Community Analysis:
Research That Matters to a North-Central Denver Community

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The need for community assessment has been well documented in library literature as a tool for library management and an imperative for the future of libraries. The plan to build a new public branch library in north-central Denver offered a unique opportunity to study the community. In 1994, the authors systematically collected, organized, and analyzed information using the Community Analysis Research Institute (CARI) model developed by Greer and Hale. As this article discusses, a variety of data collection techniques, including historical research, statistical analysis, personal interviews and structured observation, were employed. The systematic and overlapping methodologies revealed a colorful portrait of a unique community and the information needs of the people. Specific recommendations for community outreach, facilities planning, library policies, staffing, collection development, and ongoing involvement were formulated. Several avenues for sharing the information were discovered and implemented. In 1998, the community and branch library were revisited and the original recommendations were evaluated for their accuracy and validity.

For over 100 years, librarians have recognized the need for knowledge of the community to be served. Mary Cutler (1896) identified community study as an essential element of librarianship, exhorting the librarian to "be a careful student of his own town...that he may catch the spirit of the civic life and relate the library to the whole...that he may select books, establish branches, [and] open up new avenues of communication between the library and the people" (p. 448). Begin-

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Library & Information Science Research, Volume 21, Number 1, pages 7-29
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wing with the first published community study, of Jewish immigrants using the Brownsville branch of the Brooklyn Public Library (Solis-Cohen, 1908), librarians sought to learn the history, culture, religion, politics, education, occupations, values, interests, and lifestyles of immigrants and natives, juveniles and adults, city-dwellers and rural residents, the wealthy and the poor, registered borrowers and non-users, and the literate and the illiterate. As one of the early researchers admitted, “many of the first results were, no doubt, superficial and impressionistic, but our stock of useful human information rapidly increased” (Frank & Carr, 1919, p. 377). Soon after, Charles Williamson (1919) noted that “no more important responsibility rests upon library administrators and trustees than this duty of understanding clearly all the library needs of the community” (p. 70).

In the 1930s, faculty members from the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago led the field by practicing, developing, and teaching community analysis techniques. Much of this work is summarized by Carnovsky and Martin (1944) in The Library in the Community: Papers Presented before the Library Institute at the University of Chicago August 23-28, 1943, and by Berelson (1949) in his distinguished work, The Library’s Public, published as part of the Public Library Inquiry—a project instigated by the American Library Association and conducted by the Social Science Research Council. Over time, library professionals began to incorporate a variety of techniques in their community research, using census data (Kunz, 1976), market analysis of potential users (Massey, 1976), and information about community organizations (Javelin, 1976) to gain knowledge of their communities and design appropriate services. By 1976, the practice of community analysis was well established, evidenced by an entire issue of Library Trends (Bone, 1976) devoted to the topic. In that issue, Charles Evans (1976) provides a comprehensive “History of Community Analysis in American Librarianship” in which he concludes that community analysis “is as basic to library management as the physician’s diagnosis is to the practice of medicine” and that “its use in librarianship is a mark of professionalism” (p. 454). He points out, however, that methods used in community analysis, up to that time, had been primarily descriptive surveys and historical studies which, while helpful in describing the status quo, did not provide the answers to the questions which library managers must address. Experimental research, he offered, should be added to the descriptive methodologies to uncover “the real needs which they [the members of the community] may not even recognize themselves” (p. 454).

Heeding this advice, Greer and Hale (1982) developed a structured form of community analysis that incorporates a variety of techniques used by social science researchers into “a systematic process of collecting, organizing and analyzing data about the library and its environment” (p. 358). The Community Analysis Research Institute (CARI) model begins with a focus on the community from four perspectives—individuals, groups, agencies and lifestyles—and incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect a variety of data including demographic characteristics, history of the community, topographical features, transportation routes and traffic patterns, commercial activities,
communication patterns, housing, education, cultural activities, health facilities, employment, recreation, entertainment, and the characteristic lifestyles of the community and its sub-cultures. Acknowledging that “one’s philosophy of librarianship” as well as “intuition and professional judgment” are inevitable in any analysis, their “systematic and overlapping processes of data collection and organization...force conclusions and recommendations to emerge from data rather than opinion alone” (p. 358). Only when a clear understanding of the needs and interests of the community have been established, note Greer and Hale, can library professionals determine what type of library the community needs, what functions need to be emphasized, and which levels of service are appropriate. Only then, are information professionals “ready to develop goals and objectives, policies, procedures and strategies for becoming and maintaining a library customized to [their] own community” (p. 366).

