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Abstract

Material challenges have been the most contentious issue in public libraries in the United States in recent years. A challenge indicates a request by a person or group to remove or restrict library materials. The reported cases of challenges to the American Library Association skyrocketed in 2021 and reached 1,247 in 2023, presumably due to the politicization of topics such as gender, sexuality, and race and the rise of organizations that support material challenges. Accordingly, most challenged materials are alleged to depict race, sexuality, or gender in an offensive manner. Multiple communities have experienced disagreements among community members, while librarians try to protect the value of intellectual freedom in general.

Material challenges are more than just a public controversy, they also represent disagreements about public library governance. In most cases, librarians and a small number of community representatives are responsible for public library governance. A board of trustees, appointed by a local government, and library staff collaborate to make key decisions related to public library budgets, policies, and personnel, while community members can also influence public library governance by sending letters to boards, making a public comment at board meetings, or directly communicating with library staff. However, not many studies have examined the situations in which these actors in public library governance disagree.

This single case study investigates a public library system that has experienced controversy around material challenges, where actors disagree on an issue of material challenge. I focus on the distribution and exercise of power, which was examined by how actors in controversy mobilize resources to achieve their goals. Data was collected through interviews, recordings, and documents. Three analysis methods (thematic coding, meta-network framework, and chronology of disagreement events) were used for triangulation.

The main resources mobilized in this controversy were legal authority, rights, and networks. Legal authority defines the issues of the controversy, while rights are mobilized to counter legal authority. Networks exist as a resource that influences both mobilizing legal authority and rights. Regarding the continuation of controversy, these resources supply the basic elements of controversy: actors, issues, and disagreement. Legal authority provides disagreement issues, while networks encourage actors to participate and mobilize their rights in the controversy.

A model of resource mobilization in the public governance controversy is proposed to represent the relationship among these resources. Legal authority is not distributed equally because of the schema of governance that is based on majoritarianism. Actors without legal authority in Lafayette use other resources to counter legal authority by supporting different schemas of governance, which eventually continues the controversy. My research suggests a future direction for public participation by leveling legal authority to mitigate public controversy.

This study contributes to critically understanding public library governance during controversies, which eventually shape public libraries based on the power in a local community. Furthermore, it provides insights for library practitioners and community members to successfully resolve controversies surrounding public libraries.

Power and Controversy:
Controversy surrounding Material Challenges at a Public Library

by
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DISSERTATION

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Acknowledgement

감사의 글

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List of Abbreviations

ALA	American Library Association
CNL	Citizens for a New Louisiana
DQST	Drag Queen Story Time
LEH	Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities
LIS	Library and Information Science
LCAC	Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship
LPL	Lafayette Public Library
SSHH	Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood
TBG	This Book is Gay
TFP	Tradition, Family, Property Louisiana Inc.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Public libraries are growing organisms, as renowned library scholar Ranganathan (2006) once said. The history of public libraries in the U.S. clearly demonstrates their changing nature. In the nineteenth century, the prototype of North American public libraries was founded by a social club consisting of a small number of white men. These social libraries “were voluntary associations of individuals for the purpose of buying books to be owned jointly by all those who belonged” (Shera, 1971, p. 45). At this time, no professional librarians existed. Thus, the club members acted as both decision-makers and managers who ran the library in a voluntary manner. Since then, the public library model in the U.S. has changed significantly. For example, the range of users has expanded gradually, the government started supporting public libraries with taxes, and librarianship was solidified as a profession. Today, public libraries in the United States uphold their value to serve all citizens, and librarians have formed one of the strongest professional groups in the country.

In most cases, librarians and a small number of community representatives are responsible for public library governance. Librarians and a board of trustees appointed by a local government collaborate to make key decisions related to public library budgets, policies, and personnel. Due to the lack of studies, it is difficult to see the full picture of who serves as public library trustees and how trustees are selected. Nevertheless, Gibbs and colleagues (2007) and Kelley (1999) similarly reported that library boards mainly consist of community members older than 55 with a higher education degree, which suggests that a handful of community members with certain characteristics have a great influence on library governance. Other members of the community have less influence over the governance of public libraries. They may send letters to boards,

make a public comment at board meetings, or communicate with library staff, but these are often considered as mere suggestions without authority.

In addition to library employees, trustees, and general community members, many other stakeholders in the local community impact the governance of public libraries. According to Velasquez (2019), internal stakeholders who are directly related to public libraries include Friends of Libraries and library foundations, which raise funds for the library, as well as cities, counties, and villages that determine the library budgets. External stakeholders are often nonprofit and charitable organizations, businesses, faculty from K-12 schools, the mass media, and the federal government. The fact that public library services involve the interaction of various stakeholders indicates that public library governance relies on a horizontal network of organizations. Since the birth of public libraries originated in civil society, public libraries have been less hierarchical institutions and more embedded in local communities.

However, what should actors involved in public library governance do if their opinions significantly differ from others? For example, how should actors respond if library boards and library staff differ from those of community members? What should actors do if library boards and library staff have different opinions about a certain issue in a public library? What if there are conflicting opinions about public library services within its community? Dissent among actors may initiate a public controversy that involves a series of events where actors disagree in public spaces.

Public libraries in the U.S. are facing controversies around material challenges, which sets a complex scene where groups of actors constantly disagree with one another on challenges. A challenge is defined as “an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group” (American Library Association [ALA], 2012). Although challenges against

library materials have existed almost since the founding of public libraries in the U.S., the number of reported challenges to the ALA recorded the highest number of 1,269 in 2022 (ALA, 2023a; Robbins, 2015). In each of the previous 20 years, fewer than 600 challenges were reported in a given year. However, in 2021, this number began to soar (ALA, 2023a). Most of the targeted materials are challenged due to the way they depict race, sexuality, and/or gender (ALA, 2023a). About 75% of challenges in 2022 were initiated by patrons, parents, or political/religious groups, but it does not indicate that all patrons, parents, or groups in a local area agree with challengers (ALA, 2023b).

Controversies surrounding material challenges are a case of public governance, which means the process of solving public issues through the interaction of various participants (Egeberg, 2018; Gross, 2010; Kooiman, 2003; Pierre, 2011). Material challenges are public issues raised by community members who find their public library's material inappropriate. Here, the question is: what kind of information is an appropriate public good that receives funding from taxes? Commonly, library staff resolve material challenges when a challenge is submitted. However, if a challenger is dissatisfied with the library staff's decision, more actors gradually become involved in deciding whether the library should accept the material challenge. The final decision-makers are often the board of trustees of the library. During the process of resolving material challenges, controversies arise when actors disagree with one another at multiple events in public spaces. The board of trustees and library staff are required to decide their position and ways to reach it.

The controversies surrounding material challenges provide a unique opportunity to understand the governance process in local communities, especially when a number of groups disagree on a particular issue. First, the controversies provide an opportunity to examine how the

public actively seeks ways to influence decision-making about public services. For example, in controversies around material challenges, the public mobilizes various tools to steer the decisions of the public library. Some community members organize protests (or mobilize support), create Facebook groups, or provide public comments during board meetings to influence public library services. Bottom-up public participation contradicts the typical focus of new governance, which often discusses public managers' efforts to encourage public participation (Bingham et al., 2005).

Secondly, controversy in a governing process highlights the power dynamics of actors participating in governance. As Venturini (2010) argues, controversies are shaped by the distribution of power in the community. Each actor, such as boards of trustees, library staff, local government officials, community members, and patrons, participates in a controversy with asymmetrical power, which eventually affects the development and resolution of the controversy. For instance, assume that there is a disagreement between trustees and community members regarding the location of a new branch of a public library. This disagreement would become a controversy that community members participated in multiple public board meetings to express their opinions, but the disagreement persists. The resources available to actors, such as the authority granted to trustees or the networks of community members within the local community, shape their power to influence the controversy and, ultimately, governance. As we are living in "the era of third-party government," which emphasizes collaborative nature of public services, understanding actors in controversy serves as a basis to negotiate and persuade diverse actors with contradicting goals to solve public problems (Salamon, 2002, p. 1623).

This case study investigates controversy in a public library system around challenges to examine public library governance, in which a variety of actors enact their power. I conceptualize power as a capacity to achieve a desired outcome by mobilizing resources

(Giddens, 1984). Here, resources are the sources that generate power, which are divided into allocative (material) resources, such as money or space, and authoritative (human-related) resources, such as knowledge and hierarchy. I examine how resources are distributed in controversies in public libraries and how they are mobilized by actors. Specifically, I address the following research questions:

- 1) How are resources mobilized by actors in controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?
- 2) What is the relationship between the mobilization of resources and the process of controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?

This study investigates a critical single case (Yin, 2009). The unit of analysis is controversy around challenges occurring in one public library system. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documents and analyzed based on meta-network framework and the chronology of disagreement events, which are described in detail in the methodology section. This study contributes to the critical understanding of public library governance and controversies embedded in communities that shape public libraries based on the power distribution in a local community. Furthermore, it provides insights for library practitioners and community members who struggle to resolve controversies surrounding challenges by providing an in-depth analysis of resource mobilization and its impact on the process of controversies. Additionally, this study is situated at the intersection of governance and controversy research, providing a novel empirical analysis of how a governance structure enables or limits actors' ability to accomplish their goals in a controversy.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 2 provides contextual information about public libraries in the U.S., as the background for this study. First, I summarize the purpose of public libraries in the U.S. I then outline how public libraries are governed in the U.S. and how public library governance is related to the broader governance trend. Finally, I review existing research on material challenges, which is the main disagreement issue among actors in the case of this research.

2.1 PURPOSES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public libraries are socially constructed institutions linked to the objectives of society (Shera, 1949). Compared to other types of libraries, such as academic libraries or school libraries, the objectives or needs of society more directly influence public libraries and public libraries also interact with society more directly because public libraries are open to the general public. Thus, the public library as an institution has been constantly changed under the influences of society since the public library began as “a product of 19th-century social reform in Western nations” (Seavey, 1994, p. 518).

Currently, the most used definition of a public library is from the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994. According to this manifesto (UNESCO & International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 1995), a public library refers to “the local gateway to knowledge, [which] provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.” This manifesto states that the public library is an institution for providing free and equal access to information for all.

Nonetheless, a public library as an institution serves different populations with different structures depending on the society. As an example, the early public libraries in the U.S. were

founded by middle class White Americans to promote their values, which violates the current mission of equal access to public libraries (Mehra & Gray, 2020). The issue of racial discrimination is still one of the most concerning problems in U.S. libraries. When the concept of public library was exported from its Western origin, it had adapted to the new social setting (Seavey, 1994). For example, after a public library as an institution was imported, many African countries, such as Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria, public libraries were created upon a donation from Western donors. Only a small portion of citizens have used public libraries because the Western model of public libraries does not fit the needs of local citizens (Olden, 2015). Considering these vast differences from one society to another, I focus on public libraries in a specific nation, the United States, to avoid the overgeneralization of my research.

In the U.S., public libraries share a few fundamental characteristics (Rubin & Janes, 2016, p. 58). First, public libraries are established by state law and supported by local taxes. Through the nineteenth century, local citizens and their governments agreed to support public libraries as public goods by appropriating tax money. Second, public libraries are open to all without charge and people voluntarily choose to use public libraries. Although it is still questionable whether everyone feels comfortable and welcomed at public libraries, public libraries are supposed to serve every group of society. Additionally, the voluntary nature of public library use is different from formal educational institutions, such as elementary schools. The voluntary use of public libraries is a legacy of the self-improvement philosophy from the nineteenth century. Between the legal foundation of public libraries and the public libraries' services to local citizens, a board of trustees takes a governing role to assure public libraries serve the public needs. In other words, a board of trustees connects public libraries and citizens by representing the public interests and monitoring the use of public money in public libraries.

Public libraries navigate through changes in society under the governing of public library boards. As LIS (Library and Information Science) scholars have alerted, the global economic turndown resulted in fiscal austerity in public libraries and the demonstration of the value of public libraries is never more important than before (Abbott-Halpin & Rankin, 2020; Rubin & Janes, 2016). Of course, it is important to show the efficient management of public libraries to keep the budget flowing into libraries (Moran et al., 2018). Nonetheless, it is also imperative for each public library to be responsive to the community needs by setting the right goal for the community and assuring the public library services to be beneficial to the community, without excluding specific populations (Abbott-Halpin & Rankin, 2020). These challenges shed a spotlight on public library boards, whose role is to make decisions to set strategies and goals for fulfilling the needs of their community.

