeking independence with thoughts, choices, and actions. Single values associated with self-direction include curiosity, exploration, learning, creativity, and freedom. Benevolence and universalism are aligned with societal enhancement rather than self-enhancement. Benevolence has the defining goal of seeking to enhance the welfare of family, friends, and/or community members, encompassing single values, such as being helpful, kind, honest, and loyal. Universalism is more broadly focused on the goal of welfare of all humanity and nature with single values, such as equality, wisdom, social justice, and broad-mindedness.

In many ways, these values as defined by Schwartz (1996, 2003, 2012) align with top professional values among librarians as identified by previous studies (Burd, 2003; Dole, Hurych, & Koehler, 2000; Foster & McMenemy, 2012). In each of these values studies, the top ranked professional value was service, which Gorman (2000) defines both as directly assisting
individuals who use the library and, through cumulative service transactions, serving “society and humanity as a whole” (p. 74). The focus on service to library users aligns with the concept of benevolence, and the broader focus on societal change relates more closely to universalism.

Library employees provide service to library users by aiding them in finding information and books, by providing instruction to encourage them to think critically about information, and by assisting them in learning or improving skills, such as reading. These services are performed, in the best cases, with courtesy, respect, kindness, and helpfulness; values identified within the broad category of benevolence (Schwartz, 1996, 2003, 2012). In addition, the value of self-direction is inherent in these services because of the focus on providing opportunities for users to learn in ways that empower them to be independent thinkers and achieve their goals.

As with benevolence, universalism is a common value among the study participants and is aligned widely with library professionals’ values and ethics. The value of equality is framed by Schwartz (2012) within the motivational value of universalism, which includes understanding, appreciating, tolerating, and protecting all people. Dole, Hurych, and Koehler (2012) and Foster and McMenamy (2012) found that equity of access to information is a high-priority value internationally in the library profession. As discussed earlier, participants scored high on universalism and spoke of their interest in helping all people, including those different from themselves. Kagan (2005) also asserts that library professionals have a responsibility that extends beyond providing equity of access to working to defend the rights of those who are not treated equally throughout the world. The Schwartz-identified value of universalism, in this context, can be considered as aligning with this social justice value of the library profession.

Self-direction, as described by Schwartz (1996, 2003, 2012), has the defining goal of independent thought and action, which includes both the ability and the freedom to choose,
create, and explore any information or idea. Schwartz (1996, 2003, 2012) further explains that the overarching motivational value of self-direction is fundamentally compelled by the human drive for control, mastery, autonomy, and independence; it can manifest as seeking to be creative and to be free to choose one’s goals and path to attain those goals, and as having a natural curiosity and interest in learning and increasing one’s intelligence. Another aspect of this value, according to Schwartz, is a commitment to privacy with regard to these independent intellectual endeavors. This description aligns with the library profession’s value of intellectual freedom (Gorman, 2000), which relates to the professional responsibilities to support and to defend free and equal access to information for all people of a community. Library professionals demonstrate this value through services and activities that facilitate information-seeking, as well as by supporting free speech, a basic right of a democratic society, and one guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (Gorman, 2000). Intellectual freedom, as a core value of the library profession, includes both supporting and defending individuals in their independent pursuit of any and all information as well as ensuring the privacy of all who seek knowledge. Several elements are involved with this value including ensuring that library users can freely seek and read information that they seek. Indeed self-direction, as described by Schwartz (1996, 2003, 2012), is aligned with the fundamental values of the library profession as are the values of service (benevolence), and access for all (universalism). In this study, participants indicate that they hold the core value of self-direction for themselves and for the interests of those in their communities.

Because this is the first study in the library profession that used the PVQIV instrument, comparing results to other studies of personal values in the library profession is limited. Personal values studies using the Study of Values (Bryan, 1952; Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981) found that
library professionals tend to overemphasize values that are theoretical (discovery of truth and cognition); aesthetic (form, beauty, and harmony); and social (love and altruism). These values may overlap with Schwartz’s values designations (1996, 2003, 2012) in that his definition of self-direction could overlap the theoretical in the area of cognition; universalism includes some aspects of the aesthetic values related to beauty and harmony; and benevolence could be interpreted as oriented toward the social values of love and altruism. However, the alignment is not direct and further comparisons require more research. In general, these top values, regardless of the theory and instrument, point to a profession that prioritizes social and community focus; an appreciation of intellectual pursuits; and a vision for a better world with more equality, knowledge, and peace.

Perhaps more instructive is comparing the 20th century studies of the personal values of librarians (Bryan, 1952; Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981), and this study’s results of the lowest prioritized values. The studies all found an under-emphasis on economic and political values among library professionals; as defined by Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey (1970), economic values relate to self-preservation and political values relate to power, influence, and renown. These values align most with Schwartz’s (2012) definition of the value he terms power, a self-enhancing goal to attain social status, prestige, control, wealth, authority, preservation of image, and dominance. In this study, the participants cumulatively rated power low, which indicates that this value may be a lower personal priority for library managers generally.

Although standardized tests have merit for identifying personal values commonly held by librarians, this study’s individual values reports and interviews identified that some directors prioritize power, and achievement, not for themselves, but for the successful operation, funding, and quality of libraries services. Therefore, while directors might not personally seek power and
prestige, some may aspire to attain money, influence, and power for the benefit of their libraries. The distinction between personal values and values prioritized in work is a theme that emerged repeatedly through narrative inquiry.

**Values Identification through Narrative Inquiry**

Further probing of the efficacy of the Schwartz (2012) motivational values through the narrative inquiry process helped to delineate and clarify common values within the broader motivational values that Schwartz identifies. For example, instead of referring to benevolence, the participants used the specific words, being responsible, honest, loyal, respectful, and service-oriented to identify what is most important in their work. In some cases, they used the term benevolence because it was used in the values report, but they specifically discussed the more focused values (e.g., honesty, respect, responsibility, and loyalty), when describing their work activities and motivations. When participants spoke of service, some communicated the need to have a welcoming library for community members; however, most defined service as having the deeper significance of enabling intellectual pursuits and life-changing transactions. In this context, service was described not necessarily as an end but as a means to the more salient value of supporting learning and literacy.

Gorman (2000) defines fostering literacy and learning as having three elements: “encouraging literacy and the love of learning; encouraging lifelong sustained reading; [and] making the library a focus of literacy teaching” (p. 27). In previous studies (Dole, Hurych, & Koehler, 2012; Foster & McMenamy, 2012), participants viewed service as more important than literacy and learning. Whereas in this study, participants described service as encouraging a love of learning and the other aspects of Gorman’s description of literacy and learning. Rather than focusing on the act of reading itself, as Gorman (2000) suggests, study participants spoke of how
reading empowers library users to learn and improve their lives. Participants explained the fundamental purpose of library service in several complex ways. One stated, “We’re not about benevolence in the welfare state type of way. We’re about letting people find their own experiences.” Another said, one element that drives the services in the library stems from his childhood experience in which he determined that library service is “not just honoring curiosity, but the blatant encouragement of it, and to aid and abet the curiosity of young minds.” A third library director expressed the importance of the library service philosophy including the statement, “We are dedicated and passionate about changing people’s lives.” Similarly, another library director said, “Everything we do is directed toward that overall goal of making libraries an essential part of people’s ability to live, to prosper, to grow intellectually, and to be in a better place than they would be if we didn’t have them.” These statements indicate library services that are focused more on transformational experiences than on the mere transactional service of providing services, such as friendly and efficient access to books or promoting reading for the sake of reading.

In addition to having aspirational goals that library service will encourage curiosity and change lives through intellectual development, on a practical daily basis, one participant said, “I have a quote in our workroom of Henry David Thoreau that says, ‘To affect the quality of the day; that is the highest of arts.’ And that’s what we all try to do, is affect, positively affect, the quality of the day for anybody that comes in the library.” Such statements about service expand the definition and indicate a deeper professional commitment to individual learning and discovery that will improve patrons’ quality of life in the short term and, potentially, have a lasting intellectual impact on their lives.
Certainly, the professional values identified by Gorman (2000), such as service and literacy and learning, seem to overlap in practice; this points to the importance of probing more deeply to understand the fundamental motivations behind library work. Within the motivational value of universalism, participants in this study articulated the core values of understanding, appreciation, and tolerance for those who are different from them, and encouraging that tolerance in others. Participants shared a strong commitment to equality of access, and, in some cases, social justice. Many participants spoke of the importance of being broad-minded in terms of meeting the needs of diverse populations as well as in providing access to a wide variety of information. This orientation also aligns with the motivational value of self-direction, although they spoke of the interest in thinking and acting independently as important for others as well as themselves.

Some participants told stories of reaching out to socioeconomically underprivileged patrons and stated that providing access and services to this population is critical to the library’s mission. While discussing the values they most use in their work and the formation of those values, participants described personal experiences of reaching out to immigrants, low-income populations, children in poverty, and diverse populations in order to provide library services to those most in need of support. This orientation toward assisting all residents who need support is a distinct aspect of the overarching value of universalism, which targets the specific values of broad-mindedness, equality, and social justice. Participants stated that all users should have the same access to information and ideas that satisfy their curiosity and creative interests, and empower them to improve their lives. In other words, the participants spoke of library services in ways that integrate various aspects of Schwartz’s (2012) values of self-direction, benevolence,
and universalism within the context of intellectual freedom, learning and literacy, and equal access to all information for all people.

Considering the wide range of experiences and education of the study participants, it is worth noting that each spoke of these values in similar ways. This indicates that individuals with deep commitments to these specific values may be drawn to the library profession. It is interesting to note that the experiences associated with being the library director affirms these values on multiple levels, and that these experiences may be the key to refining profession values over time.

Values Distinct to the Role of Public Library Director

Participants identified and discussed their values in various contexts, including how their values priorities may have changed because of their roles as library directors. In addition to articulating shared professional values, which may be common to many in the profession, these individuals also discussed additional values priorities that related specifically to their roles as public library directors. As with other studies (Hernon, Powell, & Young, 2013; Jordan, 2012), this study found that these public library directors give high priority to honesty and integrity. Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989), in their research on business leaders, concluded that integrity suggests wholeness and coherence between what organizational leaders believe, how they manage, and the kind of organization they aspire to build. In this description integrity is a consistency of personal values, daily work behavior, and organizational focus.

Jordan (2012) defines integrity in public library directorship as synonymous with honesty, which involves consistently following the professions’ code of ethics and being a role model for others. Her study discusses accountability and credibility as separate attributes. However, in this study the directors discussed honesty, integrity, transparency, and
accountability as conceptually linked, indicating that, although honesty may be a personal value, directors may demonstrate honesty through consistent and cohesive words and behaviors (integrity), open reporting practices (transparency), and rigorous evaluation and reporting (accountability). Participants discussed these interrelated values of honesty, integrity, accountability, and transparency at various levels throughout their organizations and in their communities. When these values are established and maintained, a sense of credibility and trust is developed within the organization (Covey & Merrill, 2006) and within the community (Bundt, 2000).

Although participants highlighted the importance of integrity, their motivation for prioritizing this value was a commitment to their personal values and aspirations for the institutions, the personnel, and the communities they serve. They emphasized that they felt responsible, as the organizational leaders, to be honest, consistent, and accountable. Participants discussed integrity in multiple circumstances, including resolving performance issues, striving for excellence, modeling the behaviors they want their employees to exhibit, conducting themselves in a manner that represents the library positively in the community, and being accountable to taxpayers. In summary, integrity was a major theme, yet the overarching concept of responsible organizational leadership motivated them to commit to integrity, respect, self-discipline, and other personal values that also function at the leadership and organizational levels.

**Values in the Organization**

Some values theorists distinguish between values types within the professional setting. For example, Dolan and Raich (2013) identified a triad model of values in organizational culture in which economic values relate to efficiency, economic performance, and other pragmatic
operational standards; social values (e.g., honesty, respect, and loyalty) relate to interactions among stakeholder groups; and emotional and spiritual values are intrinsically motivated dispositions (e.g., optimism, passion, freedom, and happiness). Carter and Greer (2013) discuss the *triple bottom line* in which organizational values relate to three areas of performance: financial, social, and environmental. Financial values refer to maximizing profits, whereas social values encompass internal benefits, such as employee health, and external foci, such as community vitality. The third area of environmental values relates to natural resources used, greenhouse gases emitted, and other measures of environmental impact, which fall into the general category of socially responsible values.

Within the literature of library and information science, Finks (1989) classifies four sets of values in librarianship: professional, general, personal, and rival. He describes professional values as the specific library values of service, stewardship, love of wisdom and truth, democracy, and love of reading and books. The general work values are aspirations held in common with other professions (e.g., competence and excellence), social values (e.g., respect and courtesy), or values related to work satisfaction (e.g., self-respect and self-actualization). Finks’ (1989) third category is personal values, which he defines as those most librarians uniquely share in common; these are idealistic and humanistic aspirations for society, such as excellence, beauty, and truth. The final category is rival values, which Finks warns are detrimental to the profession; these include bureaucracy, anti-intellectualism, and nihilism. While these distinctions are of interest, in this study, participants did not speak of values from a framework in which they separated professional, operational, personal, and aspirational values. When they spoke, for example, of honesty or respect, they identified the value as important within the work environment regardless of whether it was with a staff member, a reporting
authority, or the community at large. For this reason, while several schemata of values exist to
distinguish values based on their type or functions within organizations, this study outlines
values, as the participants did, across the various environments in which they were applied and
discussed.

Theorists also posit how values are used in various work contexts. For example, Petter
(2005) describes four functional levels to organizational accountability: (1) internal compass of
personal values used for decisions and actions; (2) organizational drives in which a sense of
obligation to a supervisor or the organization is present; (3) external conditions in which
stakeholders outside of the organization have expectations; and (4) societal obligations, including
public and legal requirements. These levels of accountability establish a sense of responsibility
across an organization. Similarly, Voegtlin, Patzer, and Scherer (2012) describe three contexts
for organizational accountability: the micro level, involving personal interactions; the meso
level, relating to organizational performance; and the macro level, concerning external
stakeholders. However, this structure leaves out intrapersonal (related to the self) aspects of
values while distinguishing internal and external organizational accountability. Further, Carter
and Greer (2013) describe five levels that motivate work: (1) transaction-basic service; (2) self-
benefit; (3) organizational value; (4) outside stakeholder priorities; and (5) societal improvement.
These levels indicate how values motivate and are used in organizations, and align with the ways
in which study participants described personal values in their work.

Based on the interviews with participants in this study, public library directors’ values
operate within five distinct contexts: intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community,
and societal. Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation of the contexts in which study
participants described employing core values.
In the intrapersonal environment the individual is self-motivated to live by their values and self-reflective throughout this process. These values are formed and changed over time and are considered to be core, enduring but changeable. Interpersonal contexts include interactions with one or a few people within the institution, including employees, trustees, or reporting authorities; or with those outside the institution, including individuals who use the library or stakeholders engaging in library-related activities, such as volunteers, donors, and community leaders.

In an organizational context, values can impact a few people in small libraries or a large number of employees in libraries serving multiple neighborhoods. The organizational application of values relates to how the work is accomplished and how the organization operates. Employees
are expected to give high priority to organizational values and consistently use them for congruent and consistent operations. In organizational contexts, values relate to effective operations, policies, accountability measures, and related organizational structures.

Directors’ values also influence the broader community served by the library, including special interest groups, specific demographic groups, such as children and seniors, specific ethnic populations, and those engaged in a variety of community-level activities. The broadest frame for values employment of public library directors is societal and includes library professional associations, broader organizations, and stakeholders beyond the specific community the library serves.

Study participants described each of these environments as contextual, in which specific situations required individualized consideration of how to prioritize and use values. They interact daily within various interpersonal, organizational, community, and societal environments while continuing to reflect on their own core values that inform their behaviors and priorities. Study participants discussed defining moments that took place inside the institution, with staff or in organizational circumstances, and with external constituencies, including individual library users or other community stakeholders. While participants described these various contexts, the values they depicted as core influenced their behaviors across these various environments. For instance, directors whose core value was integrity indicated conducting themselves with integrity with staff, the library board, and users, and within the community. The consistency of demonstrating that core value across environments confirms the notion that the personal value of integrity led to an integrated code of conduct regardless of the situation.

**Instilled Values**

In discussing defining moments, study participants described how events either instilled
core values or led them to reprioritize values. In the former case, several directors mentioned values that were formed in their youth, such as respect, responsibility, and honesty, which they saw in new ways and recommitted to at deeper levels in response to critical incidents. This process of instilling values is also reflected in figure 3.1, which starts with the value being held at the intrapersonal level, applied interpersonally in communications with others, as well as at the level of the organization, and more broadly with the community and society.