During the recession of the 1980s, community analysis gained increased import, not only as a learning tool for library administrators but also as an imperative for the future existence of libraries. In an assessment of what community analysis can and cannot do, Zweizig (1980) asserts that “community analysis can increase the support of the library in terms both of funding and of use” (p. 39). Likewise, Barron and Curran (1981) recognized that community research matters a great deal: “In fact, the extent to which people will be supportive of libraries and will provide money for them to continue to exist depends on the extent to which libraries address the real needs of those people” (p. 29). In 1983, Saunders notes that “in time of economic hardship the public library becomes more rather than less important to the community” and that “without the support of the whole community, the public libraries may not survive the recession” (p. 11). Similarly, Harris (1989) cautioned that “declining circulation figures and threatened budgets are some of the issues which make it essential for libraries [of all types] to target their products to the satisfaction of customer needs” (p. 4). Finally, Robinson (1989) declared that the future of public libraries “lies in responsiveness to the very people our libraries were created to serve, the people who provide the funds to serve their interests” (p. 152).

This imperative continues into the 1990s as economics and technology create rapid change in both information needs and information agencies. In 1988, Nielsen recommended that “a more complete and comprehensive service model for librarianship is needed, which takes into account the full range of information needs in our society as well as the information technologies that may be shaped to meet those needs” (p. 194). Information needs become more complex as our society becomes more diverse. However, diversity in our profession has not kept pace with the diversity in our communities. It is no longer sufficient to rely on intuitive impressions in designing services. As professionals, we must employ every tool at our disposal to better understand the needs of diverse communities, often of people much different from ourselves. Guerena (1990) found community analysis particularly useful in Latino librarianship because the conclusions “proceed from broad-based quantitative as well as qualitative information,” (p. 17) and Evans (1992)
points out that "community needs assessment data are essential" (p. 16) when considering collection development for culturally diverse populations. Continued and continual research is necessary, notes Durrance (1991), so that libraries can "effectively meet the needs of society in the 21st century" (p. 279). Technological changes now offer libraries of all sizes the opportunity to better serve the needs of their communities. The volume of information available, however, is overwhelming for both the customer and the librarian. The plethora of information sources combined with the cost of implementing new technologies, in terms both of finances and human resources, forces library administrators to make difficult decisions. Grover and Carabell (1995) summarize the current situation for libraries succinctly:

Our swift progression into the information age presents information professionals with the daunting task of managing an abundance of diverse resources and clientele. As information needs become more complex and information sources become more elaborate, new approaches must be found to ensure the ongoing provision of customized information services. (p. 1)

Despite the long history of advocacy for community analysis, and the documented success of community analysis research, many libraries have not incorporated systematic community research into their mission and program. Unaware of the deficiencies in their community knowledge, some continue to rely on their impressions which, because they occur haphazardly, may or may not be valid. Others, while recognizing the need for community knowledge, consider formal analysis to be a relic from the past that takes too long, detracts staff from their "real" work, and is not worth the investment of time and resources. The current authors found community analysis to be an invaluable tool in deciphering the needs of a diverse community, eliciting specific recommendations for developing customized library facilities and services. Along the way, we discovered new approaches for sharing this information with library decision-makers and stakeholders. Although community analysis is not new, its implementation will result in new insights into the needs of a community and the services that the library should/could provide. The investment of a few resources now will reap benefits far into the future, and no library should take its future for granted.

RESEARCH METHODS

In 1994, while graduate students of Roger Greer and Martha Hale, the authors were studying needs analysis and became intrigued with the potential of community analysis. We decided to examine a community in the north-central area of the city and county of Denver for several reasons. A bond issue passed by the citizens
of Denver in 1990 had provided funds for the construction of a branch library in this community, yet no decisions regarding the branch had yet been made. The three neighborhoods of Globeville, Elyria and Swansea had not had a branch library since the 1950s and bookmobile visits to the local elementary school were the only library service to the community. The timing was serendipitous and the opportunity to apply the results of the research was promising.

The authors employed the methods of the Community Analysis Research Institute (CARI) model, developed by Greer and Hale (1982). This systematic process of collection, organization, and analysis of data about the community began with the question, "What do we want to know?," and proceeded until all the inherent questions were answered. The process was formal and deliberate, and examined the community from four perspectives simultaneously. Characteristics of the individuals, the formal and informal groups they form, the agencies which serve and interact with them, and community lifestyles were examined using a variety of data collection techniques (See Bolton, 1982; Greer & Hale, 1981; and Hale, 1986) including historical research, statistical analysis, personal interviews, and structured observation.

A preliminary service area was defined using a map of the city showing current library branches, city boundaries, statistical neighborhoods, and the defined location of the new branch. A detailed map of that area was obtained from the city planning department. An initial impression of the community was formed through a systematic "walk-around" or "drive-around" of the area. Topographic features and transportation routes were identified using maps and personal observation. These features were later verified by the city planning agency and community residents. The history of the community was explored by reading documents from local archives, public records and newspaper articles. Demographic characteristics were initially established using 1990 U.S. Census data, and later adjusted and expanded based on information obtained through newspaper articles and personal interviews with community leaders. Formal and informal groups within the community, and a variety of agencies serving the community, were identified using the yellow pages, newspaper articles, directories, and personal referral. These groups were then contacted and personal interviews were conducted with people from neighborhood associations, business organizations, cultural centers, health clinics, schools, recreation facilities, community organizations, social services, religious organizations, governmental agencies, and political groups. Communication agencies, including radio and television stations, newspapers, and the publications of local organizations and social agencies were identified and examined.