2.2 PUBLIC LIBRARY GOVERNANCE

Public library boards are the governing bodies of many U.S. public libraries and are responsible for making decisions regarding library operations. However, as mentioned in the introduction, there are instances where community members, who are not part of the board, wish to participate in decision-making about public library administration. Sometimes, controversies arise when actors participating in decision-making do not agree on decisions. This phenomenon suggests that authority-centered public problem-solving may not always be effective in the operation of public libraries. In this section, we will examine the concept of governance that emphasizes public problem-solving across various sectors and explore how this broader trend is reflected in the governance of public libraries.

2.2.1 Characteristics of governance

The concept of governance emerged in the public sector as a new mode of public problem-solving that replaced government-centric approaches based on hierarchy and unilateral decision making. Since the late seventies, the economic recession has evoked questions about the sustainability of the welfare state, which was operated by a bureaucratic government with centralized power (Fenger & Bekkers, 2007). Extensive criticism of centralized government questioned the ability of government to solve social problems, such as poverty and crime, as an impartial intervenor (Bevir, 2012). Social problems “have become too complex for government to handle on its own, because disagreements exist about the proper ends of public action, and because government increasingly lacks the authority to enforce its will on other crucial actors without giving them a meaningful seat at the table” (Salamon, 2002, p. 1623). Additionally, the functional fragmentation of society has created interdependent subsystems and organizations (Fenger & Bekkers, 2007). No single organization, including government organizations, can achieve its goal without interaction with other entities.

As a reaction to the model of centralized government, governance came into the limelight with an emphasis on decentralized and networked modes of governing to solve social problems through decision-making, agenda-setting, policymaking, policy implementation, and other activities (Egeberg, 2018; Gross, 2010; Kooiman, 2003; Pierre, 2011). Compared to traditional bureaucratic government, collaboration among the public, private, and non-profit sectors has gained importance. This collaboration allows governments to have access to resources, such as knowledge, expertise, and experiences, which would not be available to a centralized government (Fenger & Bekkers, 2007; Peters & Pierre, 1998). Not only organizations but also

individual community members may be included in governing networks (Fenger & Bekkers, 2007).

The decentralized mode of public governance necessitates public managers to nurture a set of skills that specialize in managing interorganizational relationships. Salamon (2002) suggests three distinct skills. First, activation skills enable a public manager to identify actors who should take a role in public problem solving and encourage them to participate in the problem solving. Often, non-profit or grassroots organizations take the lead in activating relevant actors. Second, orchestration skills are required to coordinate actors in a network to accomplish a collective goal. Lastly, modulation skills are for designing modules of rewards and penalties that keep actors on track with collaboration. These skills are used together with “a number of less direct forms of intervention as the means to achieve their ends,” such as contracting, grants, fees, and charges, (Peters & Pierre, 1998, p. 227; Salamon, 2002). Interventions, or tools, are intrinsically political since they define who can join the process of public problem solving and what roles they can play.

The transformation into public governance may be a necessary change to utilize resources across different sectors to address social problems. However, governance has two conundrums regarding legitimacy and accountability. First, is it legitimate to share authority to make collective decisions for the public with non-state actors? Since “the state and its bodies...claim to have the monopoly on the legitimate exercise of power within its territory” and residents, legitimizing decisions made by non-state actors becomes an important step in soliciting public acceptance of the decisions (Fenger & Bekkers, 2007, p. 28). Second, who is accountable for the outcome and output of collective decisions in governance? In the centralized government model, elected officials control public administration, and they ultimately hold the public accountable. It

is unclear, however, whether elected officials are still responsible for the decisions when different actors make them. If elected officials are not obligated to oversee the results of collective decisions, it then needs a tool to ensure diverse actors implement collective decisions to elicit the best outcomes for society instead of pursuing their own interests (Posner, 2002). One way to alleviate concerns about the legitimacy of governance is through public participation, which encourages direct engagement with the public in public administration (Bingham et al., 2005). Nonetheless, public participation should be meticulously designed to secure the representativeness of the public required to enhance legitimacy (Nabatchi, 2012).

2.2.2 Evolution of public library governance

Although the concept of governance originated in a broader context of government, its implications extend to public libraries, which commonly function as part of local governments to provide information services to their communities. Without much discussion about governance in the library field, some public libraries in the U.S. have exemplified the decentralized mode of public governance by collaborating across different sectors and incorporating public opinions to address community's information needs.

Since the dawn of public libraries in the U.S., most have been governed by boards of trustees, while some have advisory boards that have no governing authority (Moore, 2010). Social libraries, the predecessors of public libraries in the U.S., "were voluntary associations of individuals for the purpose of buying books to be owned jointly by all those who belonged" (Shera, 1971, p. 45). The Library Company of Philadelphia, which was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 as the first social library, was governed by ten directors. The directors put forth their efforts to decide "a proper Time for the Payment of the Money subscribed," select and order

books, print catalogs, and request support from the proprietors (cited from Korty, 1971, p. 35). Compared to the current distinction between the roles of public library boards and library staff, the directors took on the roles of librarians, who operate a library, and, at the same time, the roles of library boards, which govern a library.

Following the model of the Library Company of Philadelphia, many social libraries were established throughout the nation (Wiegand, 2018). Unfortunately, social libraries were not sustainable due to their voluntary nature. The budget of social libraries fluctuated with the economic condition of their members (Shera, 1971). This uncertainty made people question the sustainability of libraries for the public solely operated by a group of good-minded volunteers (Valentine, 2011). Yet, an alternative model of a library for the public burgeoned in Boston. As a consequence of heightened interest in self-help education among a small number of prestigious citizens, including professors and elected officials, the Boston Public Library started its service in 1854 (Lee, 1971). The Boston Public Library is considered a monumental institution because it was incorporated into the municipal system and became a role model for the free public library movement (Wiegand, 2015). The city council of Boston appointed a board of trustees to oversee the operation and financial situation of the library.

Following this tradition, currently, most advisory and governing boards are appointed by the sponsoring local government, which allocates local taxes to public libraries, in the name of a mayor or commissioner, while some trustees for governing boards are elected by the local residents (e.g., in Illinois, Kansas, and Massachusetts). A governing board makes major decisions relevant to the operation of a public library, including policymaking, control of expenditures, hiring a library director, and creating a strategic plan.

Besides the public library itself and local government, public libraries have operated in close cooperation with non-profit sector organizations long before the concept of governance emerged in the 1990s. The most common type of non-profit organization working with public libraries is the Friends of the Library (the Friends). First started in Illinois in 1922, the Friends typically operate in tandem with a single public library system. “The friends, along with the staff and the library board, have a goal of providing better library service” by promoting public library services to its community and local government, raising funding for public libraries, and coordinating with community members and other local organizations (Progar, 1975). Similarly, community members established library foundations that collaborate with the Friends and libraries as well. The foundations often focus on encouraging donations for larger projects, such as construction projects (Routledge, 2010).

Public libraries have broadened their partnerships with other organizations in their local community as the purpose of public libraries has evolved beyond simply providing physical materials and transformed into community centers that satisfy various needs of the local community. For example, public libraries partner with local governments and community organizations to support the use of e-government systems (Bertot et al., 2013); a department of social work in a university collaborates with a local public library to meet disadvantaged patrons’ needs (Cuseglio, 2021); and public libraries and health or academic libraries work together to improve health literacy in minoritized communities (Engeszer et al., 2016; Schwartz et al., 2002). Collaboration with other organizations allows public libraries to achieve their goal of serving the community’s needs under budgetary constraints (Cuseglio, 2021). The public’s role in U.S. public library governance is often limited to a data source that shows the needs and expectations of public libraries. Surveys, focus group interviews, and field research are common

tools to elicit information about community needs (Gross et al., 2016). Meanwhile, some public libraries use a citizens advisory board in large-scale construction projects (McCabe, 2000). Comparatively, more discussion of the public's role in public library governance has come outside of the U.S. Goulding (2009) argued the need for community engagement in the decision-making process of public libraries, following the new agenda for local governments announced by the New Labour Government in the U.K. In a similar vein, Pateman and Williment (2013) reported a model of a community-led public library that emphasizes a relationship with community members and their continuous participation in decision-making and the implementation of services.

Based on the literature of governance in general and public library governance, this research defines public library governance as *the process of public problem solving done by public and private actors at public libraries.*

2.3 MATERIAL CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I provide an overview of the research on censorship and challenges in U.S. public libraries. I expand the focus of the overview to censorship because censorship and challenges are closely related and often discussed together in research. Censorship means “a decision made by a governing authority or its representative(s) to suppress, exclude, expurgate, remove, or restrict public access to a library resource based on a person or group's disapproval of its content or its author/creator” (Magi & Garnar, 2015, p. 248), while challenges refer to “an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group” (ALA, 2012). In other words, challenges are a type of action that attempts to result in censorship. Due to their connectedness, this section includes both research on censorship and challenges. The

literature is categorized into four topics based on their research focus: trends and patterns of censorship in public libraries, governance, challengers, and librarians' perceptions. Additionally, I examine materials for practitioners, such as intellectual freedom guidebooks and memoirs of challenges.

2.3.1 Trends and Patterns of Censorship in Public Libraries

Practices of censorship have been connected to the larger social atmosphere of society since the dawn of public libraries in the U.S. The main group of challengers and their concerns may differ, but censorship and challenges have existed in public libraries for a long time. In the late 19th century, public librarians and philanthropists often acted as active censors with a paternalistic approach in order to maintain their preferred values in public libraries (Robbins, 2015). Slowly, throughout the early 20th century, the librarianship altered to incorporate the value of intellectual freedom, with the ALA acting as the focal point. ALA adopted the Library Bill of Rights in 1939 to reflect multiple views in library collections, and subsequently, the Bill was revised to state a formal opposition to any kind of censorship and support intellectual freedom (Magi & Garner, 2015).

Nevertheless, the objections against library collections and services persisted based on contemporary social issues. In general, major reasons for challenges toward library materials have been sexuality (or obscenity), politics, religion (or profanity), and race (Fiske, 1959). During the post-war period, the most sensitive issue that provoked challenges was the anti-communist agenda, which was followed by challenges to "obscene" books in the 1960s (Fiske, 1959; Robbins, 2015). In the meantime, public libraries in southern states faced challenges against books accused of supporting desegregation (Robbins, 2015). The reasons for challenges

still hold true 60 years later. In 2022, most challenges targeted materials regarding the LGBTQ community and racial minorities (ALA, 2023b).

Fiske's book (1959) about censorship in public and school libraries in California is one of the seminal studies that illustrates the overall pattern of censorship and challenges in one area. She conducted 204 interviews with public and school librarians and administrators to understand material selection practices and the processes and results of book challenges. In doing so, she included the analysis of the community, such as demographics and political climate, and multiple actors, such as volunteer organizations, trustees, and the press. Her study was the first to highlight why some challenges become the subject of "official discussion (or controversy)" (Fiske, 1959, p. 48) and what factors influence the result of controversy. Her only clear finding was that libraries tend to remove books when the local press supports challengers.

Similarly, Monks and her colleagues (2014) studied challenge trends in Idaho. They conducted a statewide survey to delineate how often public and school librarians experience challenges and how they respond to resolve the challenges. The result suggests that removal or relocation of books occurs, and most participants were reluctant to seek help from outside. The authors mentioned that it is unclear if the participants do not need outside help because they have a strong formal policy.

More recently, Narayanaswamy and Weaver (2015) explored the impact of ICT on book banning in the U.S., conducting a longitudinal comparison of the number of book challenges and the results of them from 1990 to 2010. The authors found that the number of challenges that resulted in the removal of books has increased while the number of book challenges has stabilized over the years. They suggest that the ICT adoption contributed to the success of book removal; however, it is too early to conclude that the ICT adoption is the sole factor that impacts

the success rate of book challenges since they did not provide an in-depth analysis of the process of book challenges and ICT's role in the process. Comprehensive data collection and analysis that encompasses diverse actors and contextual factors may be required to interpret the trend and foresee upcoming patterns of book challenges.

As described in the introduction, public libraries are facing a surge of challenges. In 2022, 1,269 challenges were reported to ALA, which is approximately three times the average number of challenges in the 2010s (ALA, 2023a). The exact reason for the increase in challenges still needs to be verified, but it is believed to be due to the politicization of topics such as gender, sexuality, and race (Harris & Alter, 2023). Additionally, nationwide civic organizations supporting these challenges contribute to the increasing number of challenges in libraries (ALA, 2023a).