For example, one director spoke of responsibility as a core value that she has long held having seen it modeled and reinforced by her family members throughout childhood. In a defining moment as a director, she chose to hold a staff member to a level of responsibility that was consistent with the work of everyone else in the library. It was clear that the person needed to be fired. Faced with this personnel issue, options might include deferring the difficult conversation to avoid the conflict with or harm to that employee. In this case, the participant believed that confronting the staff issue was her responsibility, and others in the organization were counting on her. She explained how she came to realize that the act of firing him was her responsibility, and following through instilled the value of responsibility in her. Along with accepting that responsibility was a core personal value, she had the insight that responsibility now played a broader role in her work, including the responsibility to the rest of the staff and the standards of the organization as a whole. This moment was defining not only for her, but also organizationally as other staff members learned that she had a standard level of performance that is necessary to ensure quality and excellence. This act also established responsibility as a core value for the organization and those who work there. Further, she explained that the value of responsibility also informs how she presents herself to her community, because she recognizes that, as the library director, many people in the community consider her actions and words
representative of the library. She takes that role seriously, and is conscientious about how she conducts herself in community forums. This example illustrates how a public library director’s personal value of responsibility, over time is instilled throughout the library, and more broadly within the community.

**Reprioritized Values**

In this study, some directors described defining moments involving values conflicts that led them to change values priorities. These transitions were not temporary but, indeed, were transformative in that the incidents and reprioritization became changes that persisted. The values conflicts and the subsequent values reprioritization continue to be sources of reflection and consideration for the directors who discussed them. In some cases, while describing the events, participants explained that they still reassess their choices even though they know in hindsight that they took the right course.

The most common type of reprioritization event involves participants feeling a sense of loyalty to a staff member, board member, or supervisor and then beginning to question that loyalty due to the colleague’s behavior. The stories revealed the importance participants place on relationships and the conflicts they experienced when subordinates behaved inappropriately. In several cases, the person who directly reported to the participant was not performing in ways that were required for the position. The participants described attempting to coach, mentor, and work with the person to bring about change in performance and behavior. At the end of each of these stories, the participants chose integrity, accountability, and/or organizational excellence over loyalty to the subordinates. Whether in cases of poor performance or in situations of organizational change, participants prioritized fulfilling the mission of the organization over individuals working in the libraries. Study participants articulated a commitment to
organizational effectiveness, feel responsible to the community, and practice ethical behavior in the workplace.

As participants spoke of these circumstances, each expressed strong emotion about the difficulty of withdrawing loyalty from these employees. The tone of regret was clearly a response to the choice of employees who continued to behave inappropriately or who did not change their behavior, rather than to the decisions the directors had to make. This conflict of loyalty for personnel was such a prevalent theme that it seems likely that other library managers may struggle with similar values conflicts. Indeed, what made these defining for study participants was the realization that their responsibilities to the organization and community are more important than individual loyalties to employees who may be underperforming or misbehaving.

Another type of values conflict relates to disagreements between the directors and those to whom they have reported. In one case, a conflict occurred with library board trustees who had a traditional view of the library’s role as solely focusing on books, while the director wanted to expand library services through the use of technology. In two other interviews, directors disagreed with the decisions and techniques of their superiors. In all of these situations, the director’s value of loyalty to the supervisor was in conflict with fundamental decisions about library operations.

In one situation, the city manager was more conservative about managing change whereas the director was interested in taking more risk. In addition, the city manager intended to be autocratic, but the director wanted stakeholder input on the decision-making process. In each of these scenarios, the participants described their disagreement with the confidence that their approaches were correct. At the same time, they could not persuade authority figures to agree to
their strategies. With little control over the decision-making method or results, one director chose to leave her position in protest. In the second situation, the director decided to lead change as required by the county manager in the short term and continue to persist over time until the results aligned with her priorities. Similarly, in a third case, the library director waited patiently until circumstances changed enough that the director’s method clearly became the prudent choice. In the case of the first director, she eventually returned to the library. The other directors described ultimately achieving what they thought was best for the library, though this took a lot longer than they would have preferred.

These cases are instructive in many ways. For example, study participants were definite about their values and preferences and, in the stories they told, situations were eventually resolved as the directors had initially intended. With regard to negotiating with supervisors, these directors used timing, effective communication, and persistence ultimately to reach their goals.

The above examples relate to supervisory values conflicts, yet other participants provided stories involving competing professional values. The most common professional values conflict discussed in defining moments was the need to prioritize service over stewardship. Three participants spoke of changes they made to remove or bend rules in order to provide high quality service. The rules were based on the need for the library to be a good steward of its resources, yet the directors described how those rules can, at times, get in the way of providing quality library service. Because the library profession prioritizes service over other values, it is not surprising that participants insisted on providing quality service. Yet, several directors had employees who were less motivated by providing service than by preserving the collections and maintaining stewardship of books.
Conclusion

Participants of this study oversee public libraries that enjoy high community use, and each spoke of the importance of this use, the quality of interactions and services the library offers, and the ways they conduct themselves with library personnel, patrons, and community members. They share several common core values related to openness to change, curiosity, and independent thinking (self-direction), and an interest in the welfare of others (benevolence, universalism), regardless of distinguishing factors, such as educational background, time in profession, size of library (and community), and gender. This suggests that, while other elements may contribute to effective leadership in public libraries, those who possess these core values may prioritize service delivery in libraries that could lead to high community use in areas, such as library visits, circulation, program attendance, and computer use. Participants reflected on core values and described their meaning, speaking passionately about how libraries can impact community members simply by improving a person’s day or by changing a life. The aspirational belief that libraries change lives is an underlying theme of all study participants’ responses.

Along with the visionary value of life transformation, participants also spoke of deeply held values that they apply in their everyday work, such as honesty and integrity, respect, and responsibility. They take their roles as library director seriously and articulate, model, and embed values in their work at various levels of engagement, including applying them in interactions at the interpersonal, organizational, and community levels. Participants spoke of the awareness that their position requires them to be responsible; this includes having self-discipline, mindfulness, and an interest in continuing to learn, and being able to adapt to changing environments.

In the stories of defining moments that dealt with conflict, participants were emboldened because they felt so strongly about their core values and were not willing to compromise. They
spoke of finding courage in times of conflict, bolstered by core values, which allowed them to face and resolve difficult situations. Perhaps daily, public library directors face conflicts, but what made the events described defining moments for the participants was an understanding and confidence about what mattered to them. This sense of purpose gave them confidence and further commitment to the specific core value tested by the event.

Chapter four explores the elements of defining moments in more detail to determine how values are shaped through these significant life events. Although the participants have different backgrounds, the common elements in defining moments are examined to understand how public library directors face critical incidents and find ways to grow and improve library services and operations.
References


CHAPTER FOUR

ANATOMY OF DEFINING MOMENTS:
FROM CRITICAL INCIDENT TO COMMITMENT

Previous research on defining moments in organizational leadership (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001) offers a framework for analyzing study findings. For this study, this framework suggests that individuals can identify a moment of meaning (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001), a singular life instant that sustains greater importance than others in life, creating new meaning and clarifying self-perception. Further, these defining moments occur within a broader context comprised of a series of events, reflections, insights, decisions, and commitments that transpire over time (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). This chapter delves into the component parts of defining moments as described by study participants and analyzes the anatomy of these defining moments in order to confirm findings from other studies as well as offer new perspectives on these complex and meaningful human experiences. The ultimate purpose of this examination is to clarify how core values function in the work lives of public library directors and how these experiences contribute to the organization.

Critical Incidents

Defining moments are sparked by critical life events, unexpected incidents, or challenging situation (positive or negative) that do not fit within the individual’s current knowledge base or life experience (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Cope & Watts, 2000; De Long, 2012). Cope and Watts (2000) describe critical incidents of business owners as challenging situations that result in shifts in perception, awareness, and understanding. They state that these critical incidents are singularly compelling to investigate
because of the resulting transformational change, and presumed substantial improvement, both personally with the organizational leader and within the organization.

In describing critical incidents, Avolio and Luthans (2006) identify three types that can prompt defining moments: *triggers* in which a life event prompts an individual to reflect on his or her sense of self and identity; *jolts* in which an unanticipated crisis, tragedy, or extraordinary positive experience leads an individual to change beliefs and values; and *challenging dilemmas*, either self-imposed or thrust upon an individual, which require reflection and reorientation. These descriptions apply to the various stories told by study participants and are discussed in this chapter.

In the literature of library and information science, De Long (2012), who studied of Canadian women deans of academic libraries, found that their critical incidents primarily related to job changes and subordinate staff performance problems. Similarly, 54% of defining moment stories told by the 12 study participants occurred when they were new to managerial leadership positions. Also in parallel with De Long’s findings, participants told seven stories (29%) of critical incidents involving personnel issues. In addition, two participants described unexpected critical incidents of intellectual freedom challenges, three described critical incidents of the responsibility of overseeing library building projects, and an additional three had to resolve issues involving previous directors. This variety of critical incidents indicates both a commonality with other types of organizations (building projects, customer service issues, and response to natural disasters), as well as specific challenges that may require specialized training and support for public library directors (resolving intellectual freedom issues and navigating previous director issues).
General Responses to Critical Incidents

In response to critical incidents, individuals reflect and discover new understanding and meaning in order to resolve situations (Badaracco, 1997). In some cases, these incidents prompt defining moments in which core values are tested, clarified, and either instilled in a broader context or reprioritized for the future (Badaracco, 1997; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007). In this study, participants described both instilled values and reprioritized values based on the context and specific experiences.

Defining moments are a complex series of events, reflections, insights, decisions, and commitments that transpire over time (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). Mackoff and Wenet (2001) assert that individuals respond to critical incidents in three phases: (1) reflection that leads to discovery of new meaning and new perception, (2) prioritization of values that instills a sense of purpose, and (3) feelings of confidence and self-efficacy for future situations. Although these descriptions of the responses to critical incidents illustrate the general stages of defining moments, study participants described three distinctively different responses to critical incidents: (1) a prompt and surprising moment of clarity; (2) a dilemma that requires extensive reflection over months or years prior to an insight; and (3) delayed action due to complex relational conflict and the need to coach or negotiate. Within each of these responses, the components of reflection, insight, action, confidence, and commitment occur; however, the path to resolution varied. Figure 4.1 depicts the flow of each path of defining moments described by participants.
Moments of Clarity

Moments of clariy occurred when participants faced critical incidents and made a prompt decision, such as the director who confronted a belligerent patron and insisted on respect in library interactions. The response was prompt, unexpectedly strong, and initiated by a deep commitment to respectful interactions. These moments of clarity happen swiftly, and often it was not until much later that the participants reflected consciously on the importance of the experience. Upon reflection, participants explained how their strong reaction and later
understanding of a core value resulted in new understanding and commitment to the value that
extended from a personal value to become a work and organizational-level value. This study’s
stories of moments of clarity could also be thought of as triggers or jolts (Avolio & Luthans,
2006), in that they are unexpected experiences that require prompt action and clarify values
priorities and self-perception.

In this study, stories illustrate the path of moments of clarity, including a participant who
transitioned from being an employee to becoming the director of the library. When faced with a
critical incident involving a staff member who was not performing satisfactorily, she drew upon
her personal value of responsibility to decide in the moment to step up to a higher level of
responsibility for the organization and fire the employee. She described experiencing an
immediate, clear, yet unexpected insight that her core value of responsibility now applied at the
organizational level. Her newly established identity as library director compelled her to hold
herself and the library personnel to a level of responsibility she believed to be required of a
highly effective organization.

She discussed how she felt confident to take respectful disciplinary action to remove an
underperforming employee and the experience instilled more confidence for future personnel
issues. She described this experience as defining because her decision and action to be
responsible for high standards of performance informed how she would navigate staff issues into
the future. This circumstance confirms findings in other studies (Badaracco, 1997; Dahlvig &
Longman, 2010; Flanagan, 2002; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001) in which participants experienced
more clarity and purpose after a defining moment as well as greater sense of confidence and
efficacy.
Another participant described a critical incident that fits within the Avolio and Luthans (2006) description of a trigger and elicited a moment of clarity. The participant was new to the rural library and, while helping a struggling student, decided to overlook lost book fees in order to provide books of interest to him. She explained an instantaneous understanding that support for learning was more important than the stewardship of attaining the $12 lost book fees. The situation of a child with a lost book fee likely occurs regularly in public libraries. However, in this particular moment, the incident was defining for this new director because her decision, based on a deeply held value of learning, transformed her values priorities for her library. She explained that she understood how her core value of learning could be applied within the community via the library and shifted the way she responded and how she asked other staff to respond to such incidents in the future. Thus, the defining moment not only impacted her work but informed organizational policy and culture into the future. Mackoff and Wenet (2001) refer to these as knowing moments, which assume more meaning and significance than other life moments. In this study, these trigger moments clarified how core values applied in new contexts. As in other studies (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Janson, 2008; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001), participants trusted their values and took action confidently based on them.

Another participant described a critical incident that could be considered a jolt (Avolio & Luthans, 2006) after a natural disaster in the community. She had been briefed by the town emergency team, which indicated that without basic infrastructure, civil unrest might occur. While several people crowded into the public library, with a back-up generator, to charge telephones, connect to Internet resources, and seek escape in pleasure reading, the participant decided suddenly to take responsibility beyond her role as director. She stood up on a chair and announced to the library users that supplies were limited and they all needed to evacuate the
town. She described this as defining because she overstepped her responsibility as the library director and did so for the health and safety of the town residents. She described a moment of clarity and prompt action as well as later reflection that this was defining for her. Upon reflection, she was surprised by her actions, yet confident she would do that same thing again if ever in such a situation.

**Insight Problem-solving**

The previous examples of defining moments involve situations in which the participants were clear on the course they wished to take based on core values. Another type of critical incident identified by the literature is referred to as challenging dilemmas (Avolio & Luthans, 2006) in which an individual faces a challenge without knowing a clear path to resolution. It is only through a method of insight problem-solving that the participants found paths to resolution.

In response to challenging dilemmas, an individual is unclear about how to resolve an issue and experiences uncertainty; these impasses can last days, weeks, months, or even years, prior to an insight that reorients one’s perspective. These critical incidents often occurred when participants were new to their positions or faced with a new assignment, such as building a library or managing a service model change. Because the situation was new, participants described taking time to reflect, consider the issues, and weigh the options before determining how to proceed.

In two stories, participants described critical incidents in which it was clear that they needed to make organizational changes but the process for determining the goal or direction of those changes was unclear. In one situation the director oversaw a small community library with decreasing use and decided that the library service model needed changing in order to remain relevant in the community. In the other circumstance the director was new to a very large system
and recognized that the methods he used to lead smaller library systems were not sufficient for the new environment. In both scenarios the participants described processes of investigation, experimentation, and consideration that unfolded over many months before complete understanding and a path forward became clear to them. Along the way each director experienced several insights that progressively informed the ultimate understanding of how to proceed. Once they each experienced the final insight, they became confident about how to lead change.

Based on these stories and other participant stories, it appears that the nature of the problem can affect the length of time between when a problem arises and when the course of action becomes clear. Of greater interest is the process the participants followed to resolve the various issues and gain insights about how to act. To consider the various problem-solving techniques, the following section delves into research on insight problem-solving.

**Literature on Insight Problem-solving**

Insight problems are distinct circumstances in which an individual is faced with issues that are new and different from those previously experienced (Bowden, Jung-Beeman, Fleck, & Kounios, 2005; Dominowski & Dollab, 1995; Gick & Lockhart, 1995; Mayer, 1995; Patrick & Ahmed, 2014). These insight problems require new, productive thinking (Mayer, 1995) in which the individual invents a new way of perceiving and solving the problem. Dominowski and Dollab (1995) posit that insight problems are resolved when a new knowledge state is attained, rather than simply applying a systematic process of thinking, analyzing, and deciding based on current knowledge.

Gick and Lockhart (1995) identify three stages of insight problem-solving. Initially, the problem solvers are aware that they lack the understanding of how to proceed. In the second
stage, they realize that step-by-step reasoning will not lead to the solution. The stage after identifying the problem and before the insight is called an *impasse* in which insight problem solvers seek a solution beyond their current knowledge base. The impasse occurs because the individual’s perception or *representation* of reality is not sufficient to resolve the issue (Dominowski & Dollab, 1995; Gick & Lockhart, 1995; Mayer, 1995; Patrick & Ahmed, 2014). Thus, the individual considers the problem from many perspectives, including gathering new knowledge and perspectives, in order to move beyond former representation to discover a new approach to solving the issue.