Each encounter answered some questions, but often led to other questions and other sources of community information. The systematic and overlapping process continued as long as there were unanswered questions and resulted in a huge collection of data which, when organized and analyzed, identified trends and social values, explained inconsistencies, overcame biases, and painted a detailed and colorful portrait of a unique community. Specific recommendations for community outreach, facilities planning, library policies, staff and collection
development, and ongoing community involvement were then formulated. A variety of communication media were used to share this information with library decision-makers.

A follow-up interview with the branch’s Outreach Librarian, four years later, revealed the validity of the study, the accuracy of the authors’ recommendations, and the response of the community. A library use study, currently in progress by other researchers, may offer additional insights into the efficacy of the community analysis.

FINDINGS

As part of a bond issue to renovate all of the branches of the Denver Public Library, administrators had pledged to build a new branch in the north-central area of the city. This branch would serve three small communities that had no current library service aside from bookmobile visits. The only factor that had been decided was the location of the branch. The researchers had little prior knowledge of this area. Intrigued by the potential to impact all aspects of library planning, from the building and the collection to hours and staffing, the authors decided to study the three neighborhoods of Globeville, Elyria and Swansea which surround the site of the proposed branch (Figure 1).

To form a first impression of the community, a detailed map, showing streets and structures, was obtained from the city planning office and a systematic “walk-around” (or “drive-around” in many cases) up and down every street was conducted. We recorded every impression and added notations to the map. It became vital to know every street and every house, so that as data was gathered it could be “placed” in the community setting. Several visits were necessary over the course of the research. Our first impressions were of poverty, heavy truck traffic, and industry. Access to the neighborhoods was difficult since routes in and out were limited and not easily discernible. With repeated visits, however, we began to see a more precise picture of the community. A closer look at the area during our drive-arounds further delineated the community to be served. In addition to the many topographical boundaries (two Interstate highways, the Platte River, a major high-traffic street, a wide band of railroad tracks, and a large cemetery), there are invisible yet discernible boundaries such as the county line neighborhood perceptions. While some of these features help to define the boundaries of the service area, others divide the community and are barriers to transportation, communication and knowledge. Although the area is surrounded by industry and bisected by railroads and highways, the pockets of residential areas are well established. We noticed toys in the yards, people fixing up their houses and planting gardens, and a number of recreation centers. Evidence of an Eastern European heritage was present in architecture and church names, but many of the people appeared to be of Hispanic origin. Almost all of the homes were single-family structures with very few apartments and no high-rise buildings. There were a few empty lots, but new
families soon occupied houses we saw for sale. There was a noticeable lack of services available in the community with few retail outlets and no large grocery store. These initial impressions led to questions. How had these communities begun? Who lived there then and who is living there now? Are there a significant number of children? Finding the answers to these questions required a variety of research methodologies.

Our questions about the history of the communities led us to the Western History Department of Denver Public Library. There we found documents, such as Betz' (1972) history of Globeville, a manuscript entitled *Globeville: Denver's Melting Pot* (Johnson, 1974), an article by the Polish National Alliance (Polish National Alliance, 1980) commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of one of the social societies once prevalent in the community, a history of Garden Place School by one of the early teachers, and "Globeville: An Immigrant Town" from the Denver Fortnightly Club (1983). These documents contained information about
the founding of these communities, the first residents, and early community life. The existence of the communities was tied to two major industries, both of which are still in evidence today. Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea were established as separate entities when Eastern European immigrants came to work in the smelters and meatpacking plants in the late 1800s. The Platte River separated Globeville, on the west, from Elyria in the middle, and Swansea, on the east, was cut off from Elyria by a cluster of railroad tracks. Strong neighborhood ties developed among the early residents of these three neighborhoods who lived, worked, and died together. A visit to the nearby cemetery underscored the important role played by the social groups formed by the workers. All three communities, lured by the promise of public utilities, were incorporated by the city of Denver in the early 1900s. By the 1920s, the ethnic composition of these neighborhoods began to change as Hispanic laborers, who came to work in the nearby sugar beet fields, joined the Eastern Europeans in the community.

Other documents, including photographs, in the Western History Department pointed out the importance of libraries in the communities. The Globeville Library, begun prior to 1917 in a storeroom, was followed by a library in the Community House in 1920, with a large reading room and space for classes in “Americanization.” Cost cutting measures led to the closure of this library in January 1934. The community responded with an uproar and the library was reopened a year later, only to be closed for good in 1950. Across the river, the Stockyard management supported the Elyria Library for their employees who lived in the area. This local support enabled Elyria to attract money from the Carnegie Foundation for the building of a library in 1923. This library was also closed in the early 1950s. Later, in talking with residents, we learned that the fate of these early libraries continued to be part of the community’s memory and affected their perception of the proposed new branch.