2.3.2 Governance

In connection with the necessity for including diverse factors in material challenge studies, Steele (2018, 2020, 2021) presents a unique approach to studying challenges. In her article in *Collection Management* (Steele, 2018), she suggests a research agenda using gatekeeping theory to study censorship in libraries, which incorporates organizational, social institutional, and social system levels of analysis. The organizational level focuses on the rules and behaviors of gatekeepers in an organization, while the social institutional level includes “the government, mass media, the military, religious institutions, educational institutions (such as schools and universities), professional associations (such as the American Library Association), as well as courts and the legal system” (Steele, 2018, p. 241). The social system level incorporates “social system, social structure, culture, and ideology” (Steele, 2018, p. 243) that act as gatekeepers.

Steele (2021) also investigated specific cases of challenges. Despite not applying the gatekeeping theory, she navigated through the actions of various actors and their power and authority enacted in the court case *Sund v. City of Wichita Falls, Texas*, by analyzing court documents and interviews. After untangling the book censorship case against a LGBTQ-themed book, she concluded that power and authority were the main factors that urged librarians to act as censors. In this study, power and authority specifically referred to the capability to enact policy and make library decisions. As a power holder, the City Council decided to remove the challenged books from the library, and the library director had to follow the decision because she did not possess the power to object. Her study of *Mainstream Loudoun v. Board of Trustees of the Loudoun County Library* also draws a similar conclusion regarding power and authority (Steele, 2020).

Considering my definition of library governance, I argue that Steele's studies fall under the category of library governance studies. This is because her studies concentrate on the process of governing, which includes actions such as decision-making, agenda-setting, policymaking, and implementation, in solving a public problem at public libraries. Compared to other types of challenge studies, these studies incorporate multiple actors and context into the picture to illustrate the power dynamics of challenge and censorship. However, these studies could be enhanced by adopting a wider definition of power. Steele (2020, 2021) implied that power is the actor's capacity to force a decision on another actor; for instance, the board of trustees, city council, and federal court coerced the library director to remove books. Nonetheless, this conceptualization of power placed librarians and community members in a position of powerlessness. Although Steele successfully narrated the events that happened during the challenges, the conclusion reduced the power dynamics among actors into a unidirectional power

relationship that flows from decision-makers to librarians. Moreover, it is questionable why “the Library Administrator would serve as the key gatekeeper and have the power to enforce library policy regarding selection decisions” (Steele, 2021, p. 121). In the case of the library controversy, where diverse community members present their opinion on library governance, there should be a valid, communicable reason why the library directors need to serve as the key gatekeepers who decide what is good for the library and also the community. The self-assigned task of gatekeeping may indicate paternalism in librarianship, which may make communication between librarians and community members difficult when some community members feel their autonomy has been trespassed.

2.3.3 Censors and Challengers

To effectively manage challenges against libraries, it is imperative to understand how and why community members try to remove books from the library or cancel library services. A small number of studies explain the worldview of challengers (Chabot & Helkenberg, 2022; Knox, 2015). Worldview indicates “one’s normal approach to understanding the world” (Knox, 2015, p. 14).

Knox (2015) investigated the challengers’ discourse by analyzing 15 challenge cases across books in public and school libraries and books suggested by school curricula. She collected a vast amount of data, ranging from transcripts of hearings and documents from the governing boards to interview data with challengers. The main finding of this book is the worldview of the challengers, including their perceptions of the moral decline of American society, public institutions as a safe space, and parents’ roles in setting boundaries for their children. She further

discovered the challengers' perceptions of reading, which emphasize the literal interpretation of texts and their direct impact on individuals' behaviors and morals.

Chabot and Helkenberg (2022) applied the analytical framework of Knox (2015) to analyze the discourse of challengers and supporters in a controversy around drag queen story time at a Canadian public library based on letters, emails, and memos written by challengers, supporters, and library board members. Drag queen storytime, which was started in 2015 by Michelle Tea and RADAR Productions (Drag Story Hour, n.d.), has sparked controversy in many public library systems, as some library materials have. The results present a stark contrast between the worldviews of challengers and supporters. For example, the challengers argued that public libraries should be a neutral, moral, and safe place, while the supporters asserted that it is the responsibility of public libraries to promote equity and intellectual freedom instead of being a neutral place that upholds the status quo of society.

2.3.4 Librarians' Perception

Some researchers in the U.S. and elsewhere have been interested in the perspectives of public librarians toward material challenges and censorship. Similar to the research conducted on the worldviews of challengers and censors, these studies focus on the individual level rather than the interactional, organizational, or institutional level.

Busha's (1972) survey study is one of the earliest efforts to investigate public librarians' perceptions of censorship. He tested the relationship between the attitude of public librarians toward intellectual freedom and censorship and various individual and organizational characteristics, such as age, educational level, sex, and the size of their community. According to the findings, the more education the participants received, the more opposed they were to

ensorship. The result also suggests that the participants' positive attitude toward intellectual freedom does not necessarily mean that they disagree with censorship. Busha interpreted this as a discrepancy between attitude and action due to the pressure that librarians face in real life.

Busha's study (1972) was followed by similar studies of public librarians' perceptions of censorship and intellectual freedom in different settings. For example, Oltmann's (2016b) survey study of 108 librarians and directors in Ohio found that less than 5% of participants declined to buy material that might bring negative feedback from their community. Even in rural or conservative areas, librarians collected controversial materials to build a balanced collection. In general, most participants agreed on the value of intellectual freedom suggested by ALA, although it sometimes conflicts with their personal values. The conflict between personal and professional values is also evident in research by Harkovitch and his colleagues (2003). Participants working in the Seattle Public Library system did not object to providing access to Internet pornography in their library to uphold the professional value of intellectual freedom, even though they personally find pornography objectionable.

However, another study of public librarians' perceptions in Australia suggests that the social context may influence the librarians' practices and opinions of censorship (Moody, 2004). In this study, about half of the participants refused to buy controversial material that was on the list given by the author, while most participants reported that they objected to any attempt to restrict access to information. In a similar vein, Oltmann (2016a, p. 307) reported that some public library directors argued that public libraries, as tax-funded institutions, have to reflect a community standard by refusing to collect something that is "so far across the line." Nonetheless, in the same study, some participants interpret the controversy surrounding library collections as a desirable event since it signifies the reflection of diverse views in their community and the

embodiment of intellectual freedom in their library. These findings indicate that public librarians in general understand the value of intellectual freedom in theory, although their application of this value in practice may incur an emotional toll and differ regarding the context in which librarians inhabit.

Floegel and her colleagues (2020) find that public librarians have complicated views toward drag queen storytimes. In this study, public librarians were asked about their perceptions of how relevant actors, such as religious organizations, local government officials, and library administrators, view drag queen storytimes and how these actors influence the library's decision to host them. The finding emphasizes librarians' perceptions of institutional power upon their decisions, which often have stronger power than an individual librarian's value. It implies that the institutional or organizational level requires more attention in studying the governing process, especially when a community engages in a controversy over a public library's decision.

2.3.5 Practical Materials

While some studies in academic journals narrow their focus on a specific aspect of challenges, such as librarians' practices or censors' worldview, the intellectual freedom guidebooks for librarians and the memoirs of public librarians often provide a broader and more comprehensive view of challenges in a local context.

Most guidebooks consider as many different things as possible to fight against censorship (i.e., Downey, 2017; Magi & Garnar, 2015; Jones, 1983). For example, the reason why censorship is bad is explained through the philosophy of intellectual freedom, and they emphasize that it is necessary for each public library to have a good collection management policy and material reconsideration policy. It also provides guidance on how to collaborate with

community or nationwide groups to oppose censorship together through lobbying or advocacy. In other words, this category of materials suggests a wide range of coping strategies for librarians, ranging from ideological background and organizational level coping to networking outside the library.

The New Inquisition, written by public librarian LaRue (2007), shows how the activities suggested in the guidebooks can be practiced in communities based on his field experience. The author's most emphatic point is that libraries and librarians should become *players* in the local community. To this end, the author joined several local community organizations, attended their events, and listened to their opinions, even when he did not agree with the organizations' political or religious opinions. Of course, the formal policy also helped to protect the library's intellectual freedom, but the author devoted a large portion of the book to stressing extensive networking and tenacious marketing efforts. As a result, these efforts have contributed to expanding library collections to reflect the diverse interests of the community instead of removing materials.

True Stories of Censorship Battles in America's Libraries delivers public and school librarians' experiences of the challenges in which actors in the local community were often involved (Nye & Barco, 2012). Although not academic research, the stories of librarians hint at elements that shape challenges and following controversies. For example, several national organizations intervened to address a challenge at one local public library, and the community itself was divided into two support groups (Ch. 23). In several stories, it was confirmed that the local press played a key role in raising controversy (e.g., Ch. 18, 19, and 21), and the library board appeared as an important entity in making library material policies, holding hearings, and making decisions about book challenges. (Ch. 18, 19, 23). Chapter 22 indicates that the book

challenges are part of bigger issues. In this case, the book challenges were interlaced with the library millage levy election, which was not eventually approved. Library millage is a tax imposed on local properties for the operation of libraries. It is established through approval by local voters. These cases suggest that book challenges and controversies are community issues that are closely connected with the financial base of public libraries.

The review of research on challenges and censorship in public libraries suggests a few directions that help strengthen the literature on this topic. First, studies that incorporate a broader context support the understanding of challenges. As some studies present, the demographic characteristics (Fiske, 1959), local issues (Nye & Barco, 2012), social structures and cultures (Steele, 2018), and development of technologies (Narayanaswamy & Weaver, 2015) acted as influential factors in challenges.

Second, both the context and the actors need more attention. Since the challenges and controversies are community issues, the press, library boards, local politicians, the government, local and national non-profit organizations, and other groups and organizations all take part in the process of the challenges and controversies. Thus, a study that encompasses diverse actors in book controversies supplements the prior literature that mostly focuses on librarians or individual censors. If public libraries exist for their community, it is reasonable to study the community instead of narrowly focusing on individuals. Moreover, by incorporating various actors in the study, it is possible to determine which group or individual has the most power, which indicates the capacity to mobilize resources and ultimately influences library governance.

Third, a process-based study would help us find the changing dynamics among actors and the impact of the diverse resources they utilize during challenges and controversies. As the prior studies indicate, challenges are compromised with a series of actions (i.e., sending

reconsideration letters, interviewing with the local press, holding public hearings) that are initiated by various actors and influence one another. To understand the dynamic nature of the challenges, I frame my study with the concepts of governance and controversy, which both concentrate on process. All in all, the purpose of this study is to highlight how actors inside and outside of the community mobilize resources in controversy surrounding public library governance.

2.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I compiled information that provides the context for the rest of the research. First, public libraries exist to provide information access for everyone and are therefore funded by taxes. In the United States, public libraries are primarily governed by library boards composed of community members, and similar to broader governance trends, public libraries collaborate with various local organizations. Finally, research on material challenges has typically focused on specific actors involved in the challenges or examined trends on a macro level. To supplement existing research on material challenges and place greater emphasis on the demands of various actors on public libraries, the next chapter will review power and controversy as conceptual foundations.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

In this chapter, I review the conceptual foundation for analyzing the conflicts among actors that arise in the process of solving public problems related to public libraries. This study uses power and controversy as conceptual lenses. The concept of controversy is used to conceptually wrap this series of conflicts. The concept of power served as a conceptual lens to explore the actions of actors in driving the controversy. My research connects these two concepts to investigate how controversy is shaped by actors with differing levels of power.

3.1 POWER AND RESOURCES

Power is a concept that is central to the study of controversy. Access to public controversy, such as controversy around material challenges, is not limited to specific populations, but this does not guarantee equal power for actors in controversy (Limoges, 1993). Rather, “controversies decide and are decided by the distribution of power” (Venturini, 2010, p. 261). Thus, the evolution of controversy is a power game that is embedded in power structures. The emphasis on power is also important in studying censorship because “the practice of censorship is predicated on who gets to decide what certain people or groups should know” (Knox, 2014, p. 742).