After some time, the state of new understanding is achieved often with a sudden realization — the “Aha” moment — in which the solution is not only clear but seemingly obvious (Gick & Lockhart, 1995). The experience of insight often includes a feeling of delight or, in cases when the solution appears obvious, chagrin.

With regard to the impasse, fixed thoughts can hinder the process of changing representation (Gick & Lockhart, 1995). One could be viewing the current representation too narrowly, such as considering the library to be merely a building for housing books rather than an environment for acquiring and sharing knowledge. Or, one could assess the situation with more complexity than is needed; simplification aids in resolution. A third circumstance involves realizing that a completely new representation is required to solve the problem, prompting a person to shift completely from one representation (e.g., the former director was competent) to a new representation (e.g., the former director was not competent). Another point made by Gick and Lockhart (1995) is that not all “Aha” moments in which representation changes immediately lead to “Aha” solutions. For example, in the case involving awareness that the former director was not competent, resolving the various legacy issues may require additional insights.
Regardless of the issue, resolving an impasse requires a new perspective, a new representation of the situation (Gick & Lockhart, 1995; Mayer, 1995).

**Participant Strategies to Reach Insight**

Several participants discussed their reflective processes as including talking through the situation with a trusted person, such as a spouse, a colleague, or a mentor. Worline (2012) suggests that conversations about organizational issues can create a deeper understanding and shared meaning that builds confidence and trust in future action. In this study, the trusted confidante either provided direct feedback on what to do, explored alternatives and options, or offered reflection on the participant’s priorities and values. These interactions helped to clarify the problem scope and provide alternatives. In a few cases it was during the conversation that the participant realized which direction to choose.

In situations specific to managing change in libraries, participants described methods of gathering information from respected peers, professional journals and blogs, conferences, tours of other libraries, and perspectives gained from other professions, such as business administration. These various venues allowed the participants to review a broad range of perspectives related to complex issues of leading change in uncertain times. When considering these variables, the participants sought to investigate and understand many options before determining the course that they needed to take. In the end, they considered many perspectives, then singularly constructed and implemented a change system based on their own preferences and priorities. For example, the decision to change the library service model in a rural library involved re-organizing one area of the library as an “idea room” with comfortable furniture, new books and magazines, and many places for conversation. Though other libraries had created
areas for experiential learning, the director described her unique vision as driven by the specific interests and habits of the residents of the community.

At times the “Aha” moments occurred within the context of the critical incident. In the two cases involving challenges to library materials, both directors described community meetings in which they defended free and open access to the entire collection without censorship. Through navigation of those meetings and other community interactions, the directors obtained clarity about their roles and responsibilities as community leaders on topic of intellectual freedom. Both described a deepening commitment to their values and new understandings of those values during participation in community meetings and other individual interactions. These two situations suggest that being self-reflective and self-aware aided them in responding appropriately.

Two participants discussed another technique for prompting insight and decision making, namely rest and sleep. One director described gathering facts and information and weighing the pros and cons of each choice in a difficult situation. She described thinking “constantly” for a two-week period about what to do and then finally deciding to “sleep on it.” When she awoke the next morning, she was clear on which choice to make, and stated that she often makes decisions in this way. Another director explained that he was awakened by an insight in the middle of the night. The problem was clear, upon awakening, and the diagnosis of how to resolve the issue was equally apparent. Wagner, Gais, Haider, Verleger, and Born (2004), describe a study in which rest facilitates insight. Specifically, the participants in an experimental group gained insight more quickly (more than twice as quickly) after resting than those in a control group who worked on problem-solving without a break. The researchers theorize that rest and sleep allow the brain to restructure representation of a problem in order to allow for more expedient and insightful
problem-solving behavior. Certainly, the two stories in this dissertation indicate the potential value of sleep-aided revelations.

Complex Challenges Involving Relational Values Conflicts

The third path participants described in this study involved delayed action, even when they had a clear preference for how to resolve an issue, because of values conflicts with one or more stakeholders. These situations align with Bacaracco’s (1997) description of defining moments in work termed complex challenges in which stakeholder relationships and competing values require reflection, coaching, negotiation, and/or other relational techniques to reach commonly acceptable resolution. Several participants described this type of defining moment in which determining the solution to an issue was prompt yet their approaches to critical incidents were delayed in order to align with others prior to action. In these situations, the participants realized what their preferences and values were, yet they were unwilling to act immediately on that understanding. Gick and Lockhart (1995) describe situations in which “Aha” moments of change in representation do not immediately lead to “Aha” solutions. In fact, in this study, some participants described a conflict among competing values which accounted for this delay of resolution.

Badaracco (1997) refers to defining moments without clear resolution as prompted by conflicts among competing responsibilities. In these cases, personal integrity may suggest one solution, but that path may negatively impact relationships with governing authorities. For example, one director learned quite unexpectedly of the previous director’s mismanagement of resources, requiring her to determine a course of action that would resolve the issue quickly. The incident had legal as well as other implications for the director and trustees; involving the trustees in the resolution was essential yet certainly meant a rift would form between the trustees.
and the current director. The competing values of integrity and relationships made the decision on how to negotiate the issue difficult; this example illustrates how dynamics in an organization and among stakeholders impact defining moments (Badaracco, 1997). Others with a stake in the outcome of the critical incident influence how individuals resolve issues. In this case, the director chose to be transparent about the process, which reinforced the value of integrity for her in future situations. While this critical issue was resolved within a few weeks due to its urgent nature, some delays can take weeks or even months.

In response to critical incidents that involve conflicts with subordinates and supervisors, study participants described values conflicts that prevented swift resolution. A common response among all was to recognize the situations and to take the time to either mentor the staff or negotiate with supervising authority. The interpersonal conflicts were uncomfortable, particularly for those who indicated benevolence (Schwartz, 2012) was a core value. At the same time, the deep commitment to being responsible for organizational outcomes enabled the directors to bide time and persist with the course of action they preferred with subordinates. As indicated earlier, they were less successful with governing authorities, which raises questions about power and influence; these are questions beyond the scope of this study.

Two directors described prominent community members who challenged which materials the library would house. These intellectual freedom incidents were unexpected and escalated to public debates in the communities. Whereas the above critical incidents related to circumstances with the board of directors, who might be considered internal stakeholders, intellectual freedom challenges involved outside stakeholders in the community, thus elevating the defining moment to complex dilemmas (Badaracco, 1997). Badaracco (1997) refers to this type of defining moment as “right versus right” in which the organizational leader is responsible to a variety of
stakeholders within and outside of the organization. Badaracco (1997) posits that defining moments reveal values, test the commitment to those values, and shape an individual’s character, identity, and sense of purpose. In these cases, the directors’ actions in response to intellectual freedom had long-term impact on the libraries as well as how the community viewed the library. Although each situation unfolded quietly at first, the directors eventually asserted themselves into the public discourse and engaged the communities in debate.

These intellectual freedom situations were defining because they revealed the values of the library profession and the library director, tested the directors’ commitments to those values in a public forum, and, ultimately, shaped how the directors’ and their libraries were perceived in the community with regard to intellectual freedom. Dahlvig and Longman (2010) and Gentile (2010) describe the importance of managerial leaders articulating their values and modeling them for others. These participants described the importance they placed on being the community leader for intellectual freedom, describing the value as being instilled in youth.

The two participants spoke about how their personal values aligned with intellectual freedom and how that gave them the courage to face opposition and overcome censorship in their communities. One commonality shared by both participants was a childhood experience in the public library that they described as influencing their conviction to uphold the principle of intellectual freedom as a director. During their interviews, each participant told of a formative experience in which the public library of their youth had been a refuge and support for overcoming abusive situations and encouraging their intellectual discovery. These early experiences with libraries, they explained, instilled the value of intellectual freedom in a way that gave them the courage and persistence to stand up against strong opposition and to define the public library’s community role as ensuring the principle of intellectual freedom.
In all of these cases, the participants were guided and compelled by their values to make difficult decisions. Some of these decisions led to unqualified success, while others lead to compromise, departure of library personnel, or the resignation of the director. In all of these situations their actions, and the results of those actions, informed their sense of identity into the future.

Certainty and Confidence

Several studies on defining moments conclude that one result is self-confidence (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Dahlvig, & Longman, 2010; Flanagan, 2002; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001). When faced with challenging critical incidents, participants in this study initially experienced doubt, confusion, and frustration. However, once they gained insight, they developed new perspectives on their values as well as more clarity on their identities, certainty of decisions, and confidence.

One participant said that her two defining moments gave her a “much stronger sense of purpose and the confidence that that [decision] really is the right thing.” Another participant, recalling the success of moving the library from its old building, said, “That move bumped the confidence I had and set me on a good course.” A third participant described how standing up for intellectual freedom led to professional involvement in the issue at the state and national level. She said the experience “gave me that confidence” to step into a professional leadership position when she had not previously perceived herself as a leader. The confidence and sense of self described in these examples were enduring in various aspects of her work.

Whether participants described the impact of their defining moments as one of immediate clarity, or as an experience that lead to deeper understanding upon reflection, they all described having certainty about the decisions they made as a result of the defining moment. Comments
included: “I knew I was right;” “I don’t care if someone’s looking or not, I’m always going to do the right thing;” and “I thought that that [decision] was the right thing to do.” Each statement includes certainty based on core values that they consider to be fundamental to their work.

Badaracco (2013) addresses how challenges provoke the best in responsible managerial leadership and that incremental decisions over time aimed in a particular direction, iterative and adaptable, can increase certainty, confidence, and commitment to aspirational goals.

In considering the “right” thing, a few participants identified an aspirational quality of how they act upon their values in their work. One spoke of comic book heroes as inspirations. “These are all people who tried to help people and who always tried to do the right thing.” She explained that she aspires to do the same in her work each day. Another said,

I think the combination of all of those experiences [defining moments] probably have contributed to an innate sense that I am always trying to do the best because that is the right thing to do. And that is what people expect, and that is what is inspiring and motivates people, and I guess inspires and motivates me as well.

The aspirational quality of these statements confirms other research (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Dahlvig, & Longman, 2010; Flanagan, 2002; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001) that defining moments result in new meaning and purpose. They reinforce values in ways that contribute to self-confidence and result in the individual assuming proactive, persistent behavior in the workplace, including acting with courage (Badaracco, 2013).

**Courage**

Confidence in what is “right” is not always enough for an individual to move forward in the face of adversity. In contentious work situations, courage may be required to act (Badaracco,
Courage in the work environment may entail taking risk, sustaining focus, and persisting despite uncertainty or barriers (Badaracco, 2013); or it may relate to speaking up for strongly held values and against social pressures to conform to unacceptable standards (Worline, 2012). In addition, other researchers identify courage as related to integrity, honesty, and authenticity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Rego, Cunha, & Clegg, 2012).

In this study, several participants spoke of the need for courage related to acting on or speaking up for strongly held values when the result could harm a relationship with library personnel, supervisors, and/or community members. One participant described making a conscious choice to “screw up the courage” to speak to subordinates about performance issues in order to ensure quality service. Her description included the tension of having to confront those she knew well and challenge them to behave with more courtesy and helpfulness. Whereas a confrontation like that may have been easy for someone else to resolve, fear (Worline, 2012) required her to be courageous to resolve the issue.

In another story, the participant discussed how his sense of responsibility gave him the courage to direct the management team to take corrective action against employees who were disrespectful to library users. In the above examples, the directors recognized their greater responsibility for the organization and felt they needed to draw on courage to take personnel actions against employees. These participants explained the anxiety they experienced in conflicts with stakeholders, specifically when the conflicts involved direct confrontation with those to whom they felt responsible. Many participants have a strong core value of benevolence, which relates to supporting individuals with whom they are in close contact (Schwartz, 1996, 2012). The potential conflict between their value of benevolence and their value of integrity, or doing
the right thing for the organization, may have required them to draw on courage to undertake personnel action on employees.

Participants also discussed the need for courage in other situations. One participant discussed an intellectual freedom challenge by stating, “I felt like there was this act of courage to step into the controversy …” in which the director was in conflict with community members and spoke up for a core value even if it meant retribution. Courageous acts challenge processes or people within a specific context, which often involves an individual acting for organizational or social good (Worline, 2012) in the face of fear, retribution, or failure (Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, & Sternberg, 2007). In this case, the need for courage stemmed from a concern with stakeholder relationships in the community. Not only was the director’s position potentially at risk, the reputation of the library and the values of the profession were also at stake. In this and other cases, the strongly held value of self-direction (independent thought and action) (Schwartz, 1996, 2012) relates in two ways. The director’s value of self-direction, (e.g., independent thought and action) applies to community members having access to uncensored materials, which provided the compelling interest in defending the challenge. At the same time, the participants’ independent spirits emboldened the courageous act of defending intellectual freedom.

While some researchers (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004) consider courage to be a virtue (value in action) in and of itself, Flanagan (2002) found that managerial leaders who are more aware of their core values face work challenges with courage. In other words, courage is not a value that functions independently of other values. Deeply held core values compel a person to acts of courage not for the end result of having been courageous, but for the underlying value of, for example, freedom or integrity.
Participants described drawing on courage to speak up and behave in ways that align with core values in settings where relationships may have been threatened. For example, one participant spoke of confronting a staff member who was a long-time friend. The staff member was not acting with honesty or integrity, values of high priority to the participant. Courageous acts are fueled by a certainty and commitment to the deeper values at stake. This conclusion confirms other research (Badaracco, 2013; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007), in which defining moments clarify what matters, can require standing up for those values in adverse situations, and instill a long-term commitment to the values.

Commitment and Persistence

In participant stories the commitment to the core value over time, persistence in action, makes the experience defining (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007). In this study, participants spoke about how their responses instilled confidence and compelled them to commit to a new value or recommit to an existing value over time. This combination of confidence and commitment aligns with other researchers’ findings on organizational leadership commitment (Pfeffer, 1992; Sull & Houlder, 2005), in which they conclude that past situations and self-perception influence commitment and may result in consistency over time, which instills trust and confidence from followers.

When organizational leaders commit to new ways of thinking (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001), and prioritizing values (Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007), they set the course for future decisions and behaviors not only for themselves but also for the organization (Schein, 2010). They establish policies, focus attention, and expect others in the organization to behave based on the organizational leader’s prioritized values. Yet, some statements indicate that, even after an experience of facing a critical incident, weighing options, and making a decision, individuals still
may not take action (Pfeffer, 1992) or they may persist through resistance. For example, in one interview a director concluded her story of coaching a resistant employee by stating, “In the end, when it resolved the way I felt it should have resolved, I felt much better; but there were moments there when I said, ‘Oh, screw it, I don’t really want to deal with this, I’m leaving.’” Another director similarly described her values conflict with library personnel by stating, “This sounds really bad but if I weren’t so stubborn I probably would have left. Because, at my age, I’m not sure that all the conflict and stress was worth it but, you know, it was.”

These examples allude to the likelihood that, when faced with some critical incidents, participants may choose not to assert themselves and their core values. Along with participants telling stories of their defining moments in which they stepped up to achieve excellence, a few also alluded to moments when their commitment waned. For example, one participant in summing up the importance of persisting through challenging situations stated,

I have known a number of directors, they are really nice people, really great people, [but they] were really poor directors. And the difference was that unwillingness to commit to … to step up in the middle of a controversy and go through that awkward period where you are trying to figure it out and sort through who is right and keep asking the questions and not lose your cool.

This statement underscores the importance for organizational leaders to persist consciously, including staying focused and alert throughout the process of resolving critical incidents. Indeed, in managerial leadership, defining moments may distinguish the effective from ineffective based on how the person in the position responds to critical events (Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Mackoff, & Wenet, 2001).
As with other research (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007), this study confirms that managerial leaders can respond to critical incidents with a clear sense of core values and a deep commitment to those values. Certainly one can imagine situations in which a managerial leader may choose to face challenging issues at work by maintaining the status quo rather than aspiring to excellence (Quinn, 2005). In addition, those in managerial leadership positions who perceive that the organization is running smoothly, may relax their commitment to core values and aspirational goals (Quinn, 2005). To address these issues, Quinn (2005) suggests managerial leaders need self-awareness, self-regulation, and a consistent commitment to core values.

Badaracco (2013) describes responsible organizational leaders as those who take their responsibilities seriously by proactively resolving struggles. He goes further to suggest that some organizational leaders seek out challenges and struggles to elicit their best effort. In this study, participants described their defining moments as striving to overcome issues in order to attain a higher standard of service or impact, although the focus was less on striving for the sake of overcoming challenges than for achieving an aspirational goal. In fact, defining moments, and specifically those moments of deeper meaning, can aid in achieving excellence if organizational leaders choose to step up to the challenge, navigate through discomfort, persist over time, and draw on their core values. These strategies ultimately define not only the values of the organizational leaders, but also the values and the future goals of the organizations they oversee.