Like their libraries, the three neighborhoods continued to mature until the 1950s when Globeville was bisected from north to south by the construction of the Valley Highway (I-25). Before the residents could recover from this disruption, the construction of I-70 from east to west quartered Globeville, split Swansea in two, and cut all three neighborhoods off from the rest of Denver. Our efforts to understand how the current widening of these highways was affecting the communities led us to the city planning office. We discovered there a rich source of community information based on the neighborhood planning forums that were held in the late 1980s. Other information about current issues that the communities face was found in newspaper articles. The most dramatic of these described the successful fight the residents of Globeville led against pollution by ASARCO, the descendant of the old Globe smelting plant. These documents and articles provided us with a new understanding of the history, social construction and pride of these communities.

For more current information on the make-up of the community, we turned to the U.S. Census data. Census data are an invaluable tool for demographic information about communities. Census Tracts 15 and 35 correspond closely to the three neighborhoods in the community. Analyses of the 1990 U.S. Census data, as well as
comparisons with previous censuses, provided a tremendous amount of information about the people who live in the north-central Denver area. The total population reported in 1990 was 8,510 persons, which represents a steady decline in population since 1950. The Census data also indicates that the population in 1990 was fairly young, with a median age of about 27 years (see Table 1).

However, there is more to this community than was captured in the survey of the census, so we sought answers through other resources, including historical documents, newspaper reports, and interviews with community members and business leaders. This information added depth and changed our perception of how the community was changing. For example, newspaper articles documented the loss of housing when interstate highway construction bisected the community in the 1950s and again in the 1970s. Community members confirmed that, unless influenced by outside forces, residents preferred to stay in the area. The population appears to have stabilized and the community remains an area with some of the more affordable housing in metro Denver. While the rate of decline appears to be leveling off in the Census data, newspaper articles reporting the high fertility rate, school officials bemoaning the rapid increase in enrollment, and the current youth of the residents, indicate that the population is increasing.

The Census data shed light on the nature of the families and living conditions in the neighborhoods. The majority (63.3%) of the households are "family households" headed by married couples, but nearly a third of the family households are headed by single females. Of the 2,626 occupied housing units, 57.35% are owner-occupied, an average higher than the Denver metro area. Most of the homes in the community were built prior to 1950, as was observed in our drive-arounds. Most people in the community lived in the same house in 1985 as they did in 1990, lending strength to the observation of stability in the community.

Historically, the north-central Denver area has been ethnically diverse, and, while that diversity continues, the make-up of the community has shifted from a predominantly Eastern European population to a predominately Hispanic popula-

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<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>under 5</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>401</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>477</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8,510</td>
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FIGURE 2
Population by Type of Hispanic Origin

Type of Hispanic Origin

<table>
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<th>Type of Hispanic Origin</th>
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<td>6022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>4463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>1547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1990 U.S. Census Data

Because the Census Bureau considers Hispanic to be an ethnic origin rather than a racial category (at least in 1990), it is necessary to consider both race and ethnicity to see the full picture of diversity in the community. In the 1990 Census, 70.3% of the population reported that they are of Hispanic origin. Comparing this to the racial data, it appears that many persons of Hispanic origin chose either "Other" or "White" as their race, as these categories account for most of the population. Some, however, could have chosen one of the remaining categories - Black, American Indian, or Asian, which account for about 11% of the total population. When the number of householders is viewed in terms of ethnic origin of the household, the significance of the Hispanic population in the community is further emphasized, with 60% of the householders reporting that they are of Hispanic origin.

While more than two thirds of the Hispanic population is of Mexican origin, nearly one third of the Hispanic population indicated that they are not Mexican, selecting Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Other from the census choices (see Figure 2). Since these were the only alternatives provided in the census questionnaire, anyone of Hispanic origin from a South American country, other Central American countries, or even from Spain, would fall into that "Other Hispanic" category. This highlights the importance of understanding the wording of the census questions and the choices available in analyzing the data.

What is not revealed in the 1990 Census are the changes that have taken place in the last several years. While the census data indicates that the majority of the population is Hispanic, with percentages as high as 60-70%, members of the community perceive this number to be even higher and consistently refer to the
large number of recent immigrants from Mexico. The residents’ perception of the number of Mexican nationals in the community varies from forty percent to seventy percent. Regardless of the exact figure, which may be undocumentable, the implication is that the census alone does not provide an accurate picture of the ethnic diversity of the community. It appears that significant changes may have taken place since the census data was collected and assessment of the ethnic make-up of the community should be ongoing.

The issue of language, like that of racial and ethnic identity, is complicated. While some of the people in the community have never known any language other than English, nearly half of the residents speak Spanish at home and nearly 50% of those reported that they do not speak English well. A few residents speak an Asian language with a third of those not speaking English well. Even fewer residents speak a language other than Spanish or Asian, and a handful of these, all over the age of 65, do not speak English well. This last group may represent the remnants of the Eastern Europeans who settled in the community at the turn of the century.