Out of the variegated ways of defining power, I follow the definition that emphasizes the productive or positive side of it. Often, power has a negative connotation because it prohibits, oppresses, and coerces other people into doing something that defies their interests (Stones, 2009). This negative framing of power, or “power over” approach, focuses on the mechanisms and resources that allow an individual or group to command others. As one of the most famous conceptualizations in this line, Lukes (2005, p. 25) argues that power has three dimensions: The

first dimension focuses on the observable behavior in decision-making, while the second traces how “decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues.” The third dimension goes even further to study how power shapes the preferences of people to prevent them from having grievances and eventually keep conflicts latent. These dimensions focus on individuals or groups in power who control conflicts to maintain the status quo that serves their interests.

Although the “power over” approach is often useful for understanding the strategies of elites who wish to maintain power, this perspective has a limited capacity to explain all exercises of power in controversy. Public controversy usually allows diverse individuals from different groups to participate, and thus, an analytic framework for public controversy should be able to analyze the actions of individuals from less privileged groups as well. Additionally, having controversy means that it has already passed the second and third dimensions of power, since it involves explicit, observable actions. This may indicate that the elites failed to control others to keep conflicts under the surface; accordingly, the analysis should stay in the first dimension of power over the public, which significantly restricts the analytic capability of the “power over” approach.

Public controversy needs a more appropriate approach to study different enactments of power from a wide range of groups instead of the elite controlling the public. In this study of library controversy, I define power as *a capacity to achieve a desired outcome by mobilizing resources*, following the “power to” approach, which is another major perspective in studying power. As Lukes himself admits, the “power to” approach encompasses a larger scope of power in society (Lukes, 2005; Morriss, 2016). “‘Power to’ is power as the basic capacity to achieve ends” (Hearn, 2018, p. 285). It does not necessarily involve an asymmetry of power over a certain group; however, it may discuss the distribution of resources that enable power.

Giddens' book, *The Constitution of Society*, addresses that not everyone in society enacts power with the same resources. Giddens posited that the rules and resources comprising the social structure are "both the precondition and unintended outcome of people's agency" (Baert, 1998, p. 104). The power individuals can exercise varies according to the rules, which are "techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices," and the resources they have access to (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). Giddens (1984, p. 16) defined "resources [as] media through which power is exercised, as a routine element of the instantiation of conduct in social reproduction." Resources per se, like money or military force, are not power but elements that can be drawn upon by actors to achieve their goals. He further explained the relationship between power and resources as follows:

Power within social systems which enjoy some continuity over time and space presumes regularized relations of autonomy and dependence between actors or collectivities in contexts of social interaction. But all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors (Giddens, 1984, p.16).

In other words, actors with more resources hold greater power in society, but "subordinate" actors with relatively fewer resources also exercise power to influence their "superiors." This perspective, which deems that everyone has the power to influence, is well-suited for studying how people with different resources exercise power in a controversy.

Giddens (1984, p. 373) conceptualized resources as having two categories: allocative resources and authoritative resources. He defined allocative resources as "material resources involved in the generation of power, including the natural environment and physical artifacts" and authoritative resources as "non-material resources involved in the generation of power, deriving from the capability of harnessing the activities of human beings; authoritative resources

result from the dominion of some actors over others.” Sewell (1992, p. 9) interpreted these categories such that each resource represents nonhuman and human resources. For instance, nonhuman, or allocative, resources are “objects, animate or inanimate, naturally occurring or manufactured, that can be used to enhance or maintain power,” while human, or authoritative, resources refer to “physical strength, dexterity, knowledge, and emotional commitments that can be used to enhance or maintain power, including knowledge of the means of gaining, retaining, controlling, and propagating either human or nonhuman resources.”

In addition to “power over” and “power to,” the “power with” approach is another way to conceptualize power. Early 20th-century management thinker Mary Parker Follett argued that “power with” approach is better in meeting the goal of management (Melé & Rosanas, 2003). While “power over” aims to control other actors, “power with” signifies “a jointly developed power, a co-active, not a coercive power” (Metcalf & Urwick, 2003, p. 60). Follett argued that true power lies in collaborating in a given situation rather than manipulating others. Since this study aims to examine how controversies among actors within the community have developed, the “power to” approach is more suitable for understanding the actors’ actions. “Power to” approach provides a lens to focus on the strategies and actions of actors in controversy, while “power with” can be a useful approach for resolving existing controversies or finding ways to collaboratively respond to situations before controversies arise.

In this study, I focus on (1) the resources that actors in controversy mobilize to achieve a certain outcome, and (2) their power, or their capacity to mobilize the resources (Giddens, 1976). In the analysis of power and resources, I explored what resources exist, how they are distributed, and how the resources are mobilized by different actors. By focusing on power in controversy and governance, this study offers an opportunity to critically understand the power surrounding

public libraries and the intentional and unintentional outcomes of controversies shaped by power. Ultimately, this research supports people who perceive public libraries as social institutions that exist, and change based on the actions of various actors.

3.1.1 Power in Libraries

The term power is often used to criticize groups or ideologies that oppress others. This is no different in the LIS field. Critical librarianship/theory is a recent academic and practical movement that “seeks to be transformative, empowering, and a direct challenge to power and privilege” (Garcia, 2015). The works that fall under the umbrella of critical librarianship can be categorized based on the oppressive systems they focus on, such as gender, race, and sexuality.

First, the researchers who apply the feminist perspective focus on the gendered nature of librarianship. Radford and Radford (1997) analyzed how the derogatory stereotype of female librarians is used as a strategy to overcome the fear of power/knowledge by applying a feminist lens and Foucault’s work. Sloniowski (2016) interweaves feminist theories, immaterial labor, and affective labor to show how the immaterial labor of academic librarians is considered inferior compared to other immaterial labor at universities because most librarians are female who do affective labor. She further argued that a sexual division of labor exists in academic librarianship; for example, new technologies are connected to masculinity, which eventually leads to technology-centered tasks being performed by male librarians. Similarly, Nicholson (2019) conceptualized academic librarianship as a “pink-collar job” and examined the impact of neoliberalism on academic librarians’ work. Emmelhainz and her colleagues (2017) analyzed

Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service Providers

published by the Reference & User Services Association and suggested that reference librarians are expected to perform emotional labor and that the expectation toward them is gendered.

Second, a group of studies focuses on race by applying the analytical lenses of whiteness (e.g., Espinal et al., 2018; Honma, 2005; Schlesselman-Tarango, 2016; Wickham & Sweeney, 2018) and critical race theory (e.g., Gibson et al., 2018; Kumaran & Templeton, 2020; Nataraj et al., 2020). Honma (2005) argues that the Library and Information Science field ought to address its whiteness, which refers to “a location of structural advantage, of race privilege,” “a place from which white people look at ourselves,” and “a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1). Honma asserts that libraries have been operated to serve “the interest of a white racial project by aiding in the construction and maintenance of a white American citizenry as well as the perpetuation of white privilege” (Honma, 2005, p. 4). Similarly, Schlesselman-Tarango (2016) argues that the pervasive model of “Lady Bountiful” in librarianship, which only applies to white, middle-class women, eventually inhibits women of color from entering the LIS field.

Critical race theory (CRT) also provides a theoretical basis for critical librarianship. Critical race theory is “a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 2). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), the basic tenets of CRT include the ordinariness of racism, the interest convergence of the White elites and the working-class that bars the eradication of racism, race as a social construction, and the differential racialization of different groups at different times. In LIS, for example, Kumaran and Templeton (2020) criticize the hiring and education of public library boards by utilizing the CRT framework, and Nataraj and

her colleagues (2020) used the CRT framework to argue that librarians of color are forced to enact white values when they are forced to follow bureaucratic rules in libraries.

Third, studies that criticize oppression against the LGBTQ community focus on specific library services, such as collection development (e.g., Garry, 2015; Hughes-Hassell et al., 2013; Proctor, 2020) and cataloging (e.g., Drabinski, 2013; Howard & Knowlton, 2018). Drabinski (2013, p. 108) introduced queer theory to fundamentally criticize the idea of knowledge organization per se: “When an item is placed in a particular category or given a particular name, those decisions always reflect a particular ideology or approach to understanding the material itself.” In practice, materials regarding less privileged groups are scattered in library classification, and librarians and users ought to equip themselves with search tactics to obtain these materials. The studies on collection development have taken a more practical approach. Library collections were assessed based on the portion of LGBTQ-related materials or LGBTQ-themed award-winning titles in their collections (Hughes-Hassell et al., 2013; Proctor, 2020). Garry (2015) discovered that contextual factors such as enrollment numbers, racial diversity, political climate, and certified school librarians influence the inclusion of LGBTQ materials in school libraries.

Critical librarianship has successfully unearthed the system of oppression by highlighting the power possessed by the mainstream members of society. Marginalized groups such as women or racial minorities are often considered suppressed victims in libraries. However, this stream of research may need a new perspective on power that can encompass the power possessed by less privileged groups. By applying this approach, we no longer see the marginalized group through a deficit lens. In the case of controversies over material challenges, the public actively participates in public comments during library board meetings, which are common tools of public

engagement in public libraries. Public engagement, which means “a variety of in-person and online methods for bringing people together to address issues of public importance,” may highlight the power of public as a capability and collaboration rather than view the public as a subject of “power over” (Hand & Ching, 2011; Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014, p. 65S). However, since public comments are implemented by public libraries or city/county councils, they hold the capacity to structure public comments and decide if the comments should be reflected in their decisions. To take account of the power disparity in controversies, this study focuses on how different actors, including the public, trustees, and library staff, possess different capacities and exert their capacity to achieve their goal in controversies over material challenges. Since the library is a social institution created by people, it is important to understand how actors use their capacity to change libraries and further empower the less privileged people to achieve the changes we need in libraries instead of simply criticizing the hegemony.

Furthermore, I suggest a more integrative examination of power in libraries instead of focusing on a specific system of oppression. As Crenshaw (1991, p. 1245) and Collins (1990) argue, oppression often does not operate alone; rather, different kinds of oppressions create myriad intersections that “shape the multiple dimensions” of oppression. Regarding the nature of power and oppression, my study investigates the enactment of power in library controversies without delimiting the types of oppressive systems or actors. With this approach, I present how libraries are shaped by various actors and their power through controversies.

3.2 CONTROVERSY

This study conceptualizes the conflict among actors surrounding the public library as a controversy. In this section, controversy research from various fields will be reviewed to identify

the elements that constitute a controversy. Based on these elements, I argue that the controversies surrounding the public library have existed around various issues in addition to material challenges.

3.2.1 Definitions of controversy

Multiple disciplines have studied controversy, and each has a distinct focus. The sociology of science and science and technology studies (STS) examine how scientific knowledge is intertwined with public knowledge controversies (Barry, 2012). In social media studies, the emphasis is on identifying online controversies and analyzing their characteristics, such as network structure, content, emotions, etc. (e.g., Garimella et al., 2018; Popescu & Pennacchiotti, 2010). Researchers in policy studies (e.g., Shön & Rein, 1994) and organizational studies (e.g., Dionne et al., 2019) also are interested in examining the complexity of controversy.

Despite the diversity of academic fields involved in untangling controversies, three elements are common in the definition of controversy: actors, issues(s), and disagreement. First, controversy should involve at least two *actors*. Many researchers also emphasized groups of actors (Hanczor, 1997; Limoges, 1993) or actors' affiliated institutions (van Laar & Krabbe, 2019). Following the actor-network theory, Venturini (2010, p. 260) asserts that “not only human beings and human groups, but also natural and biological elements, industrial and artistic products, economic and other institutions, scientific and technical artifacts” are actors (p. 260). Additionally, Martin (2012, p. 98-99) states that some of the actors become leaders who “support a side fully” and commit to maintaining “support by colleagues and larger groups.”

Second, controversies include *issue(s)* on which actors disagree. While it is clear that issues exist in controversies, it is often stated that these issues are not well-defined. For example,

Barry (2012, p. 330) addresses that controversial issues can expand to include “what is known about a problem, and why it matters, but also about the existence of the very problem about which they disagree.” Similarly, Rip (1986, p. 352) argues that “what is to be considered certain and what uncertain is itself part of what is at issue.” Accordingly, controversy gradually defines its issues as participants engage in interaction.

Third, *disagreement* is another basic element of controversy. In their simplest form, social media scholars view controversies as involving “opposite opinions about certain issues” (Al-Ayyoub et al., 2018, p. 557). Venturini (2010, p. 260) also provides a succinct definition of controversy: “controversies are situations where actors disagree (or better, agree on their disagreement).”

