Chapter 3. Review of the literature

"80. Caution when getting informed. We live more of what we hear than what we see. We live of someone else's faith. Hearing is the second door of truth and the main for lie. Ordinarily truth is seen, and exceptionally is heard." -- Baltasar Gracián, Huesca, Spain, 1647 (Gracián, [1647] 1993: 47) (Translation Muela-Meza, ZM).

"If information could be passed on merely by word of mouth, how little we should know of our past, how slow would be our progress! Everything would depend on what ancient findings we had accidentally been told about, and how accurate the account was. Past information might be revered, but in successive retellings it would become progressively more muddled and eventually lost. Books permit us to voyage through time, to tap the wisdom of our ancestors." –Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (Sagan, 2001: 282)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review about the three key elements of this project: the community profiling tool, and the concepts of information needs, and information providers. It explains the different definitions and approaches found in the literature that served as a theoretical background for this study. Hence, the reader can assess their scope, limitations, and interrelationships with other concepts, approaches, terms, and keywords from the rest of the thesis.

The chapter is grouped into three major sections:

The first major section explains the community profiling tool and its integral parts. These are grouped as follows: a) the concept of *community,* b) the community profiling tool (this includes: 1) merging of community analysis into the community profiling tool, 2) community profiling as a tool, 3) implementation and definition of the community profiling tool, 4) community profiling based on territoriality, and 5) effectiveness of community profiling in LIS.

The second major section addresses the concept of information needs and its integral parts. These are grouped as follows: a) the concept of need (which includes: 1) a relatively broad materialist conception of need, 2) a narrower conception of need and "bottom up" research approaches), b) the concept of information (which includes the concept of documental information needs).

The third major section addresses the concept of information providers and its integral parts. These are grouped as follows: a) the working definition of information providers, and b) type of provision: information, advice, or help.

The next major section is the community profiling tool.

3.2 The community profiling tool

These sections will explain the community profiling tool and its integral parts. The next section explains the *community* concept.

3.2.1 The community concept

It can be stated that there are definitions of *community* as there are definitions about anything; as there are people talking and writing about it or about

anything. To illustrate this, the *Chambers Dictionary* (2003) in its ninth edition records 56 derivations of the term *community.* A LIS commentator in 1992 mentioned that there were at least 90 variations of the term *community* (Usherwood, 1992: 19). The variations of *community* show the remarkable fact that this term has meant so much for humankind as does the term *society* since its inception in history. Hence, as much as it has been written about in human history, the term *community* has always been one of those perennial topics*.* In addition, *community* has not only been written as tangentially related to any of its many senses, but it has specifically been the topic of many books relating to it at a theoretical and epistemological level, like the book *Community* recently written by the British sociologist Gerard Delanty (2003), whose ideas provide more clarity to help underpin the concepts linked to *community* in this project.

In this project, there is awareness that there might be many variations of *community*, however, in order to bring clarity to what is going to be understood as a *community*, the definition from the *Chambers (2003)* English language dictionary is going to be the basic starting definition to be employed here. However, this is just a starting definition as the project has configured another definition more adequate to its findings (see below in this chapter).

> Community noun (*communities*) 1 a the group of people living in a particular place; b the place in which they live. 2 a group of people bonded together by a common religion, nationality or occupation [e.g.] *the Asian community*. 3 a religious or spiritual fellowship of people living together. 4 the quality or fact of being shared or common [e.g.] *community of interests*. 5 a group of states with common interests. 6 the public; society in general. 7 [*in biology]* a naturally occurring group of different plant or animal species that occupy the same habitat and interact with each other. ETYMOLOGY: 14c: from Latin *communitas* fellowship, from *communis* common.

This definition above is succinct, sufficient and clear, especially from its Latin etymologies of *communitas* meaning "fellowship," or from *communis* meaning "common." Therefore, the essence of the term *community* is derived precisely from its etymologies in its early inception in Latin in the 14th century meaning a *fellowship* of several people and meaning they had something in *common.* Hence, by looking at the above definition in more detail these are the senses in which this study is employing the term *community* as a starting point*:*

> Sense 1: A. The group of people living in a particular place.

This could be the group of people who live in the boundaries of the Broomhall neighbourhood. The community profiling tool was employed here to profile the features of these groups of people living in the neighbourhood of Broomhall.

> Sense 1. B. The place in which they live.

The place in which people live, which could be the Broomhall neighbourhood. The community profiling tool was employed here to profile the geographical features of this neighbourhood of Broomhall.

> Sense 2. A group of people bonded together by a common religion, nationality or occupation, e.g. *the Asian community*.

In the Broomhall neighbourhood there are several groups of people bonded together by common features, like religions (there are Christians, Moslems,

Catholics, and so on), nationalities (although all the people there tend to be of British nationality by naturalisation, some people are bonded there by their original nationality backgrounds such as Somalis, Pakistanis, Yemenis, Jamaican), and others. The community profiling tool was employed here to profile the features of these groups of people living in the neighbourhood of Broomhall bonded by these common ties.

> Sense 3. A religious or spiritual fellowship of people living together.

In the Broomhall neighbourhood there are different religious or spiritual fellowships of people living together like those mentioned above. The community profiling tool was employed here to profile the features of these groups of people living in the neighbourhood of Broomhall and their religious or spiritual fellowships and others alike.

> Sense 4. The quality or fact of being shared or common, e.g. *community of interests*.

In the Broomhall neighbourhood like in any geographical area in the world where people live, there are different groups of people bonded by different shared or common features: language, nationalities, religions, and so on. The community profiling tool was employed here to profile these features.

Going beyond this basic definition from the language dictionary, this project also holds the idea that people bonded by different symbolic ties such as nationalities, religions, languages, geography and others, they do so by belonging to each other as a group or looking or longing to belong to each other. Delanty explains this concept of belonging like this:

> "Community offers people what neither society nor the state can offer, namely a sense of belonging in an insecure world. However, community also destroys this by demonstrating the impossibility of finality. The new kinds of community are themselves, like the wider society, too fragmented and pluralized to offer enduring forms of belonging" (Delanty, 2003: 192).

The author agrees with Delanty's sense of belonging that people seek through community. In addition, another assertion this project agrees with Delanty's notions about *community* is the way that he defines community as an essentially communicative world.