Community members perceive an even greater percentage of monolingual Spanish speakers, perhaps as high as 40% of the total population rather than the 22% the Census reports. While some people strive to preserve their culture and language, other members of the community are eager for their children to learn English. School personnel indicated there is an increased demand for bilingual classes, and area English-as-a-Second-Language classes are taught in several community centers.

The Census data provides information about the education level in the community, showing that more than half of all persons 25 years of age or older have not received a high school diploma. This number must be viewed in the context of the immigrant make-up of the community. Haro (1981) reports that the majority of Mexican immigrants have completed no more than six years of schooling and Heer (1990) concurs that the average Mexican goes to school for only six years, a fact which must be taken into account when comparing the educational levels of these immigrants to standards in the United States. The 1990 census also revealed that nearly one third of the 16-19 year-olds were not high school graduates and were not enrolled in school. Figure 3 reveals that the “dropout rate” in the north-central Denver community was twice the Denver County figure and more than three times the state average.

Information gathered from the school district, a local principal and a school librarian provided further insight into problems with education in the community. At the time of our analysis, Denver was still under court-ordered busing. The community had two schools, one in Swansea with Grades 1 and 2, and one in Globeville with Grades K-5. There was a labyrinthine arrangement for busing the children who did not go to these community schools. For example, kindergarten and grades 3-5 in Elyria and most of Swansea were bused to another elementary school further south. Other Swansea students were bused to a different elementary school for all grades. Middle school children from all three communities were bused to two different schools, both in the southern part of Denver. The division
lines changed again for high school students, sending the students to three high schools in the most southern areas of Denver. This complicated arrangement had several ramifications. The neighborhood children were not in school together in a consistent fashion. Classmates from the neighborhood may be bussed to one school one year, then may be bussed to a different school the next year. Parents have children in schools all over the city, making it difficult for them to be active participants in their children's education, or to pick them up should they be sick. Older students are not able to participate in after-school events, such as clubs and athletic teams, because there are no late buses from the schools and public transportation to and from the neighborhood is limited. The long bus ride, at least 45 minutes, means that some children leave home before 7:00 a.m. and do not return until 4:00 p.m. or later. It is not surprising that community leaders expressed great concern about the state of education in the community. They indicated that the current dropout rate within the community is at least 58% and perhaps as high as 80%. While the 1990 Census indicates an existing problem, those statistics do not reflect the gravity of the situation.

The education problems led to questions about employment and income. The Census found that sixty percent of individuals 16 years of age or older are in the labor force. Most of those individuals are in service occupations and administrative support or work as machine operators, assemblers, handlers or helpers. Considering the large number of trucks and trains that pass through the area, surprisingly few people work in transportation. Community members indicate, however, that very few residents of the community are employed by local industry. This perception is confirmed by the Census "Mean Travel Time to Work" of 20 minutes (with the majority traveling by car) reported by workers living in the community.
The number of unemployed individuals in the north-central Denver community in 1990 was twice as high as that in the Denver metropolitan area. With median family incomes only half that of the county as a whole, it was not surprising to find that nearly a third of all families in this community live at or below the poverty level. As Figure 4 indicates, poverty is a greater problem for families with children, and even more so for families with a female head of household.

Yet, with so many people living below the poverty level, less than 20% reported income from public assistance amounting to a mean less than $4000 per household.

The information gathered up to this point, had provided answers, but also left us with more questions. Given the strong industrial presence, we wondered why the people who lived in this community did not work in this community? Does the census data accurately describe the community or is the community changing? What is the level of interaction between the three neighborhoods? What do the people do in their leisure time? What started out as “drive-arounds” now became “drop-in” visits during which we observed the activities of agencies and groups and talked with the leaders of those organizations. Interviews with business leaders revealed that, while some companies are actively involved in the life of the community, many are concerned only with commercial success—an attitude
which alienates many members of the community. Recreation centers offer homework help and reading classes in addition to basketball and crafts. Community centers are struggling to provide computer access in addition to ESL classes, job applications, and counseling services. A local art gallery also provides summer children's programming, and a bilingual repertoire theater, which has attained international renown, has created a space and activities which allow members of the community to celebrate all aspects of Chicano culture. Individuals began to stand out as community leaders who, as stakeholders in the new library, would help ensure its success. Customs, beliefs and lifestyles of the community became apparent. Several community members informed us of the fact, but many experiences strongly demonstrated, that word-of-mouth was the primary form of communication throughout the community.

Through interviews with business leaders we learned that the people of Globeville were disappointed that the branch library would not be built in their neighborhood. After the successful battle against the pollution of ASARCO, the citizens of Globeville were strongly united. They lobbied to have the branch library built in their neighborhood. When the decision was made to place the branch in Elyria, a decision based on centrality and the gift of land, Globeville residents reacted unfavorably. So, while the Swansea neighborhood was pleased to have a branch built in Elyria, close to their community, the Globeville community declined to accept the new branch as their own. This attitude reinforced the geographic barriers that already separated Globeville from the other two neighborhoods. Initial questions about this sensitive issue were reinforced as we interacted with other members of the Globeville community.