Then, why do actors start or join controversies and disagree in the first place? It is because their interests are at stake (Hanczor, 1997; Martin, 2012; Shön & Rein, 1994). Here, interest is not limited to purely economic factors but also encompasses broader factors that are significant to actors. Martin (2012) introduces examples of professional groups as a whole being involved in controversies. For instance, he explains that biologists join the controversy around evolutionary theory because it is a symbol of a scientific approach. In this case, it is hard for the professionals to change their positions because their profession is “so committed” to a certain view. Some researchers explain that actors’ interests are determined by their worldview (Limoges, 1993; Martin, 2012; Shön & Rein, 1994; Venturini, 2010). Shön and Rein (1994), for instance, use the term “frame” to indicate this worldview. When actors with different frames clash in a controversy, it is difficult to resolve it by appealing to facts (Shön & Rein, 1994).

Public controversy is one of the concepts that has received attention from researchers in various fields. Adding to the forementioned elements, an additional element of public

controversy is publicness. Publicness indicates that it happens “in an open public space” (Timmermans et al., 2017) and “access to them [controversies] is not restricted by any barrier or entrance fee, nor is a competence card required” (Limoges, 1993, p. 420). Dionne and colleagues (2019, p. 651) operationalized public controversy as “some degree observable and can be judged by third party.”

A notable characteristic of controversy is its development over time. In other words, controversy is a process. It starts at some point and ends or is subdued at another point. Some studies conceptualize the start and end points of controversy in a clearer sense. For instance, Venturini (2010, pp. 260-261) argues that a controversy begins “when actors discover that they cannot ignore each other” and “when things and ideas that were taken for granted start to be questioned and discussed.” A controversy ends “when actors manage to work out a solid compromise to live together” (Venturini, 2010, p. 260) and when “a certain view of the issue has become dominant” (Rip, 1986, p. 353). The time span between these two points could be decades or days (Martin, 2012). Throughout its evolution, a controversy may gain and lose participants, develop issues and problems at its core, or even transform into an entirely new controversy. Since controversies usually unfold progressively, they may consist of multiple conflicts, events, or sub-controversies (Barry, 2012; Patriotta et al., 2011).

The processual aspect of controversy complicates the analysis of already complex controversies. Langley (1999) lists the reasons why it is difficult to analyze process data, such as the multiplicity of units of analysis, the unclear concept of events that compose processes, temporal embeddedness, and changes in relationships, emotions, thoughts, and so forth. To handle these difficulties, controversy studies often divide controversies into stages, which is similar to the method of “temporal bracketing” (Langley, 1999, p. 703). For example, Shön and

Rein (1994) broke down controversies into stages to illustrate how policy discourse has changed. Dionne and his colleagues (2019, p. 657) also separated their case into four events based on the number of newspaper articles about the controversy and changes in “the orders of worth” used to justify each group of actors’ argument. This “bracketing” strategy is useful, in general, to decompose a controversy into smaller comparative units, but no set criteria guide the division of events (Langley, 1999). Rather, inductive criteria based on process data and the focus of study are a more helpful approach to breaking down a series of events.

For my study of controversies at public libraries, I define a controversy as *a series of library-related disagreement events among actors that occur in a public space*. Disagreement means an expression of differences in opinions and disagreement event is a specific event that involves multiple actors expressing disagreement with other actor(s). Public space indicates that the space is accessible to everyone. The starting point of controversy is when actors first express their opposing opinions in a public space, such as a board meeting. It ends when one opinion dominates a public space and no more explicit dispute exists in the same public space. While acknowledging that this bracket of events is tentative, I provided three phases of the Lafayette Public Library controversy based on the main issues at stake.

3.2.2 Examples of controversies in public libraries

In this section, I apply my definition of controversy to a series of events in U.S. public libraries. The purpose of this application is to demonstrate that my definition is viable to enclose events as controversies and to emphasize that controversies in U.S. public libraries erupt recurrently.

I. Historic example: Desegregation of public libraries

The desegregation of public libraries was the most contentious battleground in U.S. library history. It is unquestionably wrong to ban a particular race from public libraries when we think from the 21st century norm; however, in the 1950s and 1960s, the issue of desegregation evoked different opinions of various actors. In this section, I demonstrate how the desegregation of public libraries can be defined as a controversy with an example of the Memphis Public Library. I chose this library not only because of its representativeness of public library desegregation but also because of the abundance of available historical data. In this case, multiple actors, such as community members, a library director, a library board, and a mayor, explicitly disagreed about opening the main library of the Memphis Public Library to Black people in public events.

Four years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Jesse Turner, a clerk at the Tri-State Bank, and his attorney, H. T. Lockard, made “a threat of court action” against the Memphis Public Library on June 17, 1957 (Knowlton, 2017; “Library Board Revises Rules on Segregation”, ca. 1957). When Jesse Turner, an African American, applied for a library card to use the main library, library director Jesse Cunningham refused it immediately (Knowlton, 2017). Lockard and Turner then appealed to the library board, but the effort was futile. The board kept turning down their appeal on the basis of their belief in “harmonious relations among the people of our city” (Randolph, 1957). After a few rounds of unsuccessful appeals, Lockard filed a lawsuit against the library board and director (Knowlton, 2017). A petition was also presented at a board meeting by professors and students at Memphis State University, the University of Tennessee, Christian Brothers College, and Memphis Southwestern College (“Library Board Revises Rules on Segregation”, ca. 1957). Nevertheless, the library board, the mayor, and the library director were headstrong in maintaining their separate but equal policy. A white citizen

also voiced his support of the library's policy by sending a letter to the library director, stating, "I am sure that most all White People want the Library facilities maintained as they are and I feel that we should so express ourselves" (Hall, 1958). Additionally, there was a support letter sent to the library director anonymously, but the author identified himself as "negro" (Wiegand & Wiegand, 2018).

Throughout 1958 and 1960, black citizens organized sit-in protests at the main library reading room to demolish segregation at the public library (Wiegand & Wiegand, 2018). Under pressure to integrate public facilities, the mayor ordered the library board to reconsider its segregation policy, specifically when a federal district court set the Lockard's case for trial. The board passed the buck to the City Commission by approving a resolution that stated, "That the matter of changing the policy of the Memphis Public Library System be referred to the City Commission for decision" (Wallis, 1960). On October 13, 1960, the Memphis Public Library was finally desegregated by the City Commission's policy (Knowlton, 2017).

The Memphis case meets all the crucial components of my definition of controversy. The main actors were Turner and his attorney Lockard, professors and students at nearby universities, activists who participated in sit-in protests, the library director, the library board (especially the president), and the mayor. The actors disagreed on the issue of allowing Black people into the main branch because they have different interests. Some actors supported desegregation to achieve equal access to information, while pro-segregation actors disagreed with them to protect traditional white hegemony in public spaces, such as public libraries. The controversy started when local media reported that the main library refused to issue a library card to Turner (Wiegand & Wiegand, 2018). Then, the controversy escalated with events of disagreement in public spaces, such as the lawsuit, petitions, and sit-in protests.

It is notable that many of the demonstrations to desegregate public libraries were connected to a bigger movement to desegregate public spaces, such as schools, swimming pools, and lunch counters. For example, in 1962, a lawsuit to integrate public libraries in Birmingham, Alabama, was joined with the lawsuits for desegregating all public buildings (Wiegand & Wiegand, 2018). In Danville, Virginia, Robert A. Williams organized a sit-in protest at a public library as a strategic movement to achieve the desegregation of all public facilities. He and his comrades consulted with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other activists in the area (Wiegand & Wiegand, 2018). In the Memphis case, both Lockard and Turner were involved in other desegregation efforts as members of the NAACP. Considering that the desegregation movement gained nation-wide momentum after *Brown v. Board of Education*, it is plausible that the actors' and groups' involvement in local library desegregation controversies were also influenced by the changes at the national level. All in all, controversies around desegregation of public libraries were often connected to other movements and controversies and affected by events at different levels (i.e., national level).

II. Recent example: NYPL renovation plan

A conflict over the New York Public Library's (NYPL) Central Library Plan (CLP) is a 21st-century example of controversy in public libraries. In this case, actors, such as community members who identified themselves as scholars or journalists, a library director, a library board, and a mayor, disagreed on a plan to change a library branch into a digital commons.

In 2008, the NYPL announced the "Central Library Plan," which aimed to renovate the 42nd Street branch into a digital commons (Sherman, 2017). No public attention was paid to this plan before an article titled "Upheaval at the New York Public Library" was published in *The*

Nation in 2011. Its criticism of the CLP instigated more scholars and journalists to publish their opinions against the CLP in multiple news media, while the library director and board of trustees of NYPL supported the CLP. The controversy continued through 2012 and 2013. A protest letter to the NYPL with two thousand signatures of protesters, a panel discussion, protests in front of the library, and lawsuits followed. It was finally resolved when a new mayor of New York City supervised the NYPL to update the controversial renovation plan (Pogrebin, 2014).

This dispute around the CLP falls under my definition of controversy. First, various actors, including the library director, library trustees, journalists, researchers, and the mayor, were involved in the controversy. Second, the actors had disagreement on the justification for the CLP. The issue was whether the CLP is appropriate for the future of NYPL. The board of trustees argued that repurposing the 42nd branch is an efficient way to use public funds because the circulation rate of the books in the 42nd branch was significantly decreasing. Nonetheless, a small group of scholars and journalists disagree with the board of trustees. They accused the trustees of being businesspeople who had wrongly attempted to implant corporate logic in public services. Both sides were “committed” to a certain view, mostly based on their professional background. Third, the controversy lasted for 3 years with multiple distinctive events occurring in public spaces, such as the library, social media, courtrooms, and news media outlets. Although some of these spaces, such as social media, are not physical, they are public spaces since they allow public access.

3.2.3 Controversies around material challenges

A challenge is “a formal request to a library to reconsider an item in its collection” (Oltmann, 2019, p. 81). According to Oltmann (2019), books are challenged to be removed or

relocated to another section of the library, but other materials and services, such as DVDs, databases, magazines, library programs, or story times, are challenged as well. Because parents of children are the most common type of individuals who challenge, public libraries and school libraries are particularly vulnerable to challenges. Commonly, challengers seek to remove or relocate materials due to the sexually explicit content of materials.

Challenges include both formal and informal forms. In an informal challenge, a challenger usually verbally asks library staff if they can remove or relocate a particular library material. Library staff respond to the challenger in a casual format as well. Unlike informal challenges, a formal challenge involves paperwork that initiates a reconsideration process. ALA provides guidelines for responding to challenges through its Selection and Reconsideration Policy Toolkit to support each library in creating their reconsideration policy (ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom, 2018). According to the Toolkit, when a challenger submits a request for reconsideration, the library director and relevant library staff decide whether to accept the request. The outcome is communicated to the challenger by letter, along with the rationale behind the decision. If the challenger is unsatisfied with the decision, they can appeal to the library's board of trustees. The Board may decide on the appeal during a board meeting, where community members have the opportunity to make public comments. The decision made by the board is final. When a challenge is publicized by the media or at board meetings, it may ignite a disagreement among community members, library staff, and board members. The disagreement often centers on the issue of whether the library should accept the reconsideration request. Behind the immediate disagreement, conflicting worldviews of actors fuel the disagreement. For example, challengers view public libraries as a neutral space while others perceive public libraries as a public space for promoting equity (Chabot & Helkenberg, 2022).

Based on my definition of controversy, I argue that some material challenges set the stage for controversy at public libraries. Emily Knox (2015, p. 3), a well-known researcher in censorship and challenges, defines book challenges as “requests by members of the public to remove, relocate, or restrict books from or within institutions.” This definition well describes that book challenges’ basic element is requests by the public to remove books from libraries; thus, it does not necessarily encompass a series of disagreement events among actors. For example, if a public library director and staff decides to accept a request of reconsideration in a closed meeting and the challenger is satisfied with the decision, this challenge does not involve a series of disagreements or actions in public spaces. Hence, this occasion is not a controversy. However, if a series of disagreement events among multiple actors erupts out of a book reconsideration in a public space, for example, in library board meetings or as a form of protest in front of the library, then it becomes a controversy. Since these events are currently occurring in many locales, they offer a timely opportunity to analyze the process of controversies at public libraries.