> "It is in this essentially communicative world that community is revived. In going beyond the symbolic approach of community, I am arguing for a more pronounced constructive approach. The notion of community as a "symbolic construction" suggests a too affirmative sense of community, neglecting its capacity for cultural transformation. It is in this stronger constructivist sense that I argue that community is communicative – communicative of new cultural codes of belonging.... Whether in the form of the numerous nationalisms, ethnicities, multicultural, and communitarian politics, the new and essentially post traditional assertions of community allow little room for a shared public culture, although they presuppose the possibility of shared values... The forms of community are multiple and are expressed in communicative structures that are essentially abstract or imagined –they do not correspond to something clearly visible or to an underlying identity" (Delanty, 2003: 191).

Therefore, *community* is considered in this project, after Delanty (2003), as a communicative mechanism people pursue in order to obtain a sense of belonging with other people. However, in this project, as explained below in this chapter, the geographical boundaries of Broomhall (see also further explanation in Chapter 4) were also employed in order to obtain a spatial area where the

community profiling tool could be applied. In addition, as explained below in this chapter, the way that the *community profiling tool* was found effective for library and information science is interrelated to territoriality.

The next section explains the *community profiling tool*.

3.2.2 The community profiling tool

These sections explain the *community profiling tool* employed in this thesis. These are grouped as follows: 1) merging of the community analysis into the community profiling tool, 2) community profiling based on territoriality, 3) community profiling in library and information science (LIS), 4) historical issues in defining LIS geographical boundaries, and 5) effectiveness of community profiling in LIS.

The next section explains the merging of the *community analysis* into the *community profiling tool.*

3.2.2.1 MERGING OF COMMUNITY PROFILING AND COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

This section explains the merging of the *community analysis* into the *community profiling tool.*

Community profiling and *community analysis* have been considered the same in this study under the name of *community profiling tool.* However, through the literature review they have been found as different terminologies. For instance, *community analysis* was found as a standardized thesaurus descriptor from some scientific peer-reviewed bibliographic databases such as Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA), Social Science Citation Index, and Sociological Abstracts (see Chapter 2 above for a comprehensive review of all the databases used in this project). On the other hand, *community profiling* was not found in the literature reviewed as an internationally standardised thesaurus descriptor.

There is mixed use of the terms community profiling and community analysis in the literature, some authors preferring the former (e.g. Beal, 1985; Chagari, 2005; Roddy, 2005; Budnick, 2006; and Long, 2006), others the latter (e.g. Satyanarayana, 1997; Sarling and Van Tassel, 1999; Westbrook, 2000; 2001; and Worcester and Westbrook, 2004). However, the one single author from the social work field who has conducted more research on community profiling than any other LIS author is Green (e.g. 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1997; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2005).

Hence, the rationale behind the merging of *community analysis* into the *community profiling tool* was due to this fact that most of the sources reviewed for this study employed *community profiling.*

The next section explains the community profiling as a tool.

3.2.2.2 COMMUNITY PROFILING AS A TOOL

This section explains the community profiling as a tool.

The author has made sure that the reader when reading this thesis will find a clear connection of the terminology of *community profiling* with a *tool;* that is, *community profiling* being a *tool.* This clarification is relevant, because other commentators do not find this connection. For instance, Kalyane, and Devarai (1994: 91) who analysed the community profiling tool in relation to public libraries noted that a community profiling is not a tool, but a method to predict needs and wants of a given community. Another author (Calva González, 2004: 228) notes that *community studies* is the equivalent to what has been considered here as *community profiling.* However, this terminology of *community studies* has not been epistemologically accepted in the literature reviewed (e.g. Green, 2005; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 1997; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; Hawtin, Hughes, and Percy-Smith, 1994; Beal, 1985; Jordan and Walley,1977). In addition, *community studies,* however being found equivalent to the *community profiling tool* as employed here, still poses a major methodological problem. This commentator (Calva González, 2004: 228), along with those mentioned above (Kalyane, and Devarai, 1994: 91), confuses a tool (his *community studies)* with a method. However, a tool cannot be a method, because a tool is an instrument employed to analyse or measure research problems, and a method is a procedure of how to employ tools, or other instruments to generate, and analyse data relating those research problems.

However, these commentators (Kalyane, and Devarai, 1994: 91; Calva González, 2004: 228) are not alone in their methodological confusion, the author (Muela-Meza, 2003a) during his first months of his PhD program also showed a methodological confusion of the *community profiling* tool by classifying it, as a general qualitative research methodology. In the case of the author, he wrote this paper (2003a) on 17 September 2003 as part of a literature review on qualitative research methodology which eventually got published in 2006 when a journal editor saw it as a pre-print in the author's self-archiving at E-LIS (Muela-Meza, 2006b). Hence, he could not make the proper corrections and the 2006 journal version is the same as the 2003 pre-print. However, from 2004 onwards, the author realised the nature of the methodological confusion, and the self-critique he is now exercising is evidence that he has self-corrected his mistake. Hence, he solved his confusion, based on the further empirical research he conducted from 2004 onwards and the reporting of the findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations of this thesis.

In the case of the journal article by Kalyane and Devarai (1994), they have not conducted any empirical research for that paper and they have not published anything else related to information needs, or community profiling, or at least anything that the author is aware of. They mainly focused on empathy of the service in public libraries. Hence, the author is reporting the confusion of these authors to show evidence that he has assessed thoroughly the literature at great depth of detail on a global scope (these authors are from India), both in English and Spanish languages. However, he has not found any major epistemological consequences that would be relevant to this study.