During the investigation, it was necessary to resist the temptation to form conclusions about how the findings relate to the library. We found the best way to do this was to deliberately not think about the library, but to focus on what the community was telling us. When the answers received from the investigation began to repeat themselves and the pace of new questions slowed, the investigators had a strong sense of knowing the community. It was important, at this point, to distill the information—to articulate what makes this community unique, what are its needs, and what are the implications for the library. Only then, did we shift our focus and begin to ask questions about how the library could best serve the community.

A complete community analysis includes an evaluation of the current library, its users, services, and collection. Then, a comparison of the library to the community's needs will identify gaps in the level of service. Because our community did not have a library, there was no institution to evaluate. We could, however, make recommendations for the proposed branch, based on our research.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

We began by thinking about decision issues that faced the library. How should the library gather community involvement? What should the building look like? What
type of collection was needed? What hours should the library be open? Were there specific staffing needs? As predicted by Greer and Hale (1982), the systematic and overlapping processes of data collection forced conclusions. Answers to the questions seemed, by the end of the study, to be quite obvious to the researchers. The data we collected, analyzed and organized validated the "why" in support of the "what." Some examples of these recommendations will illustrate this process.

Historically the community has felt abandoned by institutions and government agencies, alienated from the rest of the city, and distrustful of people outside of the neighborhood. Because these feelings continue today, we strongly recommended a continuation of the library's visible presence begun during the Community Analysis. During the construction period, branch staff should become involved in the community by attending community meetings and social events, visiting the various community centers, and building positive relationships. Through this participation in the life of the community, the library would be recognized as a partner in the community. An added benefit would be inclusion in the predominantly oral communication process of the community. In addition, we recommended that, whenever possible, the staff of the library be drawn from the community. This would set the library apart from other businesses and agencies that are viewed as threatening by the local residents.

The residents feel that many public promises have been broken and much has been taken away from them. Although a mobile unit was a logical response to the geographical barriers, the members of the community were suspicious of a library that they could so easily lose. In their minds, the library needed to be a possession, before it could be a utility. To counter these feelings of mistrust, we recommended that the design of the branch be a building with a permanent, solid appearance that harmonized with the historical architecture. Additionally, the lifestyle of the community includes gatherings on front porches and street corners to share news, thus we recommended the design include an outdoor space for people to congregate. This open plaza could also function to draw people into the library by having library programs "spill out" into the community. This would allow new immigrants, unfamiliar with public libraries and suspicious of governmental agencies, opportunities to observe from a safe distance and become comfortable with the library. Signage, both inside and outside the building, we felt was extremely important and must be bilingual.

Since most of the houses in the community are small, and most of the families are large, we recommended that the interior of the library should include several quiet spaces for children to do homework. Since there are many other facilities in the community with meeting rooms, this traditional component of a branch could be eliminated in favor of an area where families could come together. The data indicated that, unlike many libraries where adults want space separated from the children's area, this branch should have a common area that allows parents and children to learn from each other.

The research elicited information suggesting a variety of library policies. For example, we suggested that the branch be open afternoons and evenings to better
serve the large population of school-age children. The many recreation centers already had morning programs for the seniors in the community. Since the community traditionally gathers for family dinners or picnics on Sundays, we recommended Saturday hours instead of Sunday. There are questions as to the legal status of many of the new immigrants. This, combined with the distrust of governmental institutions, led us to recommend that the library have a flexible registration policy which did not require specific forms of identification.

The collection needed to include English materials, Spanish materials, and much that was bilingual to help those who were attempting to learn the other language. A large children's area and collection was paramount, both for school work and for recreation. Our observation of community lifestyles, suggested certain subject areas, such as gardening, auto repair, karate, weightlifting and 'do-it-yourself” books. A large video collection was recommended because, although most residents own TVs and VCRs, there is not a video rental store in the neighborhood. Since many residents watch television, in part to improve their English skills, we recommended material related to popular culture, particularly Hispanic. Because of the low level of educational attainment, the large number of monolingual Spanish speakers, and the growing number of children in the community, the library must facilitate literacy at all levels. Bilingual literacy programs should be developed and materials collected to support them.

Of particular importance to a community that is isolated from the rest of the city, economically depressed, and educationally poor, is accessibility to computers. We recommended that these include word processing and educational software (not normally available at the library), along with a specially trained cadre of staff and volunteers to teach patrons how to use them.

While numerous geographical barriers pose a special challenge to serving the population, a number of community resources were in place, which, through cooperative efforts and assertive service, could enhance the branch’s service to the community. Several community centers have established programs which meet certain needs of the residents and which could be enhanced and enlarged upon by the library. These centers could serve as remote distribution sites for library materials and information. Whether through special offsite collections or electronic document delivery, resources from the library could be shared, creating a community information network. Remote access would be particularly important to the residents of Globeville which is isolated from the branch, not only geographically but, psychologically as well. Service to this neighborhood would require special effort due to their feelings of alienation.