3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the concepts of power and controversy, which serve as the conceptual lenses for this study, and defined each concept to suit the research. In this study, power is defined as *a capacity to achieve a desired outcome by mobilizing resources*, and controversy is defined as *a series of library-related disagreement events among actors that occur in a public space*.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodology used to study the controversy surrounding material challenges. The main method for answering the research questions is a single-case study. To analyze the selected case, I used multiple data sources and employed three data analysis methods.

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the contextual and conceptual background, I formulated two research questions that focus on how resources are mobilized in a controversy surrounding a material challenge in a public library and how resource mobilization and the process of controversy are related:

- 1) How are resources mobilized by actors in controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?
- 2) What is the relationship between the mobilization of resources and the process of controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?

The following sections explain the case-based approach to answer these questions.

4.2 CASE-BASED APPROACH

4.2.1 Viability/Strength of case method for addressing RQs

A qualitative case study is selected as the main method of this research because it allows a researcher to investigate “complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon” specifically in a real-life situation (Merriam, 2009, p. 50). Controversies around public libraries are complex processes involving multiple actors and resources that cannot be easily understood by studying individual variables. Instead of

using multiple cases to compare similarities or differences, this study focuses on producing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest longitudinally (Ozcan et al., 2017; Stake, 1995). Thus, in this study, an in-depth description and analysis of the case is provided based on multiple data sources and data analysis methods.

4.2.2 Case selection

I. Case selection criteria

The case selection criteria were finalized after iterative processes of case selection and criteria setting. The case was chosen based on the following criteria that prioritize richness of data:

- More than two public disagreement events regarding material challenges at a public library in a year
- Availability of meeting recordings
- More than three months of controversy
- Diversity of actors

First, the case must involve a controversy related to a material challenge in a public library. As I define controversy as a series of library-related disagreement events among actors occurring in a public space, the case for this study must have experienced more than two disagreement events related to material challenges in a public space. Additionally, to ensure the events are part of a continuous controversy, the disagreement events must have occurred within one year. These events can pertain directly to material challenges or to policy changes, such as in a collection development policy or reconsideration policy, which are closely related to material challenges.

Second, audio or video recordings of the meetings where actors publicly disagree should be available. By having recordings, the researcher can observe the dynamics among actors in public meetings with the precise wordings they use, which are often unavailable in meeting minutes. Recordings help to understand the events more deeply as they allow observation of the disagreement event itself, unlike filtered data like meeting minutes or news articles.

Third, the controversy must have lasted for at least three months. This condition is set because a controversy needs time to develop. Many material challenges were often resolved in one or two monthly public meetings of the library's governing body after a challenge. To examine how the controversy progresses in depth, I set three-month as a criterion to include at least three significant disagreement events, specifically public meetings.

Lastly, the more actors participate in a controversy, the better. This is based on my assumption that different actors mobilize different resources in controversies. To observe diverse resources and their mobilization in controversies, I used a diversity of actors as a proxy.

II. Case selection process

Based on the case criteria, I selected the Lafayette Public Library as a case through a four-step process.

First, I collected 209 potential cases from multiple sources for triangulation. The main sources of information for case collection are as follows:

- *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*

I collected the information about challenges from the News section of the Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy, started in 2016. I focused on subsections of the News, such as Censorship Dateline, From the Bench, Success Stories, For the Record, and In

Brief. Each subsection reports challenges that were found from news media, social media, or board meeting minutes. As a result, I collected 24 unique public library names that had challenge(s).

- **A list of book/graphic novels challenges in public libraries in 2021–2022, which received media attention**

This source is acquired from personal communication with the Office of Intellectual Freedom at the ALA. It contains the year, title of challenged book/graphic novels, state, and public library’s name where the challenge was received. 197 unique public libraries were included in this list.

- ***Book Riot’s Book Censorship News***

Kelly Jensen, a writer and former librarian, started weekly book censorship news in December 2021. This is a compilation of news coverage of material challenges, including a brief description of each challenge. I searched for the public library names identified from the journal and list to quickly check which challenge had grown more contentious.

- **Google news search**

In addition to the aforementioned sources, I used search terms, “public library challenges” and “public library book censorship” to search for challenges that were not included in these sources.

Most of the sources focus on media coverage, which is appropriate for finding controversies that involve diverse actors. This is because most controversies arise around local libraries, and if various actors participate in a particular controversy, it is natural that local media pay attention to the controversy.

Second, I applied the criteria to determine which case was more suitable for my research. In the spreadsheet, I put names of the libraries collected in the previous step on each row and filled in each column with whether each library met the criteria. After assessing about 30 libraries according to the criteria, I found that there were not many video or audio recordings of board meetings relevant to controversy. Thus, I started focusing on the availability of meeting recordings to assess potential cases. As a result, I was able to confirm that 27 public libraries had meeting recordings.

Next, I checked whether each library had experienced any controversy. I found that many libraries reported challenges to the ALA, but not all of them experienced controversy. In other words, these libraries had received challenges, but in many cases, they had only gone through a one-time public disagreement event, such as a protest at a city council meeting. After this round of the selection process, there were 10 public libraries left on the list of potential cases. Then, three libraries were eliminated from the list due to the short duration of their controversies. The Anchorage Public Library was also excluded from the list because the central issue of controversy was not a material challenge but rather the appointment of an unqualified individual as the library director by an elected official. Therefore, it was deemed unsuitable for my research questions and was excluded from the list of candidates. As a result, five libraries became the final candidates (Craighead County Jonesboro Public Library, Campbell County Public Library, Keene Memorial Library, Lafayette Public Library, and Liberty Lake Municipal Library).

With the final six candidates, I considered the specifics of the controversy and the actors involved at each library in more detail. As a result, Lafayette Parish Library (LPL) was selected as the final case. LPL has experienced controversy for a long time compared to other libraries, and various actors, such as local citizen groups from both the anti-censorship and pro-censorship

sides, politicians, library staff, and journalists, have been involved in the controversy. In addition, various issues such as drag queen story time, branch construction, and tax renewal are linked to its controversy. This diversity was not found in other candidate libraries, which makes LPL a unique and valuable case to investigate. The process of case selection is summarized in Figure 1.

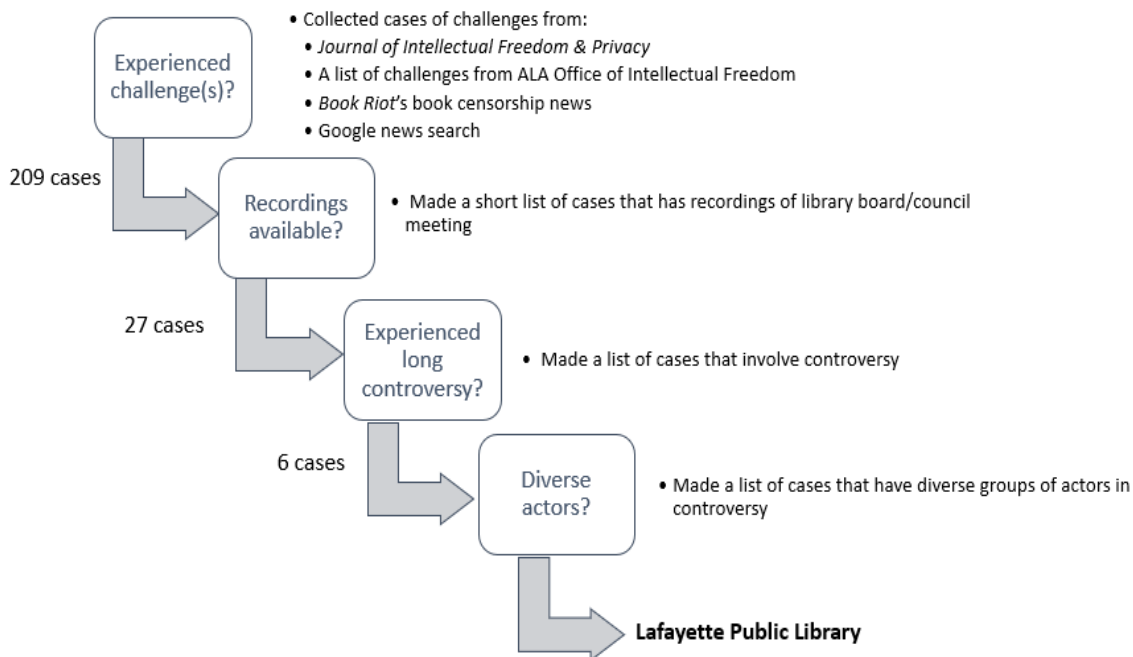


Figure 1 The process of case selection

The controversy experienced by LPL is likely more extreme compared to those experienced by other libraries. For instance, other controversies around material challenges might not have involved as many actors for an extended time period, and the characteristic of the LPL controversy where meeting recordings are accessible also sets it apart from other controversies. Nonetheless, analyzing an extreme case allows for “the progress” to be “transparently observable” (Pettigrew, 1990, p. 275). Given that controversy progresses over time, studying a unique case where this progress can be well observed offers the advantage of better understanding the phenomenon.

4.2.3 Data collection

In this section, I present the data sources I used to collect the necessary data to answer the data collection inquiries. Collected data were organized with a document management system, Scrivener, according to the type of sources.

I. Data sources

Five different types of data sources were used in data collection. Each type of data source is described below:

- **Public meeting documents & recordings**

As a primary resource, I used public meeting recordings and documents from City-Parish or Parish Council meetings and LPL board meetings. Any City-Parish Council or Parish Council minutes and agenda items between 2018 and 2023 that discussed the LPL were collected from the Lafayette Consolidated Government website. Specifically, meeting minutes and agenda items were collected. Relevant meeting videos were collected from the Lafayette Consolidated Government Council Meeting website.

LPL board meeting minutes from 2018 to 2023 were collected from the Lafayette Public Library website. The board provides the recordings of their board meetings from November 2020.¹ This coverage includes the conflicts around the LEH grant in December 2020, material challenges in October and November 2021, and the revision of the library policy in February 2023. A recording of the board meeting on September 17, 2018, does not exist, but the detailed

¹ One of my interview partners mentioned that the library director decided to post the meeting recordings on the library website after receiving numerous public record requests for the meeting recordings. Due to this decision, all the board meeting recordings have been posted since November 2020.

summary of comments in the board meeting minutes and interviews was used as supplementary data.

Public meeting recordings, excluding content not significantly related to material challenges or policies, were transcribed. For instance, reports on library roof repairs or the summer reading program were not transcribed or included in the analysis as they were not closely related to the LPL controversy.

- **News articles**

Local newspapers in Lafayette have extensively reported the controversies in the LPL. The *Daily Advertiser*, the *Acadiana Advocate*, and *KATC* are the major local news media that cover the controversies in the LPL and other news about the LPL. I collected all articles related to the LPL from 2018 to 2023 by searching their website with the search term “Lafayette Public Library.” Additionally, I collected news articles from other newspapers, including national ones, by searching for “Lafayette Public Library” in Google News. I collected 93 news articles from 2018 to 2023 that cover the controversies in the LPL.

- **Social media posts & websites**

I used data from social media posts and relevant websites to triangulate information from interviews and to collect information about events organized by actors in the LPL controversy. I collected information from Citizens for New Louisiana Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/LafayetteStopTax>), Supporters of Lafayette Public Libraries

Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/170966504419317>), Lafayette Public

Library Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LafayettePublicLibrary/>), Lafayette Citizens

Against Censorship Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LACitAgainstCensorship>),

Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/AcadianaSupportersofDragQueenStoryTime>), NAACP Lafayette Branch Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LafayetteParishNAACPUnit6060>), Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship website (<https://www.lacitizensagainstcensorship.org/>), Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship website (<https://www.la-cac.org/>), League of Women Voters of Louisiana website (<https://lwvofla.org/>), and Citizens for a New Louisiana (<https://www.newlouisiana.org/>).

- **Interviews**

I used Interview data of 29 individuals, including 19 community members, 7 board members, and 6 librarians. Detailed information about the interviewees is not provided in this document to ensure their privacy. The interview partners were contacted via publicly available contact information, such as email addresses and social media messages, and snowball methods. Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship gratefully granted permission to post an interview recruitment ad on their Facebook group. A few interview partners contacted the researcher after seeing this post. Interviews were done in-person at Lafayette, via video call, or via a phone call. Interviews lasted from 40 minutes to 6 hours depending on the experience level of the subject. With some interview partners, we had two sessions of interview when the first interview becomes too lengthy.