Nevertheless, in the case of Calva González (2004) this methodological confusion might have some methodological consequences for the international epistemological community of LIS. This is due to the fact that he has been

researching the phenomena of *information needs at* least since 1991 (Calva González, 1991). Calva González (1991; 2004), and has made a master's dissertation on the same topic (1991) and a doctoral thesis (2004) entitled: *Information Needs: Theoretical Foundations and Methods.*

However, the main issue concerning this author's (Calva González, 1991; 2004) work is that he has devised his 'theoretical foundations and methods' without having conducted any empirical research, neither in his master's dissertation (Calva González, 1991), nor in his PhD thesis (Calva González, 2004). Both studies (Calva González, 1991; 2004) are simply comprehensive literature reviews, and his research papers too. What might have some adverse methodological consequences for the Spanish speaking LIS practitioners who might read his book, is precisely his confusion of a *tool* with a *method.*

Some researchers from the social sciences out of the LIS field (Hawtin, Hughes, and Percy-Smith, 1994: 12-13), observe that needs assessments, social audits, community consultations, and community profiles, while they share certain features, can be distinguished from each other in terms of the agencies that are typically involved, the purpose of the exercise, the extent of community involvement and the scope of the exercise. They note that a community profiling is probably the broadest of these terms.

The next section explains how the c*ommunity profiling tool* was implemented in this study*.*

3.2.2.3 IMPLEMENTATION AND DEFINITION OF THE COMMUNITY PROFILING TOOL

This section explains how the c*ommunity profiling tool* was implemented in this study*.*

Most of the authors in the LIS literature reviewed have addressed the issue that *community profiles* should be considered as the first step for planning in a particular library to know about its community to be served. For instance in public libraries (e.g. Jordan and Walley, 1977; Ewart, 2004; Roddy, 2005; Louie, 1976; Sarling and Van Tassel, 1999; Satyanarayana, 1997; Amorós i Fontanals, 2000; Galluzzi, 2001; Kaniki, 2001). Others have used it in academic libraries (e.g. Westbrook, 2000; 2001; Worcester and Westbrook, 2004).

However, the present research project can be distinguished fundamentally from those authors mentioned above by not having applied the *community profiling* tool for any specific documental information institution (DII) (e.g. libraries), or documental information professionals (DIPs) (e.g. librarians), but only for the sake of knowledge and discovery. Only for the sake of conducting empirical research regardless of any practical applications, but to learn tools (e.g. community profiling), methodologies (e.g. qualitative research interpretivism), and methods (e.g. analysis of documents, interviews, observation). Thus, this project has been conducted more as a critical exercise of a theoretical type rather than practical.

Hence, this thesis has implemented the community profiling tool as rigorous empirical research project, instead of a loose and short report of any on-the-desk pragmatic literature review (comprising mainly outdated census statistics)

like has been the tradition of most LIS and non-LIS community profiles. For instance this tradition can be appraised through time, e.g. from the 1970s (e.g. Bedfordshire County Library, 1975), or the 1980s (Harrison, 1982; Backhouse, 1986; Borough of Sunderland Department of Recreation and Libraries, 1986), or the 1990s (e.g. Manzi, 1993; Warwickshire County Library, 1991), or even in the 2000s (e.g. Sheffield City Council, 2006b; Whitehead and Rowan, 2005; North West Museums Service, 2002).

This is the working definition of the *community profiling* tool employed in this study.

> "[The community profiling tool is] A comprehensive description of the needs of a population that is defined, or defines itself, as a community, and the resources that exist within that community, carried out with the purpose of developing an action plan or other means of improving the quality of life of the community" (Hawtin, Hughes, and Percy-Smith, 1994: 12-13).

The next section analyses the *community profiling tool* based on territoriality and history.

3.2.2.4   COMMUNITY PROFILING BASED ON TERRITORIALITY AND HISTORY

This section analyses the *community profiling tool* based on territoriality and history.

In order to analyse the communities' information needs from a given geographically limited neighbourhood, and the levels of information provision according to these needs, LIS practitioners need to use a tool, methodologies, and methods to conduct such research. The community profiling tool, the qualitative research methodology of interpretivism, and the qualitative research methods (analysis of documents, interviews and observation) have been considered the most adequate to conduct this doctoral research.

All human created or mediated geographical boundaries as with all human creations necessarily have to do with the non-human and human historical facts that precede them. LIS as well as all the disciplines are not the exception to that fact. Hence, this section explores the historical issues in defining LIS geographical boundaries.

From the literature reviewed, a multi-cited LIS community profiling expert (Beal, 1985) found three major forms of how librarians and other *documental information professionals* (DIPs) could identify the geographical boundaries where their library users live, study, or work. By: a) the library users' catchment area where a library serves; b) the conceptions of community by residents where a library serves; and c) the census and local government boundaries (Beal, 1985; 28).

This project conducted research to investigate the information needs and issues of the people who live in the Broomhall *territorial* neighbourhood and how documental information professionals (DIPs) satisfied their needs or addressed their issues through their information provision. However, by considering Broomhall as a geographical area in a broader citywide sense, that is like a neighbourhood (e.g. Greig, Parry and Rimmington, 2003: 258; Smith, 2002: 37),

rather than as a given particular library's catchment area of library users, and by considering DIPs in the broader sense as members of any documental information institutions (DIIs) and not just libraries. Hence, the observation of defining the geographical boundaries of Broomhall as "a library catchment area" by Beal (1985) is not employed here.

As for Beal's (1985) second observation on community boundaries as defined by the residents' perceptions of a given community, she noted that: "The boundaries of such areas are now often extremely vague, it would take considerable field research in the locality to be able to tease out local perceptions of community boundaries and it is uncertain whether, for our purposes [of librarians carrying out community profiling for library services provision], such exercise would be either valid or worthwhile" (Beal, 1985: 32).

Then, she moved on to explain her third observation by noting in her manual that librarians or any other DIPs, in order to make a valid and worthwhile community profiling exercise, they have to employ local government and census data: "the main administrative units to be considered here [in her manual of *Community Profiling for Librarians]* for use to community studies are local government and census areas" (Beal, 1985: 34). And despite the fact that she addressed few disadvantages of employing any of these three ways to define the community, particularly because they are mutually excluding, she was evidently more in favour of the use of census and local government data to define community boundaries and hence to conduct the community profiling or analysis.

Beal's (1985) local government and census geographical boundaries were not considered here as completely valid or free from contrasting arguments as it is explained below in this chapter (see Chapter 4 for further analysis of the working boundaries of Broomhall). This is due to the nature of the qualitative research methodology employed here. Furthermore, Beal's (1985) analysis, which has been more focused on the quantitative research paradigm instead of the qualitative as explained in Chapter 2, presents an analytical gap, because she has missed some important elements relating to the historical and political elements involved in the definition of communities' boundaries. For instance, she (Beal, 1985) did not consider the roles that history and politics played behind the configuration of community geographical boundaries by census and local authority perceptions.