The north-central Denver community has an important history and the potential for a vital future. The diversity represented by the ancestors of the original immigrants and the new residents of the community must be celebrated. The divisiveness between the three neighborhoods and the prevalent mistrust of government agencies must be overcome. To address these concerns, we recommended that the name chosen for the branch be one that would represent the diversity of the community and link the past with the future.
DISSEMINATION OF THE INFORMATION

It is imperative, note Greer and Hale (1982), that a written document, reporting the findings of a community analysis, be produced. While the process should be ongoing, it is necessary to articulate the findings and document the research. Before we began a final report, however, architects and library administrators were beginning to make decisions concerning the branch. We recognized the need to share our findings quickly and in creative formats that would capture attention. We offered guided tours of the community, during which we would visually show what we found, verbally introduce the conclusions we had reached, and let the participants experience the community and its needs firsthand. Handouts were provided, outlining our recommendations. Tours were given to library directors, the branch manager, collection development staff, the City Librarian, members of the Library Commission, and the library's Hispanic Steering Committee that had a special interest in the community.

The tours gave life and color to our research in a way that a written report could not. However, there were limitations to the idea. The time of day a tour was given would have a serious effect on what the participants saw. In the morning, they might see a quiet neighborhood with a few children playing in the yards; however, the afternoon would bring masses of children out onto the streets. Nights would see whole families walking around the neighborhood, while weekends would find extended families in the park having a cookout. There was also a limit to the amount of time we could devote as "tour guides". The tours provided a "snapshot" of the community, but we wanted decision-makers to have a more comprehensive view of the community.

We began to explore the idea of making a video report of the community. This would allow us to capture the community as we saw it by putting together images from various days and times and provide a permanent visual record. We realized that much more information could be conveyed in a short amount of time using the multimedia of video. The simultaneous presentation of sound, graphics and motion picture could communicate the needs of the community more vividly than a written report. We were able to make a brief introduction to such a video, and showed it to several groups, including the library commission, future staff, and a meeting of the community.

The written report of our community analysis was given to all interested parties, including the City Librarian, Library Commissioners, Director of Branches, Director of Marketing, Branch Manager and each community leader interviewed during our investigation. A copy of the report and the video were also entered into the library's own historical collection. Since that time, copies of the report have been requested by many people including the Swansea Elementary School principal who was facing an important School Board decision, a teacher and a librarian writing grant proposals for the community, a library school educator teaching a research methods class, and a regional library director who wants librarians in his area to learn how to practice community analysis.
EVALUATION

From the first, we were intrigued by the difference a community analysis could make. As the new library became reality, we watched to see which recommendations were useful. While not all of our recommendations were implemented, a significant number were incorporated into the library plans. While other library staff had formed impressions of the area from bookmobile visits or attendance at community meetings, the systematic process of data collection gave our recommendations a weight which mere impressions lacked. This validity was particularly important when presenting recommendations to library decision-makers, especially when budgetary considerations were involved. The report also documented useful information about resources in the community for the branch staff.

The knowledge created by the community analysis was used in a variety of ways. For example, the architects asked for a copy of the preliminary report, which they used in the design of the building. Our stress on the need for outreach in the community led to the development of an Outreach Librarian position for the branch, and several of the staff have been hired from the community. The collection strongly mirrors our suggestions. As we suggested, the Library Commission solicited input from the community and composed a branch name which links the name of a recent Hispanic community leader (whose impact on future generations is significant) with the name of the family who once operated a grocery store in the community and donated the land on which the library would be built.

Almost four years after the analysis was begun, we interviewed Pilar Castro-Reino, the Outreach Librarian for the Valdez-Perry Branch of the Denver Public Library to evaluate our recommendations. There is a general feeling by the new branch staff that the knowledge created by the community analysis gave them a head start in the community. We felt strongly that the staff needed to be deeply involved in the community, and it is certainly true that Ms. Castro-Reino has become an integral part of the life of the community. She echoed our recommendations that community involvement and building positive relationships is key to the success of the library. She has called parents at home to talk about their children, visited children in their homes on special occasions, and even been invited to a baby shower. Her programming for children includes soccer lessons outside the library—a highly visible activity that has drawn more and more children. She relies heavily on word-of-mouth communication and has identified additional community members who are key sources and transmitters of information.