I utilized two methods to help construct information from interviews. First, I identified key events in the controversy based on the collected public meeting recordings and documents, and news articles. I then created a timeline that includes a line with the year, month, and key events of the case (Appendix C). At the beginning of each interview, this timeline was provided to the interview partner. Interview partners were asked to add events on the timeline, write explanations, or create additional timelines if they wish. Allowing participants to freely add to

the timeline reflects the exploratory and in-depth nature of this study, as it aims to gather information on events, resources, and individuals that the researcher may not have been aware of based on the public meeting recordings and documents, and news articles (Adriansen, 2012). For every interview, I also brought a list of board meetings that included meeting dates, main agenda items, notable events during the meeting, and the names of newly appointed and retiring library board members. This list, created as a deliverable of data collection inquiries, was not shared with the interview partner; instead, it was used during the interview to reference the date of events mentioned by the interview partner or to assist their memory when their recall was unclear.

Second, I utilized the stimulated recall method by utilizing interview artifacts, which are records of an event (Burden et al., 2015; Lyle, 2003). Considering that some events in the case occurred multiple years ago, the stimulated recall method is appropriate for stimulating retrospective “recall of a situation, interaction and decision more successfully than free recall and [capturing] the complexity, uncertainty and dynamics of the situation” (Burden et al., 2015, p. 3). In each interview, I provided records of the participant’s actions, such as minutes, meeting recordings, or social media posts to stimulate their call if they do not mention a particular event they participated in or if I need to probe more about their actions.

II. Data collection inquiries

I used data collection inquiries to process the collected data (Gray, 2019). These inquiries were used each time new data was collected, helping to dissect which actors, resources, and events were present within the collected data. Deliverables were continuously created during the data collection process, and some of these deliverables were utilized throughout the data

collection phase. The deliverables from these inquiries became 1) foundational data for creating networks based on a meta-network framework, 2) foundational data for creating chronology of disagreement events, and 3) supplementary material for interviews. Table 1 shows the four data collection inquiries and the deliverables derived based on these inquiries.

Table 1 Data collection inquiries

Inquiries	Deliverables	Data sources
Who are actors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of actors including individuals' affiliation with organizations • Categories of actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles • Board minutes and recordings • Social media posts • Interviews
What resources are mobilized?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of resources including the actors, events, and brief descriptions of resource mobilization • Categories of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles • State laws • Board bylaw • Board minutes and recordings • Social media posts • Interviews
When and where do actors mobilize resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of events including the event dates, locations, and main issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles • Board minutes and recordings • Social media posts • Websites • Interviews
What are the causes and results of each event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A table that connects events and their results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News articles • Board minutes and recordings • Interviews

- **Who are actors in the controversy?**

In this study, “actors” are not limited to individuals; organizations are also actors, which consist of individual actors. As a starting point, I collected from data sources the names of individuals and organizations associated with the selected controversy. I categorized these

individuals into board members, librarians, community members, and politicians, based on their roles. Organizations were categorized into public organizations, local organizations, and outside organizations.

- **What resources are mobilized?**

As discussed in Chapter 2, “resources” in this study indicate elements that actors draw upon to achieve their goals. Anything that helps actors achieve their goals was examined to extract all the resources mobilized. Then, each resource that emerges from the data was listed with the types of resources, the actors who mobilized them, the data source(s), and the names of events where they were mobilized, if any. Resources were categorized as legal authorities, rights, networks, references, and money.

- **When and where do actors mobilize resources?**

Any resource mobilization is supposed to occur at a certain time and space. With this data collection inquiry, I made a list of events where resources were mobilized. I operationalize an event as *a social occasion that involves more than two actors and has a significant influence on controversy*. Public meetings, private meetings among actors, and protests are examples of events in this controversy. A list of events includes the dates, locations, and main issues of the events. Part of the list was used as supplementary material for interviews, as mentioned.

- **What are the causes and results of each event?**

As primary data to create an event-event network and chronology of disagreement events, I recorded the causes and results of each event. The cause of an event includes observable actions that initiate an event. A result of an event is often a set of observable decisions, such as a resolution from a public library board meeting or council meeting.

In summary, the data collection inquiries helped me familiarize myself with the data to understand the complex controversy. Some of the deliverables created during this process were used as building blocks in the data analysis phase.

4.2.4 Data analysis

The data analysis consists of thematic coding, which is traditional qualitative data analysis, and the meta-network framework and the chronology of disagreement events, which I revised from organizational network analysis (Carley, 2002; Park, 2008) and the cartography of controversy (Venturini, 2012) to dissect the complexity of controversy. Thematic coding provides a focused view of resource mobilization during controversy, while the meta-network framework and the chronology of disagreement events serve as an in-depth description of the process of controversy. The results from three analyses were assembled to provide a thick description.

I. Thematic coding

The initial step of the data analysis phase is thematic coding for resource mobilization. I coded the transcriptions from public meeting recordings and interviews. I followed the analysis steps suggested in Rubin and Rubin (2012) and Emerson (2011). First, I read through the collected data and conducted line-by-line thematic coding for resource mobilization. To keep the analysis open and inductive, any actions that intend to achieve the actor's desired goal were considered resource mobilization. At this stage, I initially planned to use allocative and authoritative resources as the thematic framework, based on the definitions by Giddens (1984) and Sewell (1992). However, during the coding process, I found that most resources fell into the category of authoritative resources. Therefore, I decided to proceed with inductive coding

without a pre-defined framework. Furthermore, I did not limit the thematic coding to resource mobilization per se, but also included any aspects related to resource mobilization experienced by interview partners, such as challenges in resource mobilization, motivation to mobilize a particular resource, and their logic or belief behind mobilizing resources. Second, I grouped codes into similar themes and aggregated excerpts from similar themes into one file and determined the core themes from the codes and excerpts. Third, I recoded the excerpt relevant to the core themes. Then, I examined the relationships between the core themes and how the relationships change over time.

II. Meta-network framework

Based on the deliverable from the data collection inquiries, I created network graphs that show how a controversy in the LPL develops in relation to resource mobilizations. To structure the necessary networks, I devised a meta-network framework of individual, organization, resource, and event (Carley, 2002; Park, 2008).

Originally, the meta-network was designed to explain how agents and knowledge are connected within or among organizations (Carley, 2002). In other words, it enables the analysis of not only the relationship between agents and knowledge but also how they are related to broader organizational elements. By including these elements in the analysis, it allows us to learn how the whole network of elements changes when a specific element, such as policy, procedures, or IT, is altered. Park (2008) also used the meta-network to analyze the relationship between elements related to social movements, aiming to explain how movement activities are enabled or restricted in a particular network. Similarly, in this study, the meta-network is used to analyze how resources are mobilized and constrained within networks of various elements instead of

focusing on a particular element to understand who wields what power in controversies and how they exert it.

The meta-network used in this research has ten possible networks based on the combination of four elements. The rows and columns of Table 2 consist of the main elements of the material challenge controversy, and each cell has a question that the network of two elements can answer. Each cell represents a two-mode network that has two distinct sets of entities except the diagonal cells (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). For example, the cell at the intersection of the event column and individual row indicates a network that has a set of individuals as one type of node and a set of events as another type of node. Individuals and events form relation(s) when an individual participates in an event. In other words, these nodes create bipartite networks. On the other hand, the diagonal cells represent one-mode networks that consist of one set of entities. For example, the diagonal cell at the intersection of the resource column and row shows the network of resources that has resources as nodes and supports as ties. Regarding attributes, the way an organization relates to another organization may have a particular type, such as shared membership or shared leadership.

The purpose of analyzing data in network form is to reconstruct the complexity of the controversy into manageable elements and relations. Mathematical measurements of networks are not used to analyze the networks; instead, the networks serve as an analytic tool to provide a thick description of the development of controversies and resource mobilizations in the process (Hollstein, 2016).

Table 2 Meta network framework

	Individual	Organization	Resource	Event
Individual	Who mobilizes resources with/to whom?	Who belongs where?	Who mobilizes what resources?	Who participates in what event?
Organization		Which organization is related to which organization?	Which organization mobilizes what resources?	Which organization participates in what event?
Resource			Which resource supports / opposes what resources?	Which resource is mobilized and in what event?
Event				Which event causes which events?

As a result, I created ten networks that answer the questions in the meta-network framework:

- **Who mobilizes resources with/to whom? (Individual-individual)**

This network consists of individuals who interact with each other to mobilize resources together. The foundational data for this individual-individual network primarily came from interviews, and personal interactions mentioned in board meeting minutes were also used as basic data. The edges in the network are unidirectional based on which individual initiated the interaction. Some interactions were not between two individuals but involved multiple individuals in private meetings; in these cases, the edge did not link individuals but rather connected the participating individuals with a circle. In creating this network, it became evident

that much of the resource mobilization did not stem from one-on-one interactions between individuals but rather from interactions between individuals and group members, often based on local organizations. Two individual-individual networks were created to show the longitudinal changes of a network before and after a particular event.

- **Who belongs where? (Individual-organization)**

This network represents which individuals belong to which organizations based on data extracted from interviews, board minutes, and social media posts. Edges were assigned one of two attributes: leadership or member. To prevent unnecessary complexity, only those organizations that clearly played a role in the LPL controversy were included in the network. For some organizations, it was difficult to determine membership due to a privacy issue. For example, although membership data for Facebook-based organizations could be obtained from Facebook group member pages, I did not use this data from Facebook groups to avoid potential privacy violations. Organizations not based on Facebook did not provide full access to membership information. Therefore, most of the data used to create this network was limited to the memberships mentioned by partners during interviews. However, since some interview partners refused to answer questions about their relationships with certain organizations or their general organizational affiliations, I was unable to create an exhaustive network.

- **Who mobilizes what resources? (Individual-resource)**

This network is a dyadic network between individuals and resources. I created this network based on a list of resources generated through data collection inquiries. Using data from resource mobilizations identified in board and council meeting recordings and interviews, I connected individuals who mobilized resources to the respective resources with edges without attributes.

- **Who participates in what event? (Individual-event)**

This network is a dyadic network showing which individuals attended which events. The list of events from data collection inquiries were used as event nodes. It was created using lists of actors who made public comments and attendance records of board and council members from board and council meeting minutes, indicating which individuals participated in each public meeting. Additionally, for events organized by other organizations where accessible attendance lists were unavailable, the network includes individuals who mentioned their participation in specific events during interviews. No attributes were assigned to the edges.

- **Which organization is related to which organization? (Organization-organization)**

This network represents the relationships between organizations, with edges assigned the attributes of either shared membership or shared leadership. Shared leadership implies shared membership. This network was restructured around organizations based on the relationships between individuals and organizations identified while creating the individual-organization network. Like the individual-organization network, membership information obtained from Facebook group pages was not used due to privacy issues.

- **Which organization mobilizes what resources? (Organization-resource)**

This network was created with organizations and resources as nodes. No attributes were assigned to the edges. Most of the data for this network was collected from interviews, news articles, websites, and social media posts. To avoid duplication with the individual-resource network, only resource mobilizations made in the name of organizations, rather than individuals, were included. For example, a public comment made by an individual from the NAACP at a board meeting was included in the individual-resource network, while a statement issued by the NAACP regarding the construction of the Northeast Regional Library was included in this organization-resource network.

- **Which organization participates in what event? (Organization-event)**

This network uses organizations and events as nodes, with edges having attributes of either participate or host. If an event was hosted by a specific organization, I gave the organization-event edge the host attribute, while if the organization merely attended the event, the edge was given the participate attribute. I collected data for this network mainly from social media posts and interviews, and connected it to the list of events from data collection inquiries. Like the organization-resource network, I only included cases where organizations, rather than individuals, participated in or hosted an event. For example, if LCAC participated as a group in an event like Artwalk to disseminate information related to LPL, it was included in this network. However, if LCAC members individually attended a Parish Council meeting to make public comments, it was not included in this network.

- **Which resource supports / opposes what resources? (Resource-resource)**

This network uses resources as nodes and edges with attributes of either support or oppose. Based on a list of resources from data collection inquiries, this network depicts which resources were mobilized to counter or support other resources. Furthermore, nodes were replaced with the categories to which each resource belongs, to identify any patterns of support or opposition according to resource categories. The nodes were arranged in chronological order based on when the resources were used. For example, resources mobilized in 2018, when the LPL controversy began, were placed on the left, and resources were placed progressively to the right according to when they were first used. Consequently, the position of each node indicates when each resource was utilized for the first time.