Hence, she (Beal, 1985) found the idea of people's perceptions of community boundaries as subjective, and vague, and instead she considered census and local authority boundaries as objective. However, in reality, those forms of boundaries have been since their inception and through their historical development, being shaped by humans; hence, human subjectivity is implicit in every human creation or forms of expression. Moreover, since they have been created by humans over historic time, then those people who created them have introduced in different ways their or someone else's political conceptions, or ideologies, which issue Beal (1985) has not been sufficiently addressed.

Beal's (1985) gap has been filled by two community profiling experts in LIS, Jordan and Walley (1977), on whose work Beal (1985) built hers. Unlike Beal (1985), they (Jordan and Walley, 1977) identified that "history of the community

is an important element in any understanding and something of the history should be included" (Jordan and Walley, 1977:29-30). It should be clarified nevertheless, that Beal (1985) did not reject all notions of history from her manual, she did in fact consider some kind of history, but related only with the history of the economic structure of a given community (Beal, 1985: 54), but she did not consider history in itself as it is considered by Jordan and Walley (1977), and the author of this thesis.

On the other hand, Jordan and Walley (1977), unlike Beal (1985), did indeed put strong emphasis on the people's perceptions of their own neighbourhoods: "we think the best guide, as often is the case, lies with the perceptions of the community members, the psychological feelings of belonging and shared interest in a geographical area … others have defined communities in different ways or simply drawn lines on maps [where] there is a difficulty in collecting statistics on the area e.g. ward boundaries may differ from our definitions" (Jordan and Walley, 1977: 29). Hence, "communities, especially where they are self-defined, do not normally fit ward boundaries, postcode areas, police subdivisions, health districts or local authorities service boundaries" (Hawtin, Hughes and Percy-Smith, 1994: 64).

After all being said, the findings of this doctoral study have given an updated corroboration of Jordan and Walley's (1977) suggestions on defining geographical boundaries according to people's perceptions on a given time when a research project takes place. Hence, the geographical boundaries of Broomhall are defined primarily by its residents' perceptions following the "bottom-up" approach by Green (2000a: 22), where residents identified and analysed "their problems and needs within the wider context of their lives," but also underpinned on human historic facts of the communities within their neighbourhood.

The next section explains the effectiveness of *community profiling* in library and information science (LIS).

3.2.2.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY PROFILING IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS)

This section explains the effectiveness of *community profiling* in library and information science (LIS).

First, the working definition of effectiveness is explained.

> "It is the human action of: having power to effect (to produce, or to accomplish, or to bring about); causing something; being successful in producing a result or effect; being powerful; of being serviceable; of being actual; of being in force" (*Chambers Dictionary,* 2003*).*

Thus, the community profiling tool has been found still effective for LIS as long as it is related to the concept of territoriality and to the notions of social needs rooted in the materialist conception of history (see above Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 for further explanation).

For the community profiling to be effective, practitioners should distinguish between community and neighbourhood (or any other group of people geographically or spatially circumscribed). Community as in Delanty (2005) is a

group of people united by intangible bonds, but neighbourhood, in line with the materialist conception of history (see Table 2.1 for a definition in Chapter 2) is a materially grounded spatial place where communities might live in, or work.

Thus, all the notions of community profiling as portraying communities as intangible without any relation to territoriality might be limited and might not assess well any given territorial location. This is because, for instance, if a library is being planned to be built in any given geographical location, if people only think of the human communities (users) who might use the library without any relation to the materially conditioned physical and environmental conditions related to the territorial location, then that planning would be limited and inadequate. Hence, that implementation of community profiling would be ineffective. Likewise, if any implementation of community profiling only focuses on territoriality and forgets about human communities, then it would also be ineffective.

Therefore, an effective model for an implementation of community profiling would be that which combines human communities and natural material territoriality. Human communities do not live (or work, enjoy, suffer, etc.) in the vacuum, or in the void, or in the ether, or on any virtual communicational and informational human-made machine (e.g. Internet). They need by *sine qua non* condition to live (and do anything else, work, enjoy, suffer, etc.) in any given material territory where the provision of goods for the satisfaction of their needs (e.g. information recorded in documents) can be obtained (including information recorded in documents, help, advice, and so on).

Hence, those research models, which claim to approach community profiling without any relation to territoriality, should be assessed sceptically. Because as far as the physical natural laws of the cosmos are concerned, any science and technology (either theoretically or experimentally developed) needs a territorial cosmic matter to be based on.

Furthermore, a community profiling can be more effective when the datasets employed are empirically generated by first hand as primary data generated by the researchers, because although there might be other territoriality-based studies such as Creaser (1999) or Bath et.al. (2005) which may resemble a territorial community profiling study, their limitations lie in their use of secondary datasets, which are generated mainly by government census and statistics, and by the time they employ them they might be already outdated. Moreover, as explained above (see Chapter 4), studies which employ census datasets (e.g. Creaser, 1999; Bath, et. al, 2005) such as enumeration districts (EDs) or super output areas (SOAs) fail to make precise territorial matches, as they were conducted here by physical observation on the ground, and people's perceptions. That is, focusing on territoriality for effective community profiling is not enough, it is also necessary that one makes use of qualitative research methods such as observation and interviews.

The next major section explains the concept of information needs and its integral parts.

3.3 The concept of Information needs

This section explains the concept of information needs and its integral parts. The next section explains the concept of need.

3.3.1 The concept of need

The analysis of information needs begins with the analysis of the concept of need. The next section explains a relatively broad materialist conception of need.

3.3.1.1 A RELATIVELY BROAD MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF NEED

This is a definition of need from *Chambers Dictionary* (2003):

> "Need. n. Lack of something which cannot well do without; necessity; a state that requires relief, such as extreme poverty or distress; lack of means of living. V.t. To have occasion for; to want; to require; to require or to be required to do something."

As explained in Chapter 2, this project underpins its theoretical foundations from several concepts (see also Table 2.1 for a definition of concepts). A fundamental concept is the *materialist conception of history* which namely gives primacy to the materiality of the cosmos (Earth, flora, fauna, life, and so on), over its idealist spirituality.