In a neighborhood with so many children, maintaining a semblance of order in the library has been a challenge. After school, the library is filled with children and teenagers, and the noise level can be quite high. The computers are always in use, usually with a crowd around each one. Teenagers come to socialize or practice English by talking to young bilingual staff members. The small study rooms are heavily used. As we predicted, service to children and youth is a large part of the branch library’s mission.
Several comments Castro-Reino made about the design of the building showed that, although the architects took some ideas from our report, they (and we) did not go far enough. While we recommended that a large children's area be integrated with the rest of the library, they placed it to one side to create a separate "adult" space. This created several spaces in the children's area that are too remote from the main service desk. Castro-Reino expressed a wish that the children's area was more centrally located and larger. A few other areas are not visible from the service desk, and it is there that trouble between teenagers will start. Additional areas for small groups to socialize would be helpful, however, she notes, these spaces must be easily visible to staff. She would like more area to display art, which, as mentioned in our report, is very important to the community. The residents were disappointed with the exterior appearance of the building, which does not look "old fashioned" or in keeping with existing neighborhood design. Many feel that the building looks too "institutional" yet the "delicate" landscaping around the building may not withstand the assault by throngs of active children. The architects did design several sitting areas and a walled patio which are very popular.

Library policies are extremely flexible at the new branch. "How can you fill out a registration form," Castro-Reino asks, "when you can't write? And how can you be expected to pay large fines when your family lives from paycheck to paycheck?" A variety of "unofficial" forms of identification are accepted for registration. When materials are late or lost, she uses it as an opportunity to move behavior closer to the "ideal", rather than imposing heavy fines.

In general, the collection reflects the needs of the community well. Popular material, such as items related to television shows or celebrities, and true crime are used more than the "intellectual" books. As predicted, the video collection has a high circulation rate. The information on community resources provided in the community analysis report has been invaluable, and needs to be formalized and updated for staff use and customer referral. Surprisingly, the branch's audio tape collection receives heavy use by local truck drivers. While the researchers were keenly aware of the heavy truck traffic in and around the community, we overlooked the information needs of the drivers.

Outreach is extremely important, and the library staff spends many hours in the neighborhood schools and community centers. Castro-Reino thinks that remote distribution sites would be helpful, but staffing is an issue, as with many small branches. She still encounters resistance from Globeville, the neighborhood our analysis identified as most isolated from the branch and alienated from the rest of the community.

Most of the staff are fluent Spanish speakers while the rest have moderate skills. Several people with ties to the neighborhood have been hired as staff. One clerk is the granddaughter of a woman who lives near the library and spent much of her childhood in the neighborhood. Grants have provided for "After School Assistants," and several young people from the neighborhood have been hired for these positions. Volunteers help with the English-as-a-Second-Language program.
Because efforts have been made to recruit from the community, residents both young and old are beginning to see the Library as a potential career.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the process, the results and the follow-up evaluation, the authors concur with the literature that knowledge of a community is an essential component of professional library service. We found the systematic process of community analysis to be an incredible tool for gaining knowledge about a community and its needs. We acknowledge that some investment of resources, both human and otherwise, is necessary to perform a community analysis. We found, however, that the benefits accrued from such an investment are significant. We were fascinated to experience the way that recommendations evolved naturally from the data. We surprised library decision-makers (and ourselves, at times) with ready answers to their questions.

Community analysis research is a learning process. As we moved through the process, several things stood out that we began to see as important components. Working in teams of two or three sparks the questions that drive the research and helps divide the work. We agree with Greer and Hale’s (1982) recommendation that the library staff conduct the community analysis, and there are several good reasons for involving as many stakeholders as possible. We found that the researcher begins to know the community as her own, to be interested in the lives of its residents, and to become an advocate for the needs of the community—an attitude that fosters proactive service. We also found that our presence in the community became a touchstone for the residents. The relationships that develop during a community analysis lead to trust and support of the library. Additionally, the community analysis researcher becomes a repository of information about the community, a resource that is valuable to the library, the community and other researchers.

Initially, there is so much to take in that we recommend carrying a tape recorder to capture impressions as they occur. We also recommend videotaping whenever possible, but always with the permission of the participants. We found that a videocamera attracts attention, bringing adults out of their houses to talk and kids to show off. Such activity is an effective “advertisement” of the library and creates opportunities for outreach.

We found the results of the community analysis to be extremely valuable even though key library decision-makers were not actively involved in the research process. The video recording was a powerful tool for communicating our findings, as were the guided tours. These multimedia formats allowed us to share the knowledge discovered through our research in ways that a written report do not allow. The report, while valuable as a record of the data and a reference to the sources, does not convey the spirit of the community. While firsthand experience is desirable, there are creative alternatives.
As the literature expresses, community analysis must be an ongoing endeavor. Our research has paved the way for continued study of the north-central Denver community and its branch library. A study of the Valdez-Perry Branch, currently being conducted by the Library Data Program at Florida State University, will create new knowledge about the use of the library. In comparison with the community analysis, this use study will further identify the needs of the community and define gaps in information services.

As we have shared the results of our community analysis with library administrators, members of the community, and the library community at large, it has become apparent that our philosophy of librarianship, which prompted us to conduct the research, has been deeply affected by the experience. We have become advocates for community analysis because this research has the potential to improve the quality of life in a community. Research matters to the north-central Denver communities of Globeville, Elyria and Swansea, and to the Valdez-Perry Branch of the Denver Public Library.

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