**Conclusion**

Public library directors who participated in this research responded to critical incidents in ways they identified as defining. By analyzing the processes they used to resolve critical incidents, the concept of one singular moment having more meaning than others (Mackoff &
Wenet, 2001) is placed into question. Study participants described multiple moments of meaning that contributed to the defining aspect of these life events. They used reflection to clarify their values preferences and to commit to those values, thus reaffirming them for future situations.

Defining moments are turning points in life, typically unexpected, and involve a moment of insight, or an epiphany, that clarifies a new path or strengthens resolve for the future. In some cases, sudden insights were enough to clarify values and meaning. In other situations, participants consciously chose to persist or act with courage to attain their values priorities; these moments had meaning because of the intentionality of instilling those values in defining ways. Participants also discussed meaningful moments of certainty about decisions, specific instances in which they experienced more confidence, and singular points at which self-awareness and identity became clearer. In addition, participants described moments in which they recognized a greater sense of purpose in their work and the work of their libraries. Thus, at any stage of resolving critical incidents, clarifying values, and defining self, specific moments of meaning may occur.

Other research (Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001) points to how organizational leaders actively engage others by articulating core values and the meaning of the defining moments in organizations. Similarly, participants in this study described how their willingness to speak up for core values and aspirational results, such as high quality library service and intellectual freedom, resulted in stronger commitments to those values in the future and also operationalized these values in organizations they oversee.

In addition, study participants indicated that values from youth influence how they chose to respond to critical incidents. Specifically, reflecting on core values, including those instilled in youth, emboldens some of the library directors to face challenging dilemmas with courage and
persistence. Badaracco (2006; 2013) posits that the organizational leader has additional responsibilities for setting the direction of the organization, being accountable for the success or failure of the organization, and managing authority over personnel. As found in this study, the role of public library director requires acting with responsibility to a broad array of stakeholders within and outside of the organization. The next chapter focuses on various managerial leadership behaviors discussed by study participants and related to the public administration literature on accountability and responsibility in order to gain greater understanding of influences on participants’ work behavior.
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CHAPTER FIVE
RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTORSHIPS

A primary theme among participants was a sense of responsibility inherent in the position of public library director and an ongoing commitment to accountability. This chapter places responsibility and accountability in the arena of public administration and discusses areas of responsibility that participants identified as relating to their work. The chapter outlines a variety of stakeholders identified by participants and examples of responsibilities as they relate to these stakeholders. The chapter includes discussions about self-regulation, purpose, and passion at work, which are concepts that the participants related to their work responsibilities. The participants perceived their responsibilities less as obligatory duties and more as an opportunity, and even meaningful, purposeful aspects of their work.

Definitions of Responsibility and Accountability
For managerial leaders, responsibility and accountability are interrelated concepts in public administration. One distinction is that responsibility is associated with positional authority entrusted to managerial leaders in order to perform duties that benefit stakeholders, whereas accountability relates to the parameters of those duties as well as the evaluation and assessment of the processes and results (Dunn & Legge, 2001). Put simply, the governing authority empowers managerial leaders with responsibility and constrains them with accountability (Dunn & Legge, 2001). For example, in public libraries, the director is empowered to oversee all aspects of library operations, including fiscal management, human resources, facilities, and operations as well as the oversight of professional library responsibilities, such as collection management, library services, and programs. Along with this authority is the public trust that the
director will manage finances and resources responsibly as well as ensure that services are provided equitably, efficiently, and effectively. To ensuring these responsibilities are carried out, the governing authority and the public may hold the director accountable by establishing mechanisms, such as reporting procedures that document processes and results. Thus, one aspect of responsibility and accountability is that they function in conjunction with the other, responsibility enabling performance and accountability constraining it (Wallis & Gregory, 2009).

Responsibility in public administration encompasses obligations or expectations to perform specified activities that impact a targeted group (or groups) of stakeholders, including the public (Petter, 2005; Wallis & Gregory, 2009). Although researchers (e.g., Petter, 2005; Wallis & Gregory, 2009) focus on responsibility in public administration as obligations or expectations (self-imposed or by others), other researchers (e.g., Dunn & Legge, 2001) highlight the public trust placed on public administrators. Public trust relates to authority given with the expectation that publically-funded resources and services are managed with integrity and fairness (Dunn & Legge, 2001). Therefore, public officials are obligated to consider how their positional authority, to which they have been entrusted, both empowers and requires them to maintain responsible behavior (Dunn & Legge, 2001) and ensure effective results (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Waldman & Galvin, 2008).

Accountability provides public officials with specific definitions, guidance on duties and processes, and clarification of responsibilities to ensure they meet these expectations (Dunn & Legge, 2001). Accountability provides a check to trustworthiness (Wallis & Gregory, 2009) and is externally directed or imposed as a restriction on empowered responsibilities (Behn, 2001) in order to ensure controllability and answerability of public administrators (Wallis & Gregory, 2009).
Responsibility and Accountability to Whom

The primary role of managerial leaders is to be responsible and accountable (Salminen & Lehto, 2012). Freeman (1984) adds that managerial leaders are responsible to a multitude of stakeholders, which he defines as individuals or entities working within or outside of the organization who affect the organization or could be affected by it. Stakeholders in the private sector include employees, governing authorities, shareholders, customers, vendors, and others who affect or are affected by organization (Voegtlin, 2011). In addition, the broader community and society are stakeholders that may be affected by the organization’s activities or products (Pless & Maak, 2011).

Public sector stakeholders include internal and external stakeholder groups. Table 5.1 lists stakeholders identified from business research (Voegtlin, 2011) and those stakeholders discussed by study participants. Because participants described stakeholders through stories, the list is not comprehensive.

Table 5.1

Stakeholders for Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Firm Stakeholders*</th>
<th>Study Participants Identified Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Customers</td>
<td>• Community groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employees</td>
<td>• General public (including taxpayers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Governmental agencies</td>
<td>• Individual personnel (including managers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Labor unions</td>
<td>• Library governing authority (board, town manager, town council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local community</td>
<td>• Library work teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-governmental groups (e.g. social, environmental)</td>
<td>• Library users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partners/alliances shareholders/investors</td>
<td>• Potential users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Representatives (e.g. associations, groups, churches)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Top managers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Several parallels exist between the list of business firm stakeholders identified by Voegtlin (2011) and those discussed by study participants. For example, both identify the importance of internal stakeholders, such as employees and managers, and external agents, such as customers. Whereas business managerial leaders have fiduciary responsibilities to shareholders and investors, public library directors, as public administrators, have fiduciary accountability to taxpayers (Petter, 2005; Salminen & Lehto, 2012), as well as a governing authority. The plethora of stakeholders inventoried illustrates a complex environment in which organizational leaders need to manage a multitude of relationships and competing interests.

As with other research (Freeman, 1984; Pless & Maak, 2011; Voegtlin, 2011), this study identifies how stakeholders influence the decisions managerial leaders make and the activities they prioritize. With limited resources, the interests of one stakeholder may compete with another. For example, in several stories the directors were attempting to make changes in library service that they believed would make the library more relevant to the community. Some personnel, internal stakeholders, were resistant, prompting the directors to choose between the library personnel or the public. In the stories of competing stakeholder interests, participants used their core values, professional values, and consideration of a multitude of stakeholders to make choices. Thus, values inform the process of discerning which responsibilities and relationships to prioritize in the public library environment.

**Responsibility and Accountability for What**

Along with core values influencing decisions, public administrators have heightened pressure from outside stakeholders who track public sector organizational performance and hold
managerial leaders accountable by demanding more transparency than is practiced in the private sector (Cooper, 2012, Dunn & Legge, 2001; Petter, 2005; Wallis & Gregory, 2009). Within this context, public administrators have the responsibility to affect positive organizational results for multiple external stakeholders, including members of the public and a variety of formal and informal community representatives. In addition, the managerial leader has responsibility for effective and efficient performance processes and personnel development (Pless, & Maak, 2011). Researchers (e.g., Orazi, Turrini, & Valotti, 2013; Petter, 2005) posit that, in the public sector, optimal effectiveness in managerial leadership requires a balance between transactional responsibilities (e.g., financial accountability to community stakeholders, a commitment to integrity, and adherence to professional ethics) and activities designed for transformational growth of the staff and organization. Study participants described both transactional responsibilities of financial accountability as well as transformational responsibility to develop library staff. In addition, they discussed the primary responsibility to provide services that positively impacted community members. The multitude of responsibilities identified by study participants parallels other research in public administration (Behn, 2001; Petter, 2005).

Petter (2005) surveyed the public administration literature regarding responsibility and developed a list of areas in which the managerial leader operates. At the personal level, public administrators feel responsible both for the values and ethics of their profession and their own personal values and morals. Within the organization, they are responsible for the organizational and personnel aspects of the operation in order to ensure quality performance and positive results. In addition, they are responsible for fiscal integrity of the organization as well as meeting the needs of consumers. In the broader external environment, public administrators assume the
responsibility to carry out their duties legally with integrity, and for being accountable to the public, which relies on, and funds, their agency.

To ensure responsibilities are carried out in the public sphere, Behn (2001) posits that public administration requires three specific types of accountability: democratic accountability, managerial competence (primarily financial), and performance. He defines democratic accountability similarly to the previous definitions of responsibility related to public trust by noting that administrators have the power to allocate funds and resources and, therefore, should do so with integrity and fairness. Accountability with managerial competence relates to overseeing finances with integrity, and performance accountability relates to both the results of the organization and the processes used.

Based on the stakeholders described by study participants and the themes related to responsibility and accountability, Table 5.2 illustrates those areas of responsibility that participants identified. Although this table does not represent a comprehensive list of public library director responsibilities, which is outside the scope of this study, it provides a snapshot of the responsibilities for which participants feel accountable. Participants discussed their core and professional values as influencing their decisions and actions, thus they feel responsible to uphold these values in their work. In addition, they described external responsibility within the communities they serve (e.g., library users, library governing authorities, and the public/public/taxpayers), and organizational responsibilities to the governing authority as well as for finance, planning, operations, performance, and personnel professional development.
Table 5.2

Public Library Director Areas of Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Organizational</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core values</td>
<td>Professional values and ethics</td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Community groups with interest in library operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual personnel and work teams performance</td>
<td>• Fairness and equity for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Library governing authority (board, town manager, town council)</td>
<td>• General public (including taxpayers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Library vision, mission, goals, strategies, results, policies, procedures</td>
<td>• High quality service for library users, equity, intellectual freedom, privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Personnel performance development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following sections address the major areas of responsibility the participants identified, and relate those themes to the public administration literature on responsibility and accountability. The purpose of this examination is to consider various arenas of responsibility in public library administration and how participants’ stories depict the complex array of competing responsibilities, accountabilities, and stakeholders.

**Financial Responsibility**

In the public accountability literature (e.g., Behn, 2001) financial accountability and responsibility are primary considerations for the organization. Although this was not a major topic of discussion, in six interviews participants spoke of their responsibility to taxpayers, trustees, and other community leaders. They stated that they consider these stakeholders when making decisions and prioritizing library services and activities. For example, one participant stated, “I feel a real sense of responsibility to make sure that we are being good stewards of the taxpayers’ money.” Another participant said, “There is a serious side of a library district. We are
a government [agency] and we have to act responsibly … fiscally and … we are making [policies] for the way our library runs.” This sense of stewardship indicates an understanding of the public role to prioritize financial integrity over self-interest (Behn, 2001). A third participant stated, “[The library] is a town department so it is important to understand how the rest of the town works, to be able to work with the town accountant and treasurer and also the town administrator.” These statements indicate that these participants understand the importance of financial accountability and consider this responsibility within the overall framework of the local government infrastructure as well as in regard to their accountability to taxpayers.

**Fair and Equitable Service**

Another primary responsibility of public agencies is democratic accountability (Behn, 2001; Dunne & Legge, 2001), which is primarily focused on fairness. Because all citizens pay for public services, the democratic principles of equity and fairness require public administrators to ensure equal access to those services. This duty was discussed by several study participants, including five participants who emphasized the importance of equal access for all people and for all intellectual pursuits. For example, one participant stated,

> I think increasingly what has become primary for me in this particular role is the value I have for equity, equity of access, equity more importantly of opportunity. I think partly because of my role, [and] partly because I feel like the world is getting less and less equitable, that the library has a real opportunity to impact [equity] and I would argue a responsibility to try to impact [equity]. … We have a responsibility and a really wonderful opportunity to create those opportunities for people who wouldn't have them otherwise.
This example addresses accountability and responsibility for the public good discussed in the literature (Behn, 2001; Dunne & Legge, 2001).

Another participant described a sense of responsibility to provide fair and open access to information by stating the role of library services as “responsiveness to every single mind in the community even if [we don’t] agree with them.” This example reflects the importance this participant placed on equity of access to information and specifically as it relates to supporting intellectual freedom regardless of the subject matter pursued.

Along with the primary role of democratic accountability being discussed specifically with regard to equity, participants also spoke more generally about the responsibility they felt to ensure the library provides useful services to the public. One library director stated, “I think that the primary responsibility of library leaders is that you are making things better for your community, stakeholders of the institution.” Another participant said, “Mostly I really feel responsible for providing what we need and want in our community—services for all people.” A third participant described her motivation as “a feeling of responsibility that we provide the very best service.” Similarly, another participant summed up his priorities, including “providing the best possible service to the public that we can, and staying in touch with them and their needs and their wants—actually, trying to stay a little bit ahead of them in their needs and their wants, which can be a real challenge.” These statements indicate that the study participants have compelling commitments to be responsible for library services that meet community needs.

More specific to the types of services offered, one participant spoke of confidentiality as a fundamental responsibility of her job. She considers privacy a particularly important issue in a small town in which everyone knows each other. She said,
The town is so small that everybody knows everybody’s business, but the library’s been the one place that people come in and they know that they’re seeing what you would find in a big city library — all [library user] information is confidential. And that they will approach us and talk about very sensitive topics or get help with sensitive topics and feel comfortable that we’re not going to go out and — it won’t be in the latest rumor that’s going around town.

In this case, the statement indicates a commitment to the professional value of confidentiality, yet the underlying motivation is a sense of responsibility to respect the privacy of those who use the library, including those individuals who to seek information on sensitive topics. So, although confidentiality is a professional value, the fundamental drive comes from the public administrator’s feeling of responsibility to respect the privacy of community members’ intellectual pursuits, which aligns with the responsibility for democratic accountability (Behn, 2001) discussed in the public administration literature.

**Performance Accountability and Responsibility**

Another area of responsibility and accountability relates to performance, including effective processes and results (Behn, 2001). One participant stated, “There is an enormous responsibility that comes with being in a leadership role, and it is around being accountable.” He asserted that everyone working in the public library needs to perform well and demonstrate the results of that performance transparently with the community. Although this perspective on public library responsibility may not be shared by all who work in libraries, several study participants discussed a similar sense of responsibility and accountability.
The public sector often struggles with providing performance accountability because of a lack of clearly defined benchmarks for performance results (Behn, 2001). In library and information science (LIS), some researchers (e.g., Dugan, Hernon, & Nitecki, 2009) provide guidance on library metrics including inputs, outputs, and outcomes for public libraries. In this study, several directors spoke of their interest in demonstrating performance accountability and determining success. One participant stated, “It [the library] is really successful because basically everybody in the community gets what they want and more from the library, and the staff is very engaged and constantly learning.” Another said, “[The library’s] use is through the roof, and that’s what it’s supposed to be. And that for me is the biggest indicator of how much it’s used. And it’s used 10 times more than it was [when I became director].” These examples speak to a prevailing assumption among study participants that library use is an indicator of performance results and that higher use demonstrates effective performance results of the library. However, LIS literature offers many more ways to measure library performance for accountability.

Behn’s (2001) concept of performance accountability also relates to efficiency in operations, which participants discussed particularly as it relates to personnel. Managerial leaders make decisions that impact the lives and work of library personnel (e.g., hiring, conducting performance appraisals, determining wages, and firing). Because of this authority, they have responsibility to engage with personnel and to do so with integrity (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1998). This responsibility relates to ensuring that employees understand and act in accordance with the obligations and expectations placed upon them by the organization as well as outside entities. One participant stated that, when she was appointed director,

Suddenly I realized that … I had to look at my job from the point of view of all the other people whose jobs were dependent on how well I did mine. I
realized that my responsibility here was bigger than I had imagined; and it
mattered a lot in the everyday lives of a lot of other people in ways that I just
hadn’t counted on and hadn’t thought about.