Therefore, this conceptualization of need based on the *materialist conception of history* was found to be of paramount importance for this thesis, because it has given clarity to the project. This materialistic concept of need has given a sound background to this project, which has imbricated nicely with the data generated or configured throughout the study.

Nevertheless, the author is cognizant of some other theories that reject the materialist view of needs. For example, there is a psychologist (Maslow, 2005) who has been an important reference for the conceptualisation of needs, and he disagrees with the materialist views of needs. He (Maslow, 2005: 247) criticises that there are other superior human needs which are not material, such as: protection, dependence, security, friendship, affection, respect, love, acceptance, dignity, self-respect, and freedom that are as basic as the material needs (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, etc.), and very important for the self-realization of humans.

However, even though Maslow's (2005) view of needs disagrees with materialism, still his assertions can be integrated to the materialist conception of needs of this thesis. Because, for humans, in order to need, give, and receive love, affection, friendship, and so on, as explained by Maslow (2005), they need before everything else to be alive, and they need to have covered all the material needs. Hence, the author does not see much contradiction in Maslow's (2005) conceptualisation with the materialist approach employed here.

The next section explains a narrower conception of need and "bottom up" research approaches.

3.3.1.2   A NARROWER CONCEPTION OF NEED AND "BOTTOM UP" RESEARCH
          APPROACHES

This section explains a narrower conception of need and "bottom up" research approaches.

Green, a social work scientist who has been conducting research for some years into the poor, the marginalised, and the oppressed (e.g. 2000a; 2000c), has built a conceptualization of *needs* which fits with the broader *materialist conception of need* explained above, in line with the *materialist conception of history* (as explained in Chapter 2). Green has made a strong case against what he calls the "top down" paradigm of *needs,* or research on needs, or needs assessment or community needs profiling.

He argues that "top down" research approaches to the needs of people in their communities by excluding the needs of the poor, marginalised, and oppressed groups of society: "The needs and daily experiences of ordinary people particularly those in marginalised and oppressed groups such as clients, users, and receivers of services are ignored." (Green, 2000c: 21).

He argues that most of the researchers of the "top down" paradigm appraise needs as normative needs, in the way that city council, statutory, and voluntary sector professionals, politicians and powerful and dominant groups, or agencies, in society ascribe them. However, these normative needs focus only on expressed needs and avoid felt needs: "The expressed needs elicited by the research were 'felt' needs grounded in their personal, family, and collective experiences of living on a much stigmatised and impoverished social housing state" (Green, 2000c: 17).

In addition, a philosopher theorist (Heller, 1996) of the needs concept elaborates further Green's "bottom up" approaches of needs. She notes that within democratic societies the ascription of these normative needs by powerful and dominant groups and agencies fall into fundamentalism, substitutionalism, and paternalism, and hence affect people's freedom of choice, autonomy, and happiness relating to their needs. By fundamentalism, she notes that those groups and agencies act as if they are the guarantors who should tell people what and how they must need. By substitutionalism they substitute people's actual needs by what they think they should need. In addition, by paternalism they act like people's parents relating to people needs (Heller, 1996: 107-108). Furthermore, she argues that in non democratic regimes (e.g. of Soviet type), where the central power of state attributes people's needs, they create a dictatorship of attribution of needs, hence, the people's freedom, autonomy, and happiness is more restricted (Heller, 1996: 93).

Heller's elaboration of Green's "bottom up" approach of needs gives more relevance to Green's approach. Hence, this is how Green defines his conceptualization of community needs profiling.

> "Community needs profiling using the 'bottom up' approach sought to get participants to... identify and analyse their problems and needs within the wider context of their lives. The research process therefore became the start of this awareness-raising process which allowed individuals to gain some insight into their situation whether it be their poverty, their mental health needs, schooling, quality of life, or housing conditions" (Green, 2000c: 22).

Thus, this study has considered Green's (2000c) "bottom up" approach to needs, as people perceive them or interpret them, in line with the *materialist conception of need.* In addition, these "bottom up" perceptions of needs are rooted in people's material conditions of life, work, enjoyment, leisure, and suffering in line with the *materialist conception of history,* and also in line with the *concept of configuration as an open structure of theory* as explained in Chapter 2 above (see also Table 2.1 in that chapter for both definitions).

Hence, this is the explanation of the first part of the concept *information needs.* The second part, at the heart of LIS, is *information.* The next section explains the concept of *information.*

3.3.2 The concept of information

This section explains the concept of *information.*

In LIS literature, there are views that consider it important to define the concept of *information*, and *information needs*, while others consider it to be unproductive. For instance, a LIS commentator who wrote a master degree dissertation about the information needs of trade unionionists and unemployed workers found that it was unproductive to define *information* and *information needs,* by observing that: "Definitions of 'information' and 'information needs' have produced much debate amongst librarians and information scientists. I do not feel it would be productive to go over intricacies of this debate" (McManus, 1987: 7). Other LIS commentator notes that "people [in LIS] talk about information need without ever bothering to define it" (Nicholas, 2000: 19).

Hence, in this thesis definitions of *information*, and *information needs* are given in this and the following sections. This is done without the intention of debating, but simply with the idea to give the readers the working definitions employed in the study in order that they may clearly assess its theoretical and methodological scope, and any possible limitations.

The configuration of the definition of *information* runs along the theoretical lines of two philosophers: Rendón Rojas (2005), a Mexican philosopher of LIS and Floridi (2002; 2004), an Italian philosopher of information. The author is cognizant that there might be some LIS researchers who might have done research in LIS than these two authors, e.g. in clarifying the concept of information (e.g. Capurro, 1996; Madden, 2000). However, the author has found the former more adequate for this study. For instance, the former place LIS' object of research within documents or information recorded in documents (Floridi, 2002: 46; Rendón Rojas, 2005: 180).

Hence, documents are core elements of library and information science (LIS), particularly *documental information, or information recorded in documents*. Now that information appeals to all professions as a kind of omniscience (von Baeyer, 2003), it is very important to distinguish what is the pertinent type of information which should matter to LIS or at least for the working definition of this thesis.