Another participant stated, “I’m the one [who is] the director of the library, if they (staff) have
issues they’re going to be coming to me. I wouldn’t look at it as they’re working for me. I work
for them.” These comments indicate a sense of responsibility to library personnel because the
director has ultimate decision-making authority as well as is accountable for results.

In some cases, participants spoke with pride about being responsible for these various
commitments. For example, one of them said, “When something goes wrong, everybody in the
group knows that they just need to call me or get me out of whatever I am doing. I’m the one that
is supposed to fight for things; that responsibility is not on them.”

Along with these obligations to oversee issues, participants also mentioned their
responsibility to adapt to and to make changes. One participant stated, “As the director I have a
lot more ability to affect change and help people than most of the people on staff. I think it's
critical to remember that.” This statement not only describes the positional authority that allows
a director to make change but also implies an obligation to be the person who orchestrates
change because the director uniquely has the authority to do so. She described her method as
empowering library personnel, “So I empower others to use their good ideas. I don't have the
best ideas in the library; other people have great ideas and I can make them happen. … But I
have to remember that they … they don't necessarily feel they have the authority. So that is
something that I try to really be mindful of.” She described a circumstance in which library staff
expressed frustration that their supervisors were not listening to their ideas. To address this
concern, the director established idea development teams. These teams encompass personnel
across the organization in order to develop new ideas throughout the library and a widespread understanding of how ideas are implemented. She said, “It took some time, but the ideas that came out of it were phenomenal, and I think really improved library service in the long run.”

Participants also spoke of the responsibility they accept, as the public library director, to ensure a standard for employee performance. For example, one stated, “I make a difference, the [administrative] team makes a difference, the board makes a difference, but it’s those people out on the floor, day to day, long term, that really do—really are the ones that impact the services and how we do it.” Participants discussed how they hold employees accountable for articulated service standards and take corrective action when employees underperform or are resistant meeting job requirements. They mentioned the importance of providing clear expectations for library staff. These expectations often have an aspiring organizational quality, such as excellent service, equal access for all, meaningful impact on library users, and expectations of “the best” effort from staff. One participant spoke of the need to be “crystal clear about expectations and holding [library staff] accountable to deliver on performance.” Certainly, articulating expectations is an important aspect of managerial leadership. In addition, the managerial leader is responsible for assessing library personnel skills, abilities, and performance in order to hold employees accountable for conducting themselves in alignment with organizational values, processes, and results.

**Personnel Development**

Beyond the previously described methods of improving procedures, articulating clear expectations, and correcting performance, participants also discussed the responsibility they have to develop library personnel, their skills, abilities, and performance. Managerial leaders can engage responsibly with employees by using both transactional methods (e.g., job descriptions,
performance evaluations) and transformational methods (e.g., modeling, coaching, and professional development) (Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Orazi, et al., 2013). The transactional methods provide structure and the transformational techniques build skills and capacity over time. Effective managerial leaders use a combination of a hierarchical, transactional approaches and transformational behaviors, such as role modeling, coaching, and professional development. Role modeling involves demonstrating through words and actions the behaviors and values the supervisor wishes to see in the employees. Coaching goes beyond modeling to engage in inquiry, dialogue, and feedback with employees related to specific activities and results. Coaching is beneficial in both developing individual competence and encouraging values congruence among managerial leaders and employees (Dolan & Raich, 2013). These strategies of modeling and coaching are aimed at developing employee competence and outputs, aligning employees with organizational values, and subsequent improve overall organizational performance (Dolan & Raich, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

With regard to serving as a role model and coach for employees, nearly all participants stated that leadership includes developing employee abilities and modeling desired behaviors and values for employees. For example, one participant explained her leadership philosophy as “giving your best; then people are going to succeed in their own work and their work as a group.” Another participant said of leading a change initiative, “I did more in the modeling way …” to influence others to change. When speaking of how she viewed leadership, one participant said, “Definitely a large measure of it is by example ... definitely living it.” These statements suggest alignment with the assertions by Kouzes and Posner (2007) that, when managerial leaders demonstrate their values through actions, it reinforces the values and behaviors they wish to see in others.
In larger organizations, one strategy is to ensure that all supervisors consistently model the values and behaviors that they wish to see adopted by all employees (Petter, 2005). For example, one participant described leveraging the upper management team to model desired behaviors. He said, “there is no way that one person can truly have the ability to monitor and engage with all of the people that it takes to get an organization to move forward; it has to be a collective process.” To this end, he works closely with supervisors on consistency in articulating and modeling organizational values and behaviors in order to spread those throughout the library system.

In addition, several participants described how they motivate personnel to take responsibility by encouraging them to contribute to organizational decision making. One said, “It is a very flat organization where everybody’s input is welcome.” Another summed up her strategy by stating, “I empower others to use their good ideas.” A third explained that she pays attention to “having that [verbal] space open for people to contribute.” These examples indicate the importance of listening to those who work in the library and encouraging them to provide input, make suggestions, and take responsibility for decisions about library operations.

In addition to encouraging engagement through contributions, participants discussed employee professional development as important. For example, when talking about how she defines leadership, one participant said, “I think the other part of leadership is—growing those around you.” Another explained her managerial leadership style as “depending on what the situation is … I think I’m willing to share leadership [with employees] if I see that there’s a demonstrated interest and ability to be a leader.” A third participant stated that she thinks about both what a person needs to learn and when to provide specific opportunities. She said, “Having the ability to know when is the right time to challenge somebody to take on some new leadership
or to get out of their comfort zone is a really important role of a leader.” Similarly, another participant said,

I give people options for activities that I know they’ll appreciate and they’ll jump on and they’ll fly with; and I don’t give people jobs where there’s a likelihood of them doing something that’s mediocre or that they’ll fail. And I’m not expecting just because you have a job title that you’re 100% perfect at that job, no matter what somebody gives you. So it’s more customized what I ask people to do.

These statements about the responsibility of the managerial leader in developing employees indicate a strong commitment to being responsible not just for the basic operational integrity of the library but also for the continued professional development of library personnel.

**Balance of Responsibilities and Accountability**

In considering the various responsibilities of a managerial leader, at times stakeholders may have competing interests, such as library employees who only want to maintain traditional print collections and community members who seek electronic resources. The managerial leader is responsible for prioritizing and/or balancing such interests (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Petter, 2005). In this environment of competing stakeholder interests, public administrators may over-focus on one area of responsibly while being less responsible, or even irresponsible, in another (Petter, 2005). Certainly, participants’ stories of previous directors indicate that public library directors may over-focus, for example, on organizational service responsibilities while not attending to fiscal responsibilities. These circumstances provide cautionary examples that are instructive and may point to the need for public library directors to consider a balance of stakeholder responsibilities as suggested of the public administration literature (Petter, 2005).
Core values inform how a managerial leader chooses among stakeholder responsibilities, such as when participants in this study prioritized openness to change in services rather than an interest in maintaining the status quo. Some study participants spoke of considering broader societal changes and external forces which compelled them to change library services. These decisions created conflicts, at times, with the library board of trustees or library personnel. Such issues illustrate how stakeholder interests can conflict and the public library director must make choices based on their core values. In addition, directors may misjudge priorities among competing stakeholder interests and create difficulties for their libraries and/or themselves as discussed in the following section.

**Accountability, Misconduct, and Mismanagement**

Public library governance often includes a volunteer board of trustees that is appointed by a governing authority with evaluation of this board being locally determined (Arns, 2007; Snyder, 2006). Within this context it is reasonable to assume that some board members are more qualified to provide oversight of public library activities, whereas others are less so. For example, in this study some participants spoke of board members who neither possessed the business administration experience or interest to conduct library fiduciary responsibilities with due diligence. In these situations previous library directors were not held accountable and, in fact, given less oversight than was prudent. In many cases, public agencies also need to undergo external audits and oversight, yet this delays the ability to quickly identify issues of financial mismanagement (Snyder, 2006).

With considerable responsibility and freedom, some directors misuse their authority (Snyder, 2006; Snyder & Hersberger, 1997). In the 1990s Snyder and Hersberger (1997) documented several case studies to illustrate that financial fraud public libraries occurs and that
embezzlement is a common problem for which library boards and librarians need better training, internal controls, and financial management procedures to reduce fraud. The majority of reported incidents involved the directors of public libraries with inefficient operations, unreliable financial reporting, and/or lack of compliance with standard procedures, rules, or laws (Snyder, 2006; Snyder & Hersberger, 1997), which may lead to misconduct.

In addition to intentional fraud or abuse, some library directors are simply incompetent at one or more areas of their complex responsibilities. Particularly in smaller town libraries, the requirements for becoming directors may not include training or education in librarianship, management, or public administration. Most specifically, directors are required to oversee the budget, and this requirement assumes a level of financial training or experience that may not be present. Although library research is scarce in this area, four stories in this study indicate that at least some public library directors lack competence and that, when they leave, the new directors have critical issues to resolve. For example, two participants spoke of choosing to address directly with the board of trustees the issue of the previous directors’ unsatisfactory performance. In both cases, the participants mentioned the importance of transparent communication, integrity with decision making, and responsibility when resolving issues. In these situations, the defining events required them to shift the organizational values to focus on more accountability and responsibility in financial governance. Both participants discussed their commitment to be accountable to the library board and to be good stewards of library funds and resources for which they have been entrusted by the public.

Along with misconduct and incompetence, an issue that arose in this study was that of two participants being falsely accused of misconduct. This type of critical incident is referred to as negative personal experiences (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988) in which the resulting
issues have both personal as well as professional negative implications. These critical incidents involve misperceptions and, because the role of public library director involves autonomy, outside stakeholders responded to false allegations negatively by withdrawing trust. These circumstances are instructive and indicate the vital need for transparency and sufficient documentation that may save a director time and anguish if wrongly accused of misconduct.

**Self-Regulation**

Study participants also shared descriptions of self-regulation in their behaviors. Self-regulation is associated with exerting self-control over thoughts, emotions, or behaviors (Yeow & Martin, 2013) in order to meet an internal standard (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). For example, a library director may choose to control anger in an interaction in order to adhere to a core value of respect in interpersonal interactions. Because self-regulation is prompted by internal desires (Gardner et al., 2005; Vancouver & Day, 2005), values are at the center of these decisions, as well as a desire to maintain behavioral consistency when attempting reach a goal (Vancouver & Day, 2005; Yeow & Martin, 2013). For instance, in the above case, the director may have a broader goal of modeling respectful interpersonal interactions for library personnel, which required self-regulation to be respectful when any rude individual makes the director angry. Thus, individuals choose to regulate their thoughts, emotions, or behaviors based on core values and goals they wish to attain.

This self-mediating process also is associated with positive organizational outcomes and increased managerial leadership competency (Yeow & Martin, 2013). For example, in a longitudinal study of work teams, the team leaders who were instructed on self-regulation activities, such as exerting extra effort, were rated higher by employees in terms of their own satisfaction and that with the leaders’ work. Team leader self-evaluations for those with self-
regulation training and practice rated themselves higher in performance effectiveness and satisfaction than those in the control groups. In addition, the groups with team leaders who self-regulated behavior achieved higher financial performance relative to the control groups (Yeow & Martin, 2013). When individuals self-regulate thoughts, emotions, and/or behaviors, they may focus more on the quality and effectiveness of their work.

In this study, participants described self-regulation as a mechanism to maintain responsibility as well as to be responsive to stakeholders when seeking to achieve stated goals. For example, one participant described hosting two or three lunches a week for the first few years of his directorship with community leaders in order to discuss library priorities and gain their input on the strategic planning process. He described how he regulated his urge to describe details about the library in order to listen to and understand their perspectives on community needs. Another participant described her philosophy on the responsibility of the library director in the community in this way:

A leader of a public library today has to be a diplomat. They have to be a pragmatist and they have to be able to compromise. They have to care about their public, and they have to know what their public is interested in in terms of access. And they have to be ready to partner all around in their community, to link the library to other institutions that are of high value in the community, whether it’s the school, a museum, non-profits, or all of those. The library director has to be ready to say, the library fits in here, this is how the library fits in. And it’s not in a secondary way, but as an equal way or primary way with those other institutions.
Some participants described their role as director in terms of how they behave within the community because they are perceived as the persona of the library. One participant said, “I remember a colleague shared an article … that said that a [Chief Executive Officer] needs to remember [that the] microphone is always on and it is always amplified.” This concept informs how the participant conducts himself. He said, “I was probably funnier but a little bit more on the edge when I was younger. I look back on some of the things I did; I probably wouldn’t do them today.” Whereas this was spoken by an urban library director, the director of the smallest rural library stated something similar: “Especially [as] the director, you’ve got to watch [your behavior] for PR reasons. The library is you, and a reflection of you. If you’re rude to someone, or you act on your first impulse - you’ve got to be able to control that.” Another participant explained her decision not to be involved in other leadership positions within her community. She said, “I strongly believe that a library director needs to be apolitical in the community. If I clutter up my agenda with memberships and political activities, then I’m not able to do for the library what I might do otherwise.” This awareness of the library director’s persona in the community was noted by four participants who serve in communities of different sizes and parts of the country. In each case the overarching theme was the recognition that they are responsible for regulating their rhetoric and behaviors in order to represent the library well to external stakeholders.

Self-regulation involves controlling one’s state of mind (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) as well as behaviors (Vancouver & Day, 2005). In order to self-regulate, the individual needs to be self-aware (Goleman et al., 2002) and mindful of the present situation as well as reflective about values priorities. In discussing self-regulations, some participants identified mindfulness at work as important, and specifically as a motivation for deliberative and self-
regulating behavior in consideration of library stakeholders. For example, one participant said of mindfulness, “It makes me pay attention to what I'm doing and how I'm impacting other people.”

In addition to mindfulness, participants discussed reflection as another activity they used to consider issues, weigh responsibilities, and make decisions. Although not all participants pointed out the specific techniques of mindfulness, reflection, and self-regulation, each told stories that indicated that he/she reflects on situations, deliberates using core values, and exhibits self-regulating behaviors in order to be responsible to stakeholders.

**Purposeful Nature of Responsibility**

As with other managerial leaders, public library directors uniquely have responsibility and accountability to a multitude of stakeholders within and outside of the organization. Petter’s (2005) definition of responsibility includes the terms “obligation” and “expectation,” which connote a requirement rather than an opportunity. In addition, he states that these obligations can be either self-imposed or expected by other stakeholders. Within this context, responsibility may be assumed as *having to* conduct oneself in a particular way for others or *wanting to* for self-motivating reasons. The first type of responsibility is externally imposed accountability, whereas an intrinsically motivated sense of responsibility is shaped by core values and a sense of purpose and meaning.

In this study participants spoke of their responsibilities with a sense of purpose rather than burden. Theorists (e.g., Badaracco, 2013; Cameron, 2011) discuss the purposeful nature and aspirational quality of managerial leadership. Cameron (2011) suggests that some responsible managerial leaders believe in the Aristotelian concept that humans are inclined to moral goodness. He asserts that this intrinsic motivation compels some managerial leaders to assume responsibilities that positively impact a diverse array of stakeholders. Cameron’s theory echoes
the tone of the interviews in which the study participants mentioned how their core values, specifically those related to societal enhancement (e.g., benevolence and universalism), motivate them to assume responsibility for meeting the requirements of various stakeholders.

Based on his analysis of case studies of managerial leaders in the private sector, Badaracco (2013) concluded that responsible managerial leaders respond to uncertainty and disruptive challenges by exerting their best effort and by striving to do excellent work in the face of adversity. He goes so far as to suggest that some managerial leaders even seek out disruption as motivation for them to strive and achieve success by overcoming obstacles. By seeking and surmounting struggles in work situations, these managerial leaders increase their feelings of purpose and meaning in their work.

Study participants discussed an interest in striving to excel with the objective of improving processes and results for stakeholders. Thus, managerial leaders are both responsive to stakeholders and responsible for the processes and results of the organization within the context of multiple stakeholders (Pless, Maak, & Jongh, 2011). These goals have an aspirational quality of striving to improve work situations, increase employee abilities, and, ultimately, benefit individuals’ lives. For example, one director indicated, “the library [is] the place where [individuals have] every opportunity to learn, to explore, enjoy life, to improve. [It is] very open and available.