For example, information matters for different professions other than LIS, e.g. journalists. However, the type of information which matters for those professions, and that make their professions unique is not the type of information that matters to LIS, and that makes LIS unique. Certainly all of them use the term information as their common device, e.g. taking a picture by a journalist at a moment that captures any event. Nevertheless, the meaning of information for those professions is different for the library and information science. Hence, when information matters for LIS is when the information employed by other professions becomes recorded in documents and communicated to the public (e.g. a journalist's picture published in a newspaper).

In addition, it is when they become documents that these socially meaningful symbols begin to be of the interest of the LIS community. Therefore, documents, or information recorded in documents, or "recorded data" (Floridi, 2002: 46), or "information sources" (Floridi, 2002: 41) are the kind of information which matters to LIS and which makes LIS unique. "LIS does not cover all PI's (philosophy of information) ground, but is concerned more specifically with documents' life cycles" (Floridi, 2002: 46).

Hence, this is how Rendón Rojas defines a document relating to LIS.

> "The document is taken as a social and cultural product, that is the result of the objectivation of the human thought and spirit, and it has as a function to preserve the social memory. From the different types of documents, library, and information science focus its attention in those that were created expressly with the purpose to communicate "intentions of the soul" [sic] and that they have a structural and articulated logic and that they have passed through the hands of the professional of documental information. From this it is understood that those objects that can generate information but that they do not include an expressed syntactical and semantic structure, they will not be taken into account for the library and information science" (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 180).

Moreover, what is the concept of information that matters for this project? It has to do with a combination of the concepts of *document* and *information.* Hence, documental information or the information recorded in documents. This is how Rendón Rojas defines it.

> "… Information is a secondary quality of the objects that are made by the subjects from the structuring of properties present in those objects. The utilized structures by the subject to interpret those objective properties are found conditioned by the psychogenetic development of the individual and by his or her socio-historic-cultural context. […] A document does not contain information like a bag of oranges; the subject does not have to face the oranges to see them and take them out of the bag; but in the document is not like that, information comes up only when the subject through that document arrives to the world of information; that step from the symbol to information is an activity that is conducted and that repeats every time that a structuring of data is being conducted by different subjects or by the same subject. If the rules of this structuring are not known so that those symbols guide us to the world of information, the document can be there in front of us and not saying anything. It is man who connects himself to that world too through those objects of the senses, but library and information science is interested in certain specific objects, created specially to connect to the world of information: the articulated linguistic signs [the documents, Muela-Meza,Z.M.]" (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 158-9).

In addition, this is how Rendón Rojas concludes his definition of documental information or information recorded in documents.

"According to this information comes from a synthesis of what is objective and subjective, from the data and some structures of the subject which allow to process those data, to interpret them, to organize them and convert them into something that may have a use value; they allow us to act and to take decisions. Man receives stimuli in the organs of his senses (sound waves, light rays of certain frequency and amplitude, etcetera) but those stimuli are not the information, they need to be given an organization, a form. It is important to remember on this point the etymology of the word "information": in-form, "to give form" (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 94-95).

After the working definition of the concepts of *need* and *information* for this project have been configured, then in the next section the combined concept of *information need* or *information needs* is examined: needs of information recorded in documents.

3.3.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF DOCUMENTAL INFORMATION NEEDS

This section explains the concept of documental information needs or needs of information recorded in documents.

As mentioned above, this study has employed Rendón Rojas' (2005) concepts of *information* and *documental information* or *information recorded in documents.* Still following him, this is how he defines the concept of *documental information needs or needs of information recorded in documents* as employed in this study.

"Man looks for information to do something, not to act. Some of these duties are scientific research, to learn, to conduct a practical theoretic activity, recreational aesthetic, and to make a decision in the political, or economic, or managerial, sphere, or even in the daily life. But with the difference of other information needs, those of interest to library science or librarianship are the documental information needs, that is, those which look for information in material formats [documents] which were made specifically to transmit [documental] information." (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 114).

Hence, Rendón Rojas' concept clarifies that the information needs of interest for library and information science are the *documental information needs or needs of information recorded in documents.* In addition, those who need information are *users of documental information* or users of information recorded in documents (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 115).

The author has found in the literature conceptualizations of information needs. For instance, there are some commentators who note that for library and information science the concept of *information behaviour* or *information-seeking behaviour* is more relevant than the concept of *information needs* to conduct research about information needs (e.g. Wilson, 1981; 1994; Calva González, 2004; Kaniki, 1989; 1995; 2001). A commentator elaborates this idea by noting that: "the correct term would be an investigation of the information behaviour or the manifestation of information needs" (Calva González, 2004: 103). On similar lines, another commentator, building on Wilson's (1981: 3) positivist information behaviour paradigm notes that: "because information needs cannot be measured or understood in abstract, the term "information needs" [sic] should be removed from the library and information science vocabulary and instead be perceived as information seeking for the satisfaction of needs" (Kaniki, 1989: 71).

This concept of information behaviour has been found more related to the study of the behaviour of users of information, or study of user behaviour (Wilson, 1981; 1994). However, this study was not focused on the behaviour of users of information, but on the information needs residents of the Broomhall neighbourhood perceived according to an interrelationship of several factors explained above, such as community bonds, and territorial bonds. Furthermore, the application of community profiling to information needs is more focused on trying to analyse information needs of communities, in a collective fashion, instead of the behaviour of individuals in an individual fashion. Hence, however valid the positivist information behaviour paradigm might be to the study of user behaviour, it was not found adequate for this study.

The next section explains the concept of information providers.

3.4 The concept of information providers

This section explains the concept of information providers and its integral parts as employed in this thesis. The next section explains the working definition of information providers.

3.4.1 The working definition of information providers

Building on the concepts of Rendón Rojas (2005), the definition of *information provider* considers any institution, whose reason for being is the collection, organisation, and dissemination of *documental information, or information recorded in documents*. This is how Rendón Rojas defines a *documental information institution:*

> "[Documental Information Institution (DII). This concept, notes Rendón Rojas], "saves us from falling into ambiguities since the generic being of the information institution can be specified in different types of information institutions: journalism, television, radio, etcetera, which do not fall into the field that we are analysing; but it does fall indeed if the information institution is restricted to the documental scope..." […] The DII is also "an organism created by society and if fulfils a social function (P), that is why we have chosen the term institution and not to follow the general consensus to call it unit of information. The fact of being a social institution means that its existence is due to a social need and like all other political institutes (State, and others which historically have appeared: parties, ministries or secretaries of State, presidency, congress [parliament, Muela-Meza, Z.M.], in the case of representative democracies) or juridical (police, public ministry, judges, Supreme Court of Justice)--, it is placed within the structure of society for its better functioning, independently of the persons who occupy a position in such institution." (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 136-7).