Whereas responsibility and accountability to multiple stakeholders may be considered by some as burdensome, the participants spoke of their work in terms of satisfaction, being rewarding, and its purposeful nature. Researchers (e.g., Wrzesniewski, 2012) describe passion at work as relating to work that has meaning for the individual and results in pleasure. This description is shared by many of the study participants. One director stated, “I’m at the end of
my career. It’s been 33 years, but every moment … has been completely engaging and energizing.” Others expressed similar appreciation for their work, including how a sense of purpose and meaning manifests as passion. One participant said, “It is a real joy and pleasure to continue to grow and learn and develop as a leader. Actually it has been really rewarding.” Another participant summed up her work by stating, “I have just loved every part of it. I love the people that I work with. I love the work that I do. I love the knowledge that I have gained. I love my community. … It is the best job.” One participant simply said, “I really love what I do.” This type of job satisfaction was echoed by all of the participants.

Conclusion

When discussing their roles as public library directors, study participants emphasized responsibility and accountability as primary motivations for their decisions and actions. It is also important to note that thinking about and articulating responsibilities and accountabilities are only starting points. Through actions that are congruent with articulated values, a managerial leader demonstrates authenticity to others (Freeman & Auster, 2011). Participants spoke of the importance of congruence between values and action for various stakeholders, including to be models for personnel and to demonstrate integrity with external stakeholders. As one participant explained, “It is not just enough to be good and know what you are about. You have to live the values and have to hold yourself accountable to them.” This example points out the importance of acting upon values and further hints at why acting in accordance of values is salient.

Study participants identified several stakeholders and responsibilities that are, at times, in conflict with each other. In considering these conflicting stakeholder issues, values also are used. They described using techniques, such as mindfulness, reflection, and self-regulation to make
choices rather than spontaneously acting on their impulses. They mentioned a sense of purpose and meaning that compels them to be responsible because of the potential impact of their work on community members and library personnel. In this process they are informed by values related to enhancing the lives of others. These values deepen their sense of responsibility and purpose in their work. The following chapter discusses stakeholder responsibility and accountability as it relates to core values and defining moments, and addresses how this study contributes to the research in LIS and organizational management as well as suggests further research on these topics.
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CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

Human values are deeply held beliefs that influence how individuals think, make decisions, and behave (Rokeach, 1973). These values include core values, which are a set of enduring principles (Schwartz, 1996; 2003; 2011; 2012), that inform an individual’s conduct, choices, and desired end-states (Rokeach, 1973). Because values are so deeply held, at times they are subconscious and used tacitly; however, at times, individuals consciously use them to guide actions and/or achieve desired goals. As this dissertation demonstrates, regardless of the size of library, staff, and community served, as well as the educational background of the directors, participants articulated common core values, defining experiences, and responsibilities. The study shows how the participants navigated critical events in ways that clarified values and defined how they are likely to respond to work situations in the future. In addition, this study reveals how the role of director influenced study participants to assume responsibilities relevant to various stakeholders. Against this background, this chapter places the study findings within the context of related literature, suggests future research, and discusses how this study contributes to the relevant research literature.

Personal Values

Previous studies of the personal values of librarians used survey instruments to identify personal values priorities. For instance, in one study (Bryan, 1952) public librarians indicated a priority for the arts, music, and literacy over scientific and sociology. In other studies, librarians rated personal values of a theoretical, aesthetic (Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981), and social (Igwe, 1981) nature higher than they did economic, political (Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981), and
religious (Igwe, 1981) values. In addition, values associated with self-respect and freedom were
considered more important than those related to comfort, pleasure, and security (Yerkey, 1980).
While the studies referenced may be helpful in imagining the personality of a typical librarian in
the mid to late 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the scant research on personal values provides little definitive
understanding of specific core values, their relation to professional values, and their current
application in libraries. This study fills that gap by addressing these topics.

This study is the first published study in library and information science (LIS) to use the
Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQIV) (Schwartz, 1996) to identify core values of
managerial leaders (library directors). This instrument, comprised of 10 basic human
motivational values, reveals three specific common motivations among the participants: self-
direction, benevolence, and universalism. Self-direction (e.g., independent thought, privacy,
curiosity, and learning) (Schwartz, 1996; 2003; 2011; 2012) aligns with the professional values
(Gorman, 2000) of intellectual freedom, privacy, and learning and literacy. Benevolence
(enhancing the welfare of people in frequent contact (e.g., family, friends, community)) and
universalism, (the understanding, appreciation, and tolerance for all people and nature) relate to
the values of service and equity of access (Gorman, 2000). Thus, although the PVQIV was
designed for more general use, participants identified values through use of the instrument that
align with service, equal access, intellectual freedom, and other values of the library profession.

Along with identifying core values using the PVQIV, this study used narrative inquiry to
probe life stories that clarified values. Similar to other research on life stories (e.g., Bennis &
Thomas, 2007; Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Flanagan, 2002; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001), in this
study, participants self-identify core values they use in their work by discussing formative
experiences, work situations, and how the role of public library director has changed their values
priorities. Through this mosaic of stories and descriptions, a pattern of commonly held and specific core values emerged. Participants described values of honesty and integrity, respect, fairness and equity, loyalty, learning and adaptability, and responsibility, regardless of their background and level and type of education. The values of respect, loyalty, and responsibility are associated with benevolence (Schwartz, 1996; 2003; 2011; 2012), the values of equity and fairness with universalism, and the value of learning with self-direction. Because study participants came to libraries from various backgrounds, not always having a graduate degree in library and information science, this research indicates that these participants are drawn to work in libraries because the profession’s values align with their core values, formed in youth and broadened through library work.

**Further Research on Core Values Identification**

Further LIS research with the PVQIV might indicate the extent to which other library managerial leaders share the motivational values of benevolence, self-direction, and universalism, and the more specific core values of honesty and integrity, respect, fairness and equity, loyalty, learning and adaptability, and responsibility. Specifically, the PVQIV could be administered to directors and other librarians across multiple countries, with various ethnic groups, with those of different generations, and with those serving in different types of libraries and in management positions within libraries. However, such research would have to take into account national cultures and other issues. Such an administration of the PVQIV in LIS, grounded in national cultures and related perhaps to the GLOBAL leadership research (House, Javidan, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002), could indicate if these three motivational values, found in common among the study participants are more broadly shared across the profession. Similarly, a librarian-specific values identification instrument could be developed that may affirm to what
extent values, such as integrity and respect, are shared across the sectors previously identified for PVQIV research. That instrument might be linked to the instrument used in the GLOBAL research.

This study's finding about core values aligning with professional values raises questions about how individuals decide to join, and to remain, in the library profession. Specifically, are certain individuals who hold the strong values of self-direction, benevolence, and universalism more likely to choose work in libraries, or is the profession a more complex tapestry of individuals and values? The fact that study participants indicate their formative values align with the values of the profession indicates that professional training may need less focus on adoption of professional values and more emphasis on how personal, core values may aid library managerial leaders in upholding professional values in practice.

This study affirms the importance of investigating the core values of managerial leaders in order to improve how those values are used in practice. Several directors’ defining moments related to a values conflict of loyalty to individual staff and responsibility for organizational outcomes. In all cases, the participants prioritized their responsibility to the community and taxpayers over individual personnel loyalties. With many of the participants, this was a defining decision, which suggests that others in directorships may face this conflict of loyalties. Further research is needed to indicate to what extent internal and external loyalties to stakeholders are major values conflicts in public libraries and how these conflicts are resolved.

**Public Library Director Core Values in Practice**

Whereas previous studies identified librarian personal values using values tests (Bryan, 1952; Douglass, 1957; Igwe, 1981; Yerkey, 1980), this research extends beyond values identification to understand how personal values influence work and how the work experiences
of public library directors inform their values priorities. This study concludes that core values
play a primary role in informing the work of study participants, whether they are consciously
aware of and intentionally using them, or whether these values operate at a sub-conscious or
intuitive level of influence. The assertion that personal values are either instilled at a deeper level
or reprioritized by defining moments (Bennis & Thomas, 2007) is supported by this study. Study
participants described critical incidents and defining experiences as either instilling core values
established in formative years or shifting values priorities.

Related to formative values, such as honesty and respect, this study shows that
participants apply these values across the organization, in many contexts, and with a variety of
library stakeholders. For example, participant stories revealed they place a high priority on
respect when they interact with personnel, governing authorities, and other stakeholders. In
addition, they instruct their employees to interact respectfully with library users; they establish
policies directed toward respectful library use and conduct, and they are respectful when
engaging in conflict resolution. Some participants discussed how intellectual freedom, the right
for any person to pursue any subject, is fundamentally an issue of respect for every individual’s
intellectual inquiry process. Thus, respect manifests in many ways, including tolerance,
particularly in the managerial leadership position, in which public library directors are
responsible for engaging with a broad array of stakeholders with whom they do not always agree.

Participants identified honesty as a value instilled in childhood and applied in their role as
public library director through integrity, transparency, and accountability. Jordan (2012) states
that integrity in public library directorship is synonymous with honesty and involves consistently
following the professions’ code of ethics and being a role model for others. She views
accountability and credibility as separate attributes. However, in this study the directors
discussed honesty, integrity, transparency, and accountability as conceptually linked, indicating that, although honesty may be a personal value, they apply honesty in work through consistent and cohesive words and behaviors (integrity), open reporting practices (transparency), and rigorous evaluation and reporting (accountability). Participants discussed these interrelated values of honesty, integrity, accountability, and transparency as one notion that applies at various levels throughout their organizations and in their communities.

In previous research, public library directors, while not specifically asked about values, identified integrity as a primary personal attribute (Hernon, Powell, & Young, 2003; Jordan, 2012) for public library directors. However, these studies did not examine how directors practice integrity, why it is important, or where they learn the skills and importance of integrity. This study contributes to the literature by identifying, through participant stories, how integrity relates to the formative value of honesty and truthfulness as well as congruency in doing what they say they are going to do, behaving ethically, being transparent about library activities, and being accountable to multiple stakeholders. Several participants stated that they conduct their work with transparency and accountability in order to act with integrity and be responsible to various stakeholders. Some participants described systems they established to demonstrate accountability, while others provided instructive stories of situations in which they chose to be honest and direct in difficult situations. Each of these aspects of integrity requires more exploration to understand fully how integrity is integrated into the work of public library directors and others in the library profession.

In addition, this study raises awareness of issues when integrity, honesty, and accountability are not present in the public library setting. Previous research (Snyder, 2006; Snyder & Hersberger, 1997) reveals situations in which library personnel mishandle funds for
personal gain, with the conclusion that financial and other misconduct may be prominent in the public library setting. This study, while not confirming this conclusion, identifies integrity issues, such as mismanagement of funds, resources, and staff as indicated by four participants, three of whom stated that integrity issues of previous directors were critical incidents that prompted defining moments. Although the study population was small, the fact that 25% of the participants described significant issues with previous library directors indicates an area for more research. Certainly, the combination of stories highlighting the importance of integrity and the lack of it raise questions about the extent of integrity issues in public libraries. Indeed, if misconduct is an issue and identifiable on a large scale, the profession needs to consider policy implications, training curriculum, and ethical accountability measures.

This study also found that participants shared common values conflicts, including situations in which they chose integrity for library services over loyalty to employees. When employees were not performing as the director instructed, participants described various methods to resolve the issues, yet ultimately when employees were not performing satisfactorily, they either left or were fired. Employee issues took months or years to resolve, and the participants described them as defining conflicts because they, ultimately, chose an ongoing commitment to organizational integrity and responsibilities, specifically to the overarching priority of providing high quality services and/or accountability to the public.

Study narratives highlight how values are reinforced or reexamined by defining moments. This process gave the study participants a stronger sense of commitment and confidence, which confirms other research showing that defining moments increase the hardiness and values commitment of managerial leaders (Bennis & Thomas, 2007). During the narrative inquiry process, for example, several directors described initiating change and persisting even when they
encountered resistance. When they were new to the directorship, or responded to external changes in the environment, study participants mentioned being responsible for meeting the needs of community members and leading organizational change. Resistance from library personnel and other stakeholders created values conflicts in which self-directed library directors chose changes in services over loyalty to employees.

In the Schwartz values model (1996; 2003; 2011; 2012) self-direction and openness to change are contrary to more conservative values of maintaining tradition, conforming to societal priorities, and maintaining security. While all participants scored high in self-direction, they scored conservative values low, with tradition being the lowest. Further probing through narrative inquiry indicates that, although the participants initiated change within their organizations and in the communities, some regulate their efforts with self-control due to a sense of responsibility to a wide variety of stakeholders in the community and their public persona as the library director. Thus, while some values are core, participants, to varying degrees, described balancing their core values preferences with those related to maintaining relationships with stakeholders. The participants described this as a responsibility a public library director undertakes to self-regulate when considering the needs of library stakeholders.

**Further Research on Core Values and Work**

Further research is needed to understand how work experiences expand an individual’s commitment to core values, and how these values evolve within the work environment. Although this study points to strategies, such as reflection, insight, and persistence, that contribute to meaningful understanding of and commitment to core values in various situations, more study is needed to understand fully this complex human process. For example, research could ask participants to use diaries or calendars to record values use, with the intent of documenting
values development within the work context. These daily reflections could also reveal other sources of values prioritizations such as influence of mentor values on the values of participants.

Longitudinal analysis of core values of first-year public library directors might also shed light on this complex process of values strengthening and reprioritization. These probing methods over a longer timeframe or with more in-depth life-story documentation may clarify under what circumstances one chooses to commit to existing values at a deeper level and when one chooses to shift values priorities.

Further study of personal and professional values use in public libraries may also include case study methods. Using case studies, investigators gather and examine evidence from various data sources, including other members of the organization. These processes allow for an examination of multiple perspectives within the organization, including those of personnel, board members, library users, and other stakeholders. Through case studies, an investigator could probe these perspectives and incorporate written communications, policies, and other organizational documentation, and observation. In this way, case studies offer a richer portrait of what and how personal values are being used and reduce data bias associated with self-interest and self-protection during participant reporting.

**Professional Values Priorities**

As with librarians in other studies (Burd, 2003; Dole, Huruch, & Koehler, 2000; Foster & McMenemy, 2012), study participants identified service delivery as the primary professional value and purpose of the library. Whereas the previous studies used surveys to determine this professional values priority, this study’s use of narrative inquiry illustrates how public library directors frame the professional value of service as it relates to other professional values. For example, all participants articulated a strong sense of responsibility to provide high quality
service to those using the library, and several stated the importance of ensuring equitable service to all people in the community. Yet, study interviews revealed that underlying the stories of library service was the deeper motivational value, namely the professional value of enabling “every person in the community serviced to continue her or his education, to become more knowledgeable, and to live the life of the mind in the way in which she or he chooses” (Gorman, 2000, p. 29). For example, one participant summed up the primary motivation of library service in this way, “I work in libraries because I believe they change people’s lives. Everything we do is directed towards that overall goal of making libraries an essential part of people’s ability to live, to prosper, to grow intellectually, and to be in a better place than they would be if we didn’t have them [libraries].” This example represents the sentiment of all of the participants. In essence, providing high quality service is important as a desired behavioral value (Rokeach, 1973) that is used to achieve the more aspirational desired end-state of providing learning experiences that improve people’s lives.

Along with the professional value of service, in two stories community members challenged library materials, which compelled participants to defend intellectual freedom. Yet, the underlying value each participant described was the importance of free and open access so that anyone could learn what he or she intrinsically seeks to know. Participants described intellectual freedom as the mechanism to ensure intrinsic learning as the end result. Thus, the personal and professional value of intrinsically motivated learning compelled the directors to uphold values, such as effective, friendly service, intellectual freedom, privacy, and other professional values. Study participants considered the long-term impact of the work they do in terms of learning that can improve, and in some cases, transform those in the community. To this end, they promote and defend professional values to further each unique community member’s
interest and intellectual needs. Thus, literacy and learning (Gorman, 2000) was the underlying professional value motivating the directors in this study, whereas other professional values, such as equity of access, privacy, and intellectual freedom (Gorman, 2000), were described as critical in achieving this deeply held and aspirational personal and professional value.

**Further Research on Library Professional Values**

Further research could clarify the extent to which the hierarchy of professional values identified in this study is shared by other library practitioners, both managers and non-managers. For example, rather than simply listing the core values for participants to rank (as done in Burd, 2003; Dole, Hurych, & Koehler, 2000; Foster & McMenemy, 2012), researchers might provide a set of scenarios depicting different library situations in which specific values are implicit. Participants would rank these scenarios from most to least salient, and the values in these scenarios could be decoded to identify the values priorities.