In addition, following Rendón Rojas (2005) conceptualizations, the person who works in a library or any other *Documental Information Institutions (DII) or Institutions of Information Recorded in Documents (IIRD),* can be defined as a *Documental Information Professional (DIP) or a Professional of the Information Recorded in Documents (PIRD)*:

> "[The Documental Information Professional (DIP)] is an active agent inside the social communication circuit. Precisely it is the information professional that through his activity makes possible the conditions in order to de-objectify the internal word converted into symbol; that is, it is he who opens the doors of the world of information: if he ceases doing that, he ceases being an information professional. [... the DIP] can allow or hamper and deform the social communication depending if he fulfils his function of providing the necessary conditions to ensure that his user [of information recorded in documents] gets introduced into the world of information and dialogues with the texts and his authors"

(Rendón Rojas, 2005: 145). Furthermore, Rendón Rojas argues that [...] "the information professional is neither a merchant of information, nor an educator. He may become both, but that is not a *sine qua non* characteristic to become an information professional." (Rendón Rojas, 2005: 146).

As it can be read in the definition above, the keywords for this concept are *documental, information,* and *institution,* and the idea of *institution* is key to denote the *institution of information recorded in documents.* Thus, *documental information institutions (DIIs)* can be libraries, information centres, documentation centres, advice centres and other similar institutions. A LIS researcher (Sander Villarino, 1992: 40) also agrees with Rendón Rojas in calling for example a library as an institution.

Nevertheless, terming these organizations as institutions is rare amongst *document information professionals (DIP)* as termed by Rendón Rojas (2005: 145-146) or in LIS theory. The most common way of calling them is as *units of information* (e.g. Calva González, 2004). However, a radio station, and a newspaper can be units of information, but they are not *documental information institutions (DIIs).* They may include a library within their organizations, and in such a case, a *documental information institution* might be hosted inside those organisations, but they *per se* are not *documental information institutions*.

Other commentators try to term them in different ways. For instance, a recent study (Usherwood, Wilson, and Bryson, 2005) has lumped libraries, archives and museums together under the umbrella term of *repositories of public knowledge.* Perhaps that new term has to do with the compliance of the study with the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council of the British government. However, as in the example of radio stations and newspapers, although the museums are well-established institutions in society, they are not *documental information institutions (DIIs)* as defined above. If they host libraries or documentation centres within their walls then these would be DIIs inside other institutions. Furthermore, museums have little to do with LIS, except for the case if they hosted libraries or information or documentation centres inside; the discipline of museology is the science that studies museums, not library, and information science (LIS).

As it can be seen, defining an *information provider* is not an easy task. However, by defining them as *units of information (UI),* or *repositories of public knowledge (RPK)* does not help either to obtain more clarity. A UI or a RPK could be virtually any kind of organization that deals with information, but the organizations that matter for this study are those related to *documental information,* or *information recorded in documents.* This will prevent LIS practitioners or researchers from getting lost every time that governments create new nomenclatures, like Museums, Libraries, and Archives in the UK, in order to name documental information institutions, or whenever any societal change takes place as nowadays that *information* seems to permeate all layers of society and academic and political discourse (von Baeyer, 2003).

Nevertheless, even after the exposition explained above, the difficulties are not removed completely with the definition of *information provider* this thesis has configured. The idea of *documental information institutions (DIIs)* comes alongside with the idea of a LIS researcher (Leach, 1999: 74) who observes that broadly speaking *information provision* "is used to encompass issues such

as sources, sites and mediums [of information provision]." That is, this thesis covers the broad spectrum of information provision in the community of Broomhall. However, the definition of this term, including all the features of this thesis, is flexible to the configurations emerged from the data generated in this project. In like manner, Leach (1999: 74) also talks about *information provision* in a narrower sense.

For his study, and following other authors, *information provision* in a narrower sense could be transacted in the way information is transacted: a) put across, b) transmitted, c) disseminated, d) transferred, e) diffused, and f) communicated (Leach, 1999: 74). In order to group those terms of information communication as *information provision in a narrower sense,* Leach (1999: 74) talks about an information channel; a medium used to convey information, and mechanism of transmission. Thus, mechanisms, channels, and mediums of information encapsulate his analysis of *information provision* in a narrower sense. In this sense, this project has also considered some of Leach's (1999: 74) elements of *provision of information* in a narrower sense.

The final section of this chapter makes an approximate differentiation between the provision of information, and advice, and help.

3.4.2   Type of provision: information, advice, or help

This sections addresses the differences amongst the provision of information, advice, or help.

The concept of *documental information institution (DII)* configured by Rendón Rojas (2005), might be suitable for libraries and similar DIIs. However, that concept is limited when applied to identify other types of documental information providers who do not serve their users in the same way as e.g. libraries, even when they also employ documental information to provide their services. An example of those providers is the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The CAB might be considered a DII because it collects, organises, and disseminates documental information. However, the institution collects and organises its information only to feed its home-made nationwide information system; its dissemination is seldom in the form of printed document, e.g. like libraries. The delivery of the service –through their previously organised documental information—takes the form of advice (Johnson, 1995).

This is how the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary (*Oxford University Press, 2004) defines *advice* and *help:*

> Advice: guidance or recommendations offered with regard to future action.
>
> To help: make it easier for (someone) to do something. ☐improve (a situation or problem); be of benefit to. ☐support (someone) to allow them to move in a specified direction: I helped her up.

Thus, *advice and help providers* have a clear aim of providing social welfare services, or services related to state agency as some suggest (Delanty, 2005). That is, advice and help providers do not need to stock documents or information recorded in documents with the purpose of serving users through them, either through their direct help, or through their indirect help of previously

having organised them in stacks or providing them diverse technologies to access them (e.g. computers, Internet, DVDs, CDs).