**Defining Moments**

Previous researchers have investigated defining moments of organizational leaders, such as in business (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Badaracco, 1997; Bennis & Thomas, 2002, 2007; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001) and in higher education (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Flanagan, 2002). These studies emphasize how critical incidents prompt defining moments by either affirming core values at a deeper level or challenging those values in ways that result in changes to core values priorities. This study expands on the research on defining life experiences by analyzing how managerial leaders navigate them. The goal of this analysis is to explore the components of defining moments and identify paths from incident identification to resolution in order to ascertain what and when the defining change occurred as well as how the individuals’ core values informed that process.
Individuals presumably face critical life situations that do not prompt transformative change. This study illuminates participant activities and thought processes that make these situations defining, rather than simply commonplace interactions and experiences. Specifically, participants use reflection and insight to gain a deeper understanding and new meaning that informs identity and purpose. The analysis of the 24 stories confirms other research (Avolio & Luthans, 2006; Mackoff & Wenet, 2001) about how to navigate defining experiences. In addition, this study introduces new ways of viewing defining moments, as either realized in retrospect, discovered through insight problem-solving, or navigated through conflict resolution.

This study confirms De Long’s (2012) finding that library managerial leaders identify critical incidents primarily relate to job changes and subordinate staff performance problems. Of this study’s defining moments, 54% occurred within the first year of taking a new position and 29% of critical incidents involving personnel issues. In addition, participants confirm that they face critical issues related to managing change; this finding aligns with other research (e.g., Cope & Watts, 2000). In addition, participants described critical incidents related to challenges to library materials, library building projects, residual issues of previous directors, and, in one case, a natural disaster in the community. These findings point to the variety and complexity of responsibilities and issues that public library directors face.

In response to critical incidents, the study participant discussed resolving the issues in similar ways to those identified in other research (Mackoff & Wenet, 2001). Specifically, managerial leaders respond to critical incidents with reflection that leads to:

- discovery of new meaning and new perception
- prioritization of values that instills a sense of purpose
- confidence and self-efficacy for future situations
This study contributes to the literature on defining moments by identifying three distinct paths of defining moments: (1) a prompt and surprising moment of clarity; (2) a dilemma that requires extensive reflection over months or years prior to an insight; and (3) delayed action due to complex relational conflicts and the need to coach or negotiate in order to achieve resolution. Within each of these responses, the components of reflection, insight, action, confidence, and commitment occurred; however, the path varied. This analysis also provides techniques for reaching insight (e.g., discussion with trusted confidantes, research, and breaks in reflection, such as through rest or sleep). In addition, two participants discuss how formative experiences in libraries instilled a value so deeply that, when faced with opposition to their position on intellectual freedom, they felt courage to persistence with their stance. These and other study findings provide further understanding of how the three paths (moments of clarity, insight problem-solving, and complex challenges involving relational conflicts) lead to defining resolutions.

Further Research on Defining Moments

Further research is needed to determine the extent to which managerial leaders commonly use moments of clarity, insight problem-solving, and complex challenges involving relational values conflicts, as described in chapter four. Do these three methods apply in libraries other than public libraries? Do managerial leaders use additional methods? To what extent are the commitments to the values consistently followed? How does persistence in pursuing a chosen path relate to courage at times of stakeholder scrutiny?

In addition, further research could clarify how various critical incidents and life experiences result in more confidence, values clarity, and purpose. Through an understanding of the various components and paths of defining life experiences, managerial leaders in libraries
may be more alert and aware of these situations and intentional about how to resolve them. The identification of paths to insight and the role of courage, for example, may assist other professionals in leveraging these techniques to attain more success with critical incidents.

**Managerial Leadership**

This study delved into values that are specific to the role of the public library director. These organizational leaders are responsible and accountable to a broad array of stakeholders, including employees, who affect or are affected by the organization (Freeman, 1984). In considering the common themes related to how the participants approach personnel, several leadership theories are relevant. For example, *servant leadership* (Greenleaf, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2002) relates to, among other things, the managerial leader’s responsibility to understand the developmental needs of personnel and use modeling, training, and improvement of work conditions to support them in working effectively. In addition, the servant leader articulates inspirational values and a vision that influences workers to excel as they accomplish the organizational mission and move beyond self-interest. Study participants described modeling behaviors based on values they prioritize for personnel, listening to and encouraging employee contributions, and leveraging opportunities to challenge and improve employee abilities. Several study participants also discussed the role of leadership as articulating a vision and clearly articulating organizational values.

*Authentic leadership* (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) may apply as managerial leaders use their self-awareness of values and their commitment to integrity to act with authenticity. Freeman and Auster (2011) posit that acting authentically requires knowing one’s values and acting on them; this involves being responsible in relationships with stakeholders, understanding how the past informs the self, and clarifying future aspirations. In this study, several participants
reported that reflecting on values, such as integrity, is foundational to their managerial leadership style. All participants discussed how being in the study benefited them by allowing them to reflect on their values, the meaning of their work, and the way they work. Further research is needed to understand how the use of personal values by managerial leaders in libraries relates to the theoretical notions of authentic leadership. To what extent do theories, such as servant leadership and authentic leadership capture the views of managerial leaders as they consider subject of leadership? In addressing this question, further research should consider the following section.

**Responsible Leadership Theory**

Although servant leadership and authentic leadership theories involve strategies that participants described as using in their work, these theories center primarily on internal organizational activities between leader and follower (Pless & Maak, 2011). However, study participants described a sense of community responsibility as the underlying motivation for many of their activities, including their interaction with library personnel. They also expressed feelings of responsibility to stakeholders outside the organization. For this reason, the theory of responsible leadership (RL) may be better suited for further investigation with library managerial leaders.

RL is an emerging leadership theory among business and academic leadership theorists in response to unethical leadership, which has resulted in environmental crises, such as oil spills; social crises (e.g., in sweat shop industries); and economic crises (e.g., 2007-2009 economic recession) (Freeman & Auster, 2011; Pless & Maak, 2011).\(^7\) Whereas other leadership theories focus on how the managerial leader supports personnel, such as employee skills development, \(^7\)In 2010, the first international conference on responsible leadership was hosted in Pretoria, South Africa (Pless & Maak, 2011). A special issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics* (2011) was devoted to RL; and a recent monograph addresses the subject (Badaracco, 2013).
RL defines organizational personnel as only one stakeholder group among many. RL is value-centered and focused on relationships and outcomes for a broad array of stakeholders impacted by a business; these stakeholders include company shareholders, customers, and the community served, as well as groups representing broader social and environmental impacts (Pless & Maak, 2011). In other words, the managerial leader’s role is to coordinate and cultivate outside relationships, while focusing on growing the talent within their organization. In RL, the managerial leader makes intentional and principled decisions based on values, and uses influence and power to pursue meaningful ends that are motivated by societal values, such as environmental sustainability and community well-being (Pless & Maak, 2011).

Within the narrative inquiry process, participants described the value of responsibility as integral to how they engage with various stakeholders (e.g., library personnel, library users, governing authorities, community members and organizations, taxpayers). Participants stated that, in their role as public library director, they consider the interests and needs of these various stakeholders when they make library decisions. In addition, they discussed conflicts among stakeholders and the need for self-regulation in interacting with them. Pless and Maak (2011) suggest a balance among responsibilities toward stakeholders in order to manage competing interests. In this study, participants identified the motivational value of responsibility to a multitude of stakeholders without clear delineation of priorities among them.

**Further Research on RL in Libraries**

This study raises awareness of the crucial role that accountability and responsibility play in the work of public library directors. RL offers opportunity for investigation, including research to identify the full range of stakeholders that affect and are affected by libraries, and which stakeholder responsibilities are priorities in various contexts. In addition, further research
might reveal to what extent the RL theory aligns with activities and motivations of library managerial leaders. Do these leaders portray leadership within the context of values and stakeholders? If so, how does this approach manifest in their work?

Further research also is needed to clarify how library managerial leaders and their employees perceive their organizational responsibilities and activities. For example, library directors and personnel could engage with instruments used in other RL studies, such as surveys that reflect participant views of managerial leaders’ actions, perceptions of managerial leaders’ ethical and proactive behaviors toward external stakeholders, employee pride in and satisfaction with the organization, and employee retention patterns (Doh, Stumpf, & Tyman, 2011). This research could further expand on this study’s conclusion that public library directors consider their responsibilities to various stakeholders to be a fundamental motivating aspect of their work.

**Summary of Research Agenda**

Further research may determine if the common themes of core values, critical incidents, and defining moments shared by the study participants apply more broadly to other public library directors. In addition, the topic may have broader interest for directors of academic libraries, others working in public administration, and managerial leaders in the private sector. Specifically, the values identifications from the PVQIV (Schwartz, 2012) combined with narrative inquiry provide a rich context in which to understand how managerial leaders use values at work and how work changes their values priorities. Additional research applying these methodologies may indicate the extent to which others in the library profession, such as new librarians, select these values rather than values motivations of tradition, security, conformity, or self-enhancement values, such as achievement or power. Given that new librarians are entering into a new profession, this research could clarify if barriers are likely to be prevalent with them.
In addition, the study results relied on the self-reporting of the participants both through the self-selected results of the PVQIV and the narrative inquiry process, which produces a snapshot in time of their consideration of their values, defining moments, and responsible managerial leadership behavior. The results could be probed by means of case studies that provide data from different stakeholders, such as employees, governing authorities, and others in the community.

Because the organizational leader’s values influence the organizational values and culture (Schein, 2010), further research could determine how specific values, such as integrity, respect, and responsibility, are adopted and applied by personnel and embedded into the library culture. In addition, such research would contribute to the understanding of how public library directors introduce, maintain, and evaluate organizational values among personnel in an effort to solidify their preferred organizational culture. This research could probe the various values within an organization as they relate to the culture of the library.

**Conclusion**

Public library directors in this study prioritize benevolence, self-direction, and universalism. Schwartz (1996; 2003; 2011; 2012) defines these basic motivational values to include:

- enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent contact
- independent thought and action
- understanding, appreciating, and protecting the welfare of all people

This study contributes to the values research by illustrating how these values manifest in work. Specifically, while Schwartz (2012) indicates these values are motivationally distinct, in library practice they are interrelated as the motivational value of enhancing the intellectual (self-
regulation) welfare of others includes library users and personnel (benevolence) and everyone in the community (universalism). This desired end-state combines the three distinct motivational values identified by Schwartz, thus extending the understanding of the interplay between these values.

The value of enhancing the intellectual abilities of others instills a sense of passion as library directors strive to meet various stakeholder learning interests, including those of library users and employees. Some directors break rules and overlook lost book fees to promote intellectual pursuits. Others strongly defend intellectual freedom and equal access to information for all. Findings indicate that, although these public administrators feel responsibility and accountability, the motivation is intrinsic and grounded in a human-centered perspective of encouraging learning for all.

Public library directors face challenges and navigate complex issues to provide for a broad array of stakeholders. Understanding values use and development is integral to effective work. Through the reflective process of identifying values with both the PVQIV and recollections of defining moments, participants gained a stronger understanding of their values formation and development. They expressed gratitude for being in the study and having the opportunity to reflect more deeply and find more meaning from their values.

Study findings have implications for library directors, regardless of the stage in their careers. The life stories reveal several stages in the position in which values are tested and leveraged. Particularly when new to a directorship or facing change, critical incidents are likely to occur. These events challenge values and aid in the director defining the core values that matter most for them and the organization. These situations clarify the director’s sense of self and identity within the context of various library stakeholders.
As directors continue throughout their tenure in public libraries they may expand the use of formative values, such as integrity, respect, and loyalty. These values are operationalized with stakeholders through techniques of reflection, mindfulness, and self-regulation. This intentional use of these behavioral values improves effectiveness and self-confidence. At the same time, directors focus on end-goal oriented values (equality, fairness, life-long learning) to inspire a keen sense of meaning, purpose, and passion in their work and the organization.

By the end of their careers library directors who reflect on core values and defining moments find this mental exercise elicits a deeper understanding of the contributions they have made to the library organization, the profession, and their communities. Participants in this study who were reaching retirement stated that they may have managed situations by reacting to various circumstances. It was not until a comprehensive reflection on these years of effort that they discovered the patterns and deeper contributions of their work. Yet throughout these stages in their careers values tacitly guided principled decision-making.

Core values are fundamental to the way individuals perform their duties because they influence perceptions, decisions, and behavior. Because values are inherent some individuals may use them unconsciously or without focus. This study raises awareness of the importance of being mindful and intentional about values use at work. By reflecting on core values and defining moments, others may gain deeper understanding of the motivations that inform, and indeed inspire, them in their work.

As managerial leaders deal with substantive issues, such as those associated with managing change, and as communities select directors to move the library forward, the library profession needs to acknowledge that values are an important component of individuals and their conduct; after all, values are critical motivators of behaviors and attitudes. For this reason, it is
critical that future research goes beyond the study of director attitudes, beliefs, and competencies (see chapter one). As shown in this study, it is also important to identify how directors come to hold the values they do, how their value priorities influence their behavior, attitudes, and actions, and how work experiences modify values over time.

This research can be cast in the context of the larger literature on values and extend the insights gained from those studies. For example, public library directors, as public administrators, navigate various stakeholder responsibilities and accountabilities of their positions. With the increased emphasis on authenticity and responsible leadership in other professions, the motivation of enhancing the welfare of others offers a values perspective to be explored further in the organizational development literature.

Managerial leaders in all professions face challenges to values as well as conflicts among them. As this research emphasizes, organizational leaders may use mindfulness and self-regulation to reduce the impact of challenging situations, as well as reflection, insight, courage, and persistence to resolve values conflicts in organizations. These techniques require additional study in order to understand fully how they may be leveraged by organizational leaders regardless of industry.
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Hello,

Perhaps you have been alerted by <mutual colleague> that I would be contacting you.

I am a doctoral candidate at Simmons College conducting a dissertation on the core values of public library directors.

You have been identified as one of only 15 library directors in the country to participate in this study because of your demonstrated success as a public library managerial leaders (including Star Library recognition).

Process
- Values questionnaire (10-15 minutes)
- Reflection on core values report and questions for interview (10+ minutes)
- Telephone Interview – Your stories about your core values at work (60 minutes or less)
- Review and expansion on your stories as you wish (optional)

I will call you within the next week to discuss the study and any questions you may have about participation. If you are interested, we will schedule the telephone interview at that time as well as logistics for the values questionnaire.

Please reply to this e-mail to let me know best days and times for a brief, 10 minute conversation about the study. Alternatively, you could provide the contact of your assistant with whom I can schedule our phone meetings.

More on the research – Benefits & Risks to You
In previous research on values, leaders indicate that participating in the research helped them find deeper meaning in their work because of the opportunity to step back and reflect on their leadership activities, defining moments, and their core values.

Along with this benefit, your participation in this research will lead to findings that may be instructive to others in the library profession. Although research in other fields shows a clear link between values and organizational effectiveness, the library field is lacking in this area and your participation will help to highlight if and how core values inform public library leadership.

The process will include an in-depth telephone interview in which we explore your core values. To prepare for this informal conversation, you will receive guiding questions along with your custom values profile based on the results of your values questionnaire. The interview itself will be approximately 60 minutes in length and include you telling stories about defining moments in your work.
Your confidentiality is of the utmost importance and several processes will be in place so that your contributions will remain anonymous.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without any reciprocity.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you to discuss this study and your interest in participating. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharon Morris
Doctoral Candidate, Simmons College
Dear <Name of colleague>.

Hope this e-mail finds you well. As you may know, I am working on a dissertation and have a favor to ask in this regard. Although I do not know the people I have selected to interview for this research, you know one. I have identified <Name of participant> as a potential participant and one of only 15 in the country with whom I will be recruiting.

Because of the small study size, I am reaching out to my colleagues, including you, seeking assistance in recruiting these 15 participants. Would you be willing to assist in my recruiting <first name> to be in the study? This would be a tremendous favor to me but also will help acquire a diverse group that includes your state.

Below is a draft e-mail I composed for you to edit and send. If you could let me know whether this is something you are willing to do or not, that would be helpful for my own records and tracking. In either case, I thank you for your consideration.

Draft e-mail

Hello <name>,

I want to introduce you to an opportunity that is fairly unique and may be of interest. My colleague Sharon Morris is working on a dissertation and is interested in having you participate. I told her I would contact you to let you know about this study and to also indicate the value of being involved. In my work with Sharon, I know her to be a person of integrity and thoughtfulness. I believe this opportunity could be of benefit to you and also could have positive implications for the library profession. My understanding is that Sharon will be contacting you by e-mail and phone. I encourage you to consider participating as your time and interests allow.

Best wishes,
<your name>

Again, I thank you for considering this request. Below is a brief introduction to my study.