3.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a literature review relating to the three major integral parts that comprise this study: the community profiling tool, and the concepts of information needs, and information provision. These are the key points of these integral parts.

    1) Key points of the community profiling tool.

As for the community profiling tool, this was analysed as being interrelated with different concepts such as *community,* and *territoriality. Community* was configured in this study, following Delanty's (2003) conceptualizations, as a communicative mechanism that people pursue in order to obtain a sense of belonging with other people. *Territoriality* was related to the geographical boundaries of Broomhall as a spatial area where the community profiling tool was applied.

The community profiling tool emerged in the literature as having a synonym terminology called *community analysis.* The latter was found as a thesaurus descriptor from scientific peer-reviewed bibliographic databases (e.g. Library and Information Science Abstracts); however, the former was found to be more useful for most of the documental sources reviewed. Hence, the author merged the *community analysis* into the community profiling tool without complications.

The author of this study made the methodological clarification that the terminology called *community profiling* is a tool that serves to analyse social needs (e.g. information needs) of any human community. Hence, the author criticised and rejected the notions of some commentators who confused the *community profiling tool* with methods. The author also made a self critique, and hence rejected as well his earlier confusion of this tool with a qualitative research methodology (Muela-Meza, 2003a; 2006b). Hence, those studies that pretend to serve as theoretical and methodological foundations of information needs, but that confuse *tools* with *methods* (e.g. Calva González, 1991; 2004) should be criticised and rejected, because instead of giving a sound epistemological foundation for LIS they bring confusion. Hence, LIS like any other science needs sound epistemological foundations, not confusion, in order to improve its development as science to better equip its practitioners to understand and solve LIS research problems.

The community profiling tool implemented in this study, in contrast with the different studies reviewed had been conducted only for the sake of knowledge and discovery. Whilst the studies reviewed have implemented this tool as part of their planning processes within their libraries, and most of them had been conducted on-the-desk as very short reports supported mainly with outdated census data, this study has been fundamentally distinct from the former in the sense that it was conducted only as a rigorous empirical research for the sake of pushing the theoretical and epistemological boundaries, and without any pressure to obtain practical applications, or to comply with the policies of any library, or any other institution from the statutory or voluntary sector.

Nevertheless, the working definition of the community profiling tool, after some social scientists who have made a manual on the subject (Hawtin, Hughes, and Percy-Smith, 1994: 12-13), acknowledges that this tool can be employed for practical applications by a given community or communities within their neighbourhoods, or by researchers who conduct research on their behalf, to obtain an action plan that describes their social needs and the resources that would satisfy their needs in order to improve the quality of life of the members of those communities. Hence, the author subscribed to this definition because he theoretically considers that LIS researchers should conduct research bearing in mind the social responsibility of trying to improve the quality of life of the populations of their studies (e.g. Muela-Meza, 2007). In addition, this reasoning was made at a theoretical level, because as mentioned above the author did not pursue any practical application. However, as explained above in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 2), the author is responsible for his own analyses, discussions, and interpretations of the data, and presentation of the findings of this study, and will renew that responsibility once this study had been made public (see Chapter 7 below for the ways it is going to be made public). However, as a consequence, if the readers within the different communities of the Broomhall neighbourhood should ever build a practical action plan, then that would be their own responsibility.

Another key element of community profiling is its interrelationship with territoriality. This study found it to be of paramount importance that this tool should be employed within a material territorial space, or geographical boundaries, and that these should be configured by the perceptions of the members of the communities of those geographical boundaries. This assertion goes in contrast with those commentators who support the idea that the geographical boundaries should be assigned by the statutory sector through census (e.g. Beal, 1985). In addition, this interrelationship of community profiling and territoriality goes in line with two of the three major concepts employed in this study as a theoretical framework (see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2 for definitions). Territoriality is related to the *materialist conception of history* because a community profiling needs a material territory geographically delimited where communities live or work to be applied upon. Territoriality is also related to the *concept of configuration as an open structure of theory* in the sense of being the geographical boundaries being delimited (e.g. configured) by the members of the communities of a given territorial area (e.g. Broomhall).

Therefore, the model of effectiveness of the community profiling tool for library and information science that emerged in this study should combine, through mutually conditioning interrelationships, human communities, and natural material territoriality. In addition, the configuration of any given territorial area should be made through primary source datasets obtained from the perceptions of the members of the different communities that live in that territorial area, and through the use of qualitative research methods such as observation and interviews, instead of relying on secondary sources datasets of statutory sector census or private sector statistics, which might be outdated, or politically and commercially biased.

    2) Key points of the concept of information needs.

A relatively broad materialist conception of need has been explained in line with the *materialist conception of history* (see Table 2.1 for definition in Chapter 2 above), which gives primacy to the materiality of cosmos over its idealist spirituality. That is, people first need to be alive in order to satisfy survival (e.g. water, food, shelter, clothing, housing) or cultural (e.g. information recorded in documents) needs.

Along the lines of the *materialist conception of history,* and the *concept of configuration as an open structure of theory* (see definitions above in Table 2.1 of Chapter 2), this study has employed the conceptualizations of Green's (2000c) "bottom up" approach to needs, as people perceive them or interpret them, instead of how powerful and dominant groups and agencies ascribe them.

This study, building on the concepts of LIS philosopher Rendón Rojas (2005) has employed the *concept of information recorded in documents* of paramount importance to LIS, because epistemologically the only information that matters for LIS is that that has been recorded in documents.

3) Key points of the concept of information providers

Building on the concepts of Rendón Rojas (2005), this study underpinned his concept of information provider in the form of *Documental Information Institution (DIIs),* or *Institution of Information Recorded in Documents.* DIIs include libraries, documentation centres, or any other institutions whose social function is to preserve humankind social, historic and cultural memory and heritage for the purpose of introducing users to the world of information recorded in documents according to their needs.

However, as for the Broomhall neighbourhood, these DII information providers were limited in their operationalization, because there were found other centres that offered advice and help mostly in oral form; hence they did not need stack documents as in libraries (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau)

Finally, Chapter 4 will present a historical and demographical background of the Broomhall neighbourhood.