Library directors establish the organization’s values and vision, instill these values in the workforce, and address values conflicts as they arise, such as those related to user privacy versus security, intellectual freedom challenges, and equal access strains with limited resources. Despite the salience of values in public library work, no study, until this one, has investigated how public library directors employ values in their work. This study examine the core values of public library directors, how their life experiences shaped those values, how these values inform their managerial leadership activities, and whether and how their library experiences alter their values priorities over time.
The study will be of interest to library directors, public and otherwise, interested in values, how values impact their work, and how core values can be leveraged to accomplish the organization’s mission and vision. It may also be of interest to directors wanting to reflect on their own values and how to leverage those values in their everyday work. Those who oversee public library directors, including library board members, may gain ideas for assessing candidates for library director positions as well as evaluating the directors they do hire. This study may also be of interest to graduate programs in LIS that include coverage of leadership values, as well as library leadership institutes that address values identification, awareness, and implementation. Because values are universal, library professionals in other countries may also be interested in the study, and consider implications in their own countries. Finally, state library staff who work with public library directors may gain insight into how values impact public library directors and use those insights to provide coaching, support, and training for library directors and boards.
APPENDIX C

Talking Points for the Introductory Phone Call

Introduction
Hello, I am Sharon Morris. Did you receive my e-mail about the study I am conducting on personal values? Do you have a few minutes to talk with me now or is there a better time I may reach you?

I wanted to explain the study a bit more and why you have been selected among only 15 out of nearly 9,000 public library directors.

Selection
Your library has been a star library for multiple years which is a tremendous accomplishment. Along with that, I have been reviewing your website to learn more about your library and the leadership you provide. Your success within your community and the quality of your image indicate strong leadership.

Study Description
The study involves four basic activities.

1. You will receive a questionnaire to fill out. This typically takes about 10 minutes. I can send this electronically or via mail. Do you prefer a print version or something online?
2. Then, I will send your customized report of your values based on the questionnaire you have filled out. You will review this report, reflect on the results as one way to consider your core values and the questions for the interview.
3. We will have a telephone conversation that will take no more than one hour. In that conversation, you will tell stories about two defining moments, talk about your core values, and discuss leadership. I will send questions to you ahead of time so you may prepare. Because we will be exploring your experiences and delving deeper I may ask other clarifying questions to get more specific information.
4. You will receive a transcript of the interview which you may review and revise before I write the findings and analysis.

To confirm that your privacy is secure, I will send you a copy of the summary findings of your section of the study. This will be a final opportunity for you to confirm the information and also confirm that the depiction does not reveal information that might identify you to others.

Any questions? May we schedule our 60 minute interview? Let me wrap up by letting you know the next steps. I will be sending the questionnaire to you by next week. I will also send you a reminder e-mail of our interview time and include the questions.
I am grateful and excited that you are going to be participating in this research. I look forward to our next conversation. Also, if you need to reach me, my contact will be on all the information I send.
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

Core Values of Public Library Directors

You are being asked to voluntarily participate in a dissertation research study conducted by Sharon Morris from Simmons College. The study is designed to gather values data about select public library directors. You are among 15 recognized public library directors who will be asked to participate.

By participating in this study, you understand the following statements apply to you:
1. Your participation in this project is voluntary. You understand that you will not be compensated in any way. You may withdraw or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
2. Participation involves filling out a questionnaire estimated to take approximately 10 minutes. After completing the questionnaire, you will receive a customized values report and a series of interview questions. The interview will be conducted by telephone and will take no more than 60 minutes. The conversation will be recorded and you will receive the written transcript in order that you might add, redact, or correct information.
3. Finally, you will receive a copy of the summarized findings for your section of the research so you may confirm confidentiality prior to the completion of the final dissertation.
4. You understand that the questionnaire, your personal values report, the interview content, and any follow up for this research will be used only for the stated purpose of the study and any presentations or publications related to the research. The specific information you provide will be masked in the final study product so that you and other participants in the study cannot be identified. You will be able to review the text before it is added to the final dissertation to confirm confidentiality. In addition, all information you provide will be destroyed within three years of the study.
5. As an agreement for participation, you will receive a copy of the dissertation. Other potential benefits of participating in this study include the opportunity to reflect on your personal values as they relate to your work in your public library. In other studies of leadership and values, the participants reported that being in the study strengthened their understanding of their values and leadership. Along with this personal benefit, this study gives you the opportunity to contribute to the growing research in the area of library leadership.
6. I understand that the research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Simmons College.
7. I understand the explanation provided and have had all questions answered to my
satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

By signing and dating below, I consent to being a participant in this study.

_________________________________  Sharon Morris, Investigator

Please Print Your Name

_________________________________

Your Signature

_________________________________

Date

QUESTIONS:
Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about the study or about your rights as a research subject. If other questions occur to you later, you may call me, the investigator, Sharon Morris. If at any time during or after the study, you would like to discuss the study or your research rights with someone who is not associated with the research study, you may contact the Human Protections Administrator through the Office of Sponsored Programs at Simmons College, Boston. If you wish to contact the supervising professor, Dr. Peter Hernon, his contact information is below.

Sharon Morris
<address>

Dr. Peter Hernon, Doctoral Chairman
Professor Emeritus
Graduate School of Library and Information Science
Simmons College
300 The Fenway
Boston, MA 02115-5898

Thank you
APPENDIX E

Portrait Values Questionnaire IV

Here we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Put an X in the box to the right that shows how much the person in the description is like you.

**HOW MUCH LIKE YOU IS THIS PERSON?**

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<tr>
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<th>not like me at all</th>
<th>not like me</th>
<th>a little like me</th>
<th>somewhat like me</th>
<th>like me</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.</td>
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<td>2. It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.</td>
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<td>3. He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.</td>
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<td>4. It's very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.</td>
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<td>5. It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.</td>
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<td>6. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. He always looks for new things to try.</td>
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<td>7. He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.</td>
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<td>8. It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.</td>
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<td>9. He thinks it's important <strong>not</strong> to ask for more than what you have. He believes that people should be satisfied with what they have.</td>
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<td>10. He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.</td>
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<td>11. It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and to choose his activities for himself.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>It is very important to him that his country be safe. He thinks the state must be on watch against threats from within and without.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>He likes to take risks. He is always looking for adventures.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>It is important to him to be in charge and tell others what to do. He wants people to do what he says.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Religious belief is important to him. He tries hard to do what his religion requires.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>It is important to him that things be organized and clean. He really does not like things to be a mess.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>He thinks it's important to be interested in things. He likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>He believes all the world's people should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to him.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>He thinks it is important to be ambitious. He wants to show how capable he is.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>He thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to him to keep up the customs he has learned.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Enjoying life's pleasures is important to him. He likes to 'spoil' himself.</td>
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<td>27. It is important to him to respond to the needs of others. He tries to support those he knows.</td>
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<td>28. He believes he should always show respect to his parents and to older people. It is important to him to be obedient.</td>
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<td>29. He wants everyone to be treated justly, even people he doesn’t know. It is important to him to protect the weak in society.</td>
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<td>30. He likes surprises. It is important to him to have an exciting life.</td>
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<td>31. He tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is very important to him.</td>
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<td>32. Getting ahead in life is important to him. He strives to do better than others.</td>
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<td>33. Forgiving people who have hurt him is important to him. He tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge.</td>
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<td>34. It is important to him to be independent. He likes to rely on himself.</td>
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<td>35. Having a stable government is important to him. He is concerned that the social order be protected.</td>
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<td>36. It is important to him to be polite to other people all the time. He tries never to disturb or irritate others.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>37. He really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is very important to him.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. He always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. He likes to be the leader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. It is important to him to adapt to nature and to fit into it. He believes that people should not change nature.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your cooperation!
Portrait Values Questionnaire IVF (For female participants)

Here we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Put an X in the box to the right that shows how much the person in the description is like you.

HOW MUCH LIKE YOU IS THIS PERSON?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>not like me at all</th>
<th>not like me</th>
<th>a little like me</th>
<th>somewhat like me</th>
<th>like me</th>
<th>very much like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her. She likes to do things in her own original way.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is important to her to be rich. She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. It's very important to her to show her abilities. She wants people to admire what she does.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. It is important to her to live in secure surroundings. She avoids anything that might endanger her safety.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. She always looks for new things to try.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. She believes that people should do what they're told. She thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It is important to her to listen to people who are different from her. Even when she disagrees with them, she still wants to understand them.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. She thinks it's important <strong>not</strong> to ask for more than what you have. She believes that people should be satisfied with what they have.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. She seeks every chance she can to have fun. It is important to her to do things that give her pleasure.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. It is important to her to make her own decisions about what she does. She likes to be free to plan and to choose her activities for herself.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. It's very important to her to help the people around her. She wants to care for their well-</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW MUCH LIKE YOU IS THIS PERSON?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>not like me at all</th>
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<th>a little like me</th>
<th>somewhat like me</th>
<th>like me</th>
<th>very much like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Being very successful is important to her. She likes to impress other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>It is very important to her that her country be safe. She thinks the state must be on watch against threats from within and without.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>She likes to take risks. She is always looking for adventures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>It is important to her always to behave properly. She wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>It is important to her to be in charge and tell others what to do. She wants people to do what she says.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>It is important to her to be loyal to her friends. She wants to devote herself to people close to her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>She strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Religious belief is important to her. She tries hard to do what her religion requires.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>It is important to her that things be organized and clean. She really does not like things to be a mess.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>She thinks it's important to be interested in things. She likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>She believes all the world's people should live in harmony. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to her.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>She thinks it is important to be ambitious. She wants to show how capable she is.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>She thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to her to keep up the customs she has learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Enjoying life’s pleasures is important to her. She likes to ‘spoil’ herself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>It is important to her to respond to the needs of others. She tries to support those she knows.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
28. She believes she should always show respect to her parents and to older people. It is important to her to be obedient.

29. She wants everyone to be treated justly, even people she doesn’t know. It is important to her to protect the weak in society.

30. She likes surprises. It is important to her to have an exciting life.

31. She tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is very important to her.

32. Getting ahead in life is important to her. She strives to do better than others.

33. Forgiving people who have hurt her is important to her. She tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge.

34. It is important to her to be independent. She likes to rely on herself.

35. Having a stable government is important to her. She is concerned that the social order be protected.

36. It is important to her to be polite to other people all the time. She tries never to disturb or irritate others.

37. She really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is very important to her.

38. It is important to her to be humble and modest. She tries not to draw attention to herself.

39. She always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. She likes to be the leader.

40. It is important to her to adapt to nature and to fit into it. She believes that people should not change nature.

Thank you for your cooperation!
Dear <name of library director>:

Thank you for filling out the personal profile questionnaire. Please see below for your customized report of the findings.

The next step in the research process is for you to reflect on these values and/or others you consider to be core values, and consider your answers to the attached questions about defining moments, core values, and leadership.

Our interview is scheduled for <date, time> via phone.

Values in order of preference (below is a sample)
- Benevolence (tie) - Compassion, preservation & enhancement of welfare of those in frequent contact (tribe)
- Self-Direction (tie) - Independent thought, creating, and independent choice of action
- Achievement - Personal success, competence
- Stimulation - Excitement, challenge, novelty
- Universalism - Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, equality
- Conformity - Restraint of action or impulses to remain a part of social norms
- Tradition - Respect and commitment to cultural or religious norms
- Power - Social status, prestige, control, dominance over people or resources
- Security - Safety and stability of society, relationships, and self
- Hedonism - Pleasure, personal enjoyment, fun

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Please review the values report based on the questionnaire you filled out. The core values are listed first and you might identify other, more specific values you consider to be core.

For the interview, you will tell stories of two defining moments in your work as public library director. To clarify terms, some definitions are below.

- Your values serve as the lens through which you view the world and make choices. They are deeply held beliefs of what is fundamentally important to you and are guiding principles for your thinking, decisions, and behaviors. Core values are those deepest held values which you consider to be non-negotiable and when you act from your core values, you gain a strong sense of purpose. Managerial leaders often feel most effective when they use their core values in their work.

- A defining moment is a clarifying turning point in your life; one in which a critical event occurs that tests and clarifies your values. A critical event could be a positive or negative experience and typically is unexpected and involves a moment of insight, or an epiphany, that clarifies a new path or strengths resolve for the future.

- A defining moment results in a change significant enough to alter or deepen core values and instill a deeper sense of purpose and commitment. Along with these critical events, and your responses to them, we will explore any moments of insight, or epiphanies, and the resulting commitment to core values.

- In considering which defining moments to tell stories about, choose two from your work. These could be related to critical events with governance (board, administration), supervision (staff), or experiences with the public either in the library or in the community. In addition, please consider at least one defining moment in which two or more values were in conflict (either within you or in relating to others or with professional values).

(This section will contain the questions about defining moments, core values formation and use in work to evoke stories of people and experiences related to values.)

THANK YOU
# APPENDIX G

## Interview Questions

**Introduction**
Thank you for joining me for this discussion. Over the next hour, we will be discussing defining moments, your core values, and leadership. Before we get started, do you have any questions or thoughts about the process?

## Interview

### Critical Events & Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Sub-questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. First, tell me a story about a defining moment in your work with either library trustees/supervisors, staff, or the community/public. What critical event prompted the situation? | • What was the situation? Where and when did it occur?  
• Who was involved? How did you interact with them?  
• Was there a values conflict? If so, please explain.  
• How did the situation play out? How was the situation or conflict resolved?  
• Was there a point at which you decided to use your values to address the issue? If so, describe that decision.  
• What role did your values play?  
• Were you satisfied with the result?  
• How did you feel about the situation at the time?  
• What did you learn? What insight did you gain?  
• Looking back, how did this event instill/re-instill/modify a core value?  
• What makes this a defining moment for you? |
| 2. Now let’s turn to your second defining moment. Tell me about another defining moment and, in particular, one in which you faced a conflict among values. The values conflict could be between two of your own values, or a conflict between your core values and those | • What was the situation? Where and when did it occur?  
• Who was involved? How did you interact with them?  
• What values were in conflict?  
• How did the situation play out? How was the situation or conflict resolved? |
values of others.

- Was there a point at which you decided to choose one value as the priority? If so, describe that decision.
- Were you satisfied with the result?
- How did you feel about the situation at the time?
- What did you learn? What insight did you gain?
- Looking back, how did this event instill/re-instill/modify a core value?
- What makes this a defining moment for you?

### Values Development

Thank you for sharing those stories from your work experience. Now let’s talk about your values formation.

| 3. Choosing a core value that most influences your work, how was that value formed and instilled? | 
|---|---|
| 4. Did you have any mentors or role models who helped instill or refine this value? If so, who? When? Under what circumstance? | How long have you held the value? |
| 5. What other influences have affected the value? (experiences, books, etc.) | How does this value influence you in your role as public library director (if not already addressed previously)? |
| 6. Next, let’s turn to the topic of leadership. Have your values informed your role as a leader? If so, how? |  |
| 7. Has your leadership role impacted the values you have? If so, how? |  |
| 8. How do you define leadership? |  |

| 9. Is there anything you would like to add that I haven’t asked? | How did the results of the values survey relate to your understanding of your core values? |

Thank you for taking the time to share your stories and insights on values as a library director and leader. The next step will be to get this interview transcribed so I can send it to you for review. As other things occur to you after this conversation, you may jot them down. I will give
you the opportunity to review the transcript and correct any information or add more detail if you wish. Do you have any questions for now on the next steps or anything else about this research?
APPENDIX H
Narrative Inquiry Interview Guide

Introduction
- Introduce self, confirm that the timing is convenient
- Thank you for participation
- Confirm receipt of Values Report & Interview Questions
- Reiterate that the conversation is only between the two of us, is being recorded for a transcript and analysis; confidentiality assurance

Prompts and Techniques
- Ask them to “reconstruct” rather than “remember”
- Ask what happened first; then meaning: initial response, feelings, thoughts, conclusions
- Listen, patience. List any questions while listening and be patient and wait to ask follow up questions.
- Restate, paraphrase, then ask for more detail and/or check for meaning
- “You mentioned … what was that like for you?”
- “You mentioned … how did you respond…
- “Can you say more about …”
- “You used the term ‘ _____ ‘ What does that mean to you?”
- When something new is introduced, follow up to find out more.
- Summarize before transitioning: “We’ve talked about…, unless you have other details to add, how about if we move on to the next question of…”

---

APPENDIX I

Interview Themes Coded in NVivo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th># of Participant</th>
<th># of References</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for job</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning of career</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building projects</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change - Adaptability</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment - New library service model</td>
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<td>Conflict-core values</td>
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<td>Missteps of former director</td>
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<td>Purpose, Sense of</td>
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