- **Which resource is mobilized and in what event? (Resource-event)**

This network uses resources and events as nodes, with edges that do not have attributes. Based on a list of events created from data collection inquiries, it connects each event to the resources mobilized at that event. I primarily used board and council meeting minutes and recordings, as well as interviews, as data sources to construct this network. Additionally, each node was replaced with the category of the resource to identify patterns in resource mobilization.

- **Which event caused which events? (Event-event)**

Finally, this network was intended to use events as nodes and causal relations as edges. However, since most events were not directly caused by other events as found from data collection inquiries, it was not possible to create this network.

III. Chronology of disagreement events

In parallel with network analysis, a chronology of disagreement events was created. Both the cartography of controversy and case studies emphasize the importance of chronological analysis (Venturini, 2010, 2012; Yin, 2009). Compared to other time-series analysis methods, the chronology “can have an important analytic purpose—to investigate presumed causal events—because the basic sequence of a cause and its effect cannot be temporally inverted” (Yin, 2009, p. 148).

To create a chronology of disagreement events, events and resource mobilizations were arranged by time (see Appendix A). This chronology includes the events, results, dates, resources, and main actors of the LPL controversy. Details of each event and resource mobilization were also included to provide context for each event and result. While linking the events within the controversy in a cause-and-effect manner, it was found that some results emerged from actors’ decisions without a specific event. For example, the postponement of

DQST resulted from the college's decision to withdraw venue support rather than a particular event. To identify broad patterns of resource mobilization, the chronology includes resource categories instead of a detailed description of each resource mobilization. Additionally, the main actors are represented as categories rather than names, helping to discern the patterns of the controversy. In some cases, the exact timing of events or results could not be confirmed from the collected data; in these cases, approximate timelines were suggested. This chronology aided my sensemaking of how the controversy evolved and helped identify which actors and resources were relevant to the controversy's progress, thereby assisting in answering RQ2.

4.2.5 Data validity & reliability

The traditional perspective of validity and reliability, borrowed from natural science, is often difficult to apply to qualitative studies (Yazan, 2015). The validity and reliability of this study will be increased by using techniques from the qualitative research tradition (Merriam, 2009).

1) Internal validity

Internal validity, or credibility, addresses the question of how closely research findings correspond to reality. This study is designed to triangulate with multiple data sources and analysis methods to enhance the credibility of the study. First, data from interviews, documents, and recordings were cross-checked. Second, three data analysis techniques were applied to understand the collected data and answer the research questions. A member check was also conducted with the final document to verify if the analyses reflect the interview partners' experiences.

Additionally, I acknowledge my positionality, which influences the whole process of my study. I was educated as a librarian in South Korea. I hold a bachelor's degree in library and information science and public administration and a master's degree in library and information science. Before joining the Ph.D. program in the U.S., I worked as an academic librarian for 5 years in South Korea. My education and experience in two different countries provide me with a unique perspective. Intellectual freedom is highly valued in the library profession in the United States, whereas in South Korea, intellectual freedom is relatively less emphasized, and criticism from librarians or users against censorship is also relatively rare (ALA, 2008; Lange, 2013). Therefore, due to my educational and professional background as a librarian in South Korea, my feelings about intellectual freedom may differ from those of librarians who were educated and work in the United States. Nonetheless, as a librarian, I strongly identify with my profession, and it almost automatically provided access to librarians and anti-censorship organizations.

My ethnicity, race, sexuality, and gender impacted the dynamics with my interview partners. As an Asian foreign-born bisexual woman, my identity was hypervisible in a predominantly white area. To navigate such situations, I actively negotiated my race, gender, and sexuality as appropriate to form rapport with my interview partners (Arendell, 1997; Deodhar, 2022). For example, I mentioned that I am not educated in the U.S., which influenced me to see the concept of censorship in a different way, when I interviewed interview partners who want to limit access to particular materials at the LPL library. I often asked my interview partners to explain the U.S. politics or the history of Lafayette since – as a foreigner – I know less about the U.S., and many partners explained the cultural background of Lafayette to me in detail.

2) External validity

External validity is often about the generalizability of research findings. Unlike the statistical generalization of findings from a sample to a larger population, external validity in qualitative case studies is better understood as transferability, which refers to the extent of the applicability of research findings to a different situation. It is imperative to provide a “thick description” to support other researchers in measuring the transferability of research results to a different setting (Merriam, 2009, p. 227). A “thick description” in this study focuses on the context of the LPL and the power dynamics among actors. First, a description of the context of the LPL, such as demographics of its community, cultural and political landscape, history of the LPL and Lafayette Parish, statistics of the LPL, and significant events at the LPL beside the controversy, are presented in Section 4.3. The detailed contextual information helps readers understand the uniqueness of the LPL case and the similarities of the LPL with other library systems before they transfer the result of this study.

Second, I provide a “thick description” of power dynamics represented as resource mobilization among actors, which is the main contribution of this study to library and governance studies. This study describes what resources each actor has access to, how actors come to have access to certain resources, and limitations for the actors in mobilize resources in Chapter 5. The details help determine its transferability to similar cases in local governance where actors with varying levels of power try to solve a public issue.

3) Reliability

Reliability is measured by how well research can be replicated. However, in qualitative research, the “consistency” and “dependability” of research findings with the collected data are more crucial “because human behavior is never static” and “there can be numerous interpretations of the same data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). While all the aforementioned

strategies for increasing validity also increase reliability, I created a case study database to further guarantee consistency (Yin, 2009). The case study database for personal use was created with the software Scrivener, which has binder and search features. The feature helps me organize data into groups and locate data easily. The search feature allows me to look up an exact phrase, which also makes locating data easier.

4.2.6 Ethical considerations

This study does not anonymize the case but anonymizes individuals as needed to protect their privacy. The most preferable option for a case study is to reveal both the case and the individuals' identities (Yin, 2009). The disclosure of identities increases the validity and reliability of the research by allowing readers to access the data I use. Considering that this research focuses on a controversial topic, I anonymized interview partners' identities and any names in my data to encourage interview participation and protect them from any potential harm (Yin, 2009).

Since the Lafayette Public Library has already received considerable media attention, it is possible to identify individuals even though they are anonymized. Furthermore, most of the documents and recordings are public documents that are already available to the public, which makes it easier to identify individuals. Thus, when reporting findings and discussion, I did not use consistent pseudonyms or code names for individuals to obscure their identities. Nonetheless, some interview partners chose to use their names in my dissertation when we shared the interview consent.

4.3 CASE DETAILS: LAFAYETTE PUBLIC LIBRARY

This section provides a summary of the basic information about Lafayette Parish, Louisiana, where the Lafayette Public Library is located, and about the Lafayette Public Library itself, selected based on case selection criteria. Additionally, I offer a narrative centered around the key actors and disagreement issues of LPL controversy, detailing how the controversy faced by the LPL has progressed from 2018 to 2023. This narrative aims to aid in understanding the findings on resource mobilization presented in Chapter 5.

4.3.1 Background of Lafayette Public Library

I. Lafayette Parish

Lafayette Parish is located in the southern region of Louisiana. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.), Lafayette Parish has a land area of 268.83 square miles (700 km²) and a population of approximately 244,205 in 2021. A majority of the population is White (65.3%), followed by Black Americans (28.1%), Hispanics or Latinos (6.2%), and Asians (2.4%). The parish seat of Lafayette Parish is the city of Lafayette, where approximately 50% of the parish population lives. Lafayette is still racially and economically divided along the Evangeline Thruway - the northeastern part of the Thruway is historically a black neighborhood, while the southern part of Lafayette is an affluent white area (Mader, 2019b). In the meantime, the Latinx population in Lafayette Parish has grown significantly. A local newspaper identifies Hurricane Katrina's impact on the demand for construction workers as the cause of the increase in the Latinx population (Daigle, 2021).

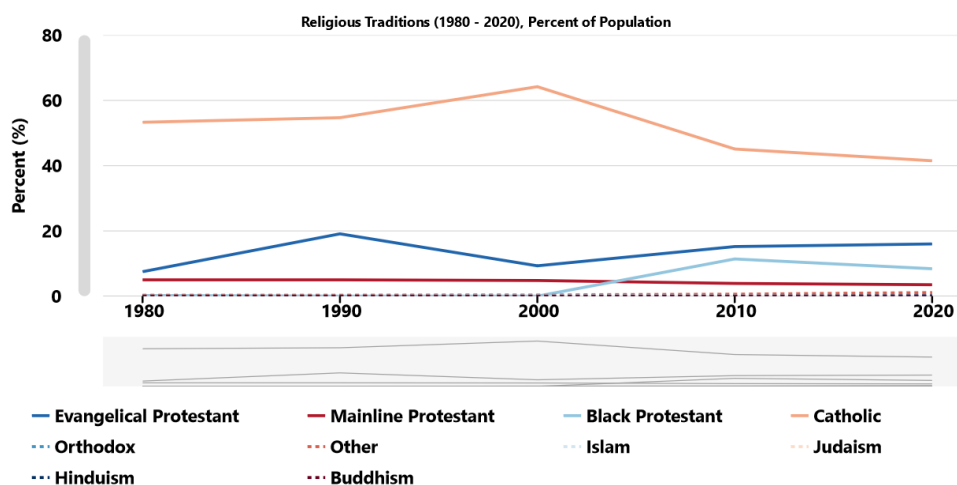


Figure 2 Religions in Lafayette Parish

Figure 2 shows the religious landscape of Lafayette Parish. The most practiced religions in Lafayette Parish are Catholicism, Protestantism (primarily Baptist and Methodist), and Evangelicalism. In 2020, about 40% of the population of Lafayette practices Catholicism, which has significantly diminished compared to 2000 (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, n.d.). Comparatively, Evangelical Protestants have increased their following by almost double in the past 20 years.

Lafayette Parish has a relatively conservative political climate, with more than 50% of registered voters identifying as Republicans. Since 1972, presidential elections have been won by Republican candidates in the parish (Louisiana Secretary of State, n.d.). In the 2020 presidential election, Lafayette Parish voted in favor of incumbent Republican President Donald Trump, with 63% of the vote going to Trump and 35% going to Democratic candidate Joe Biden.

Lafayette Parish and City went through a significant change in their governance. Lafayette Parish and Lafayette City residents agreed in 1996 to form the Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) to govern both parish and city. Accordingly, the City-Parish Council represented the citizens by having 9 members from the parish and the city. Council members

served for four years. In 2019, 5 Republicans and 4 Democrats sat on the City-Parish Council. Of the 9 members, two were Black and two were women.

In 2018, the constituents of the city and parish voted to split up the city and parish. This splits the City-Parish council into the City Council and the Parish Council, while the mayor-president remained to lead the LCG. Monique Blanco Boulet, a Republican, is the current mayor-president. The background of this deconsolidation includes differences in priorities between urban and rural voters, along with race (Maloyed, 2022). City voters generally favor higher taxation, whereas rural voters tend to oppose it. Predominantly Black neighborhoods in the city have difficulty accessing government services if taxation for their areas is rejected by rural voters.

After the deconsolidation, the Parish Council became the governing authority that appoints the board of the Lafayette Public Library. In 2019, the first election was held for the newly formed Parish Council. As a result, four Republicans and one Democrat were elected. A. B. Rubin is the only Democrat and the only Black member of the Council. No councilwoman was elected. No one on the council had served as a councilman before 2019 except Kevin Naquin. The voter turnout rate for the Parish Council election was 43.92%, on average (Louisiana Secretary of State, n.d.).

II. Lafayette Parish Library System

The history of the Lafayette Public Library (LPL) dates back to 1942, when the state founded the Lafayette Municipal Library. The library expanded to several locations, eventually settling in a building on Lee and Main Street that served as the main library branch for many years until 1973. No publicly available information about the desegregation of the LPL exists. In

1979, the Friends of the Lafayette Public Library was founded to support fundraising and tax issues for the LPL. Additionally, a few members of the Friends of the Lafayette Public Library established the Lafayette Public Library Foundation in 1993 in need of a separate non-profit organization for a long-term revenue stream (Lafayette Public Library Foundation, n.d.).

LPL is a public institution funded by tax millages levied on property. The voters of the parish approve these tax millages for the library, and once approved, the voters decide their renewal every 10 years through a vote. In 2002, through the efforts of the library director, board members, and a Political Action Committee, LPL secured three tax millages. However, in 2018, one of the tax millages failed to be renewed, and as of 2024, LPL is operating with two tax millages (Lafayette Loves Libraries PAC, n.d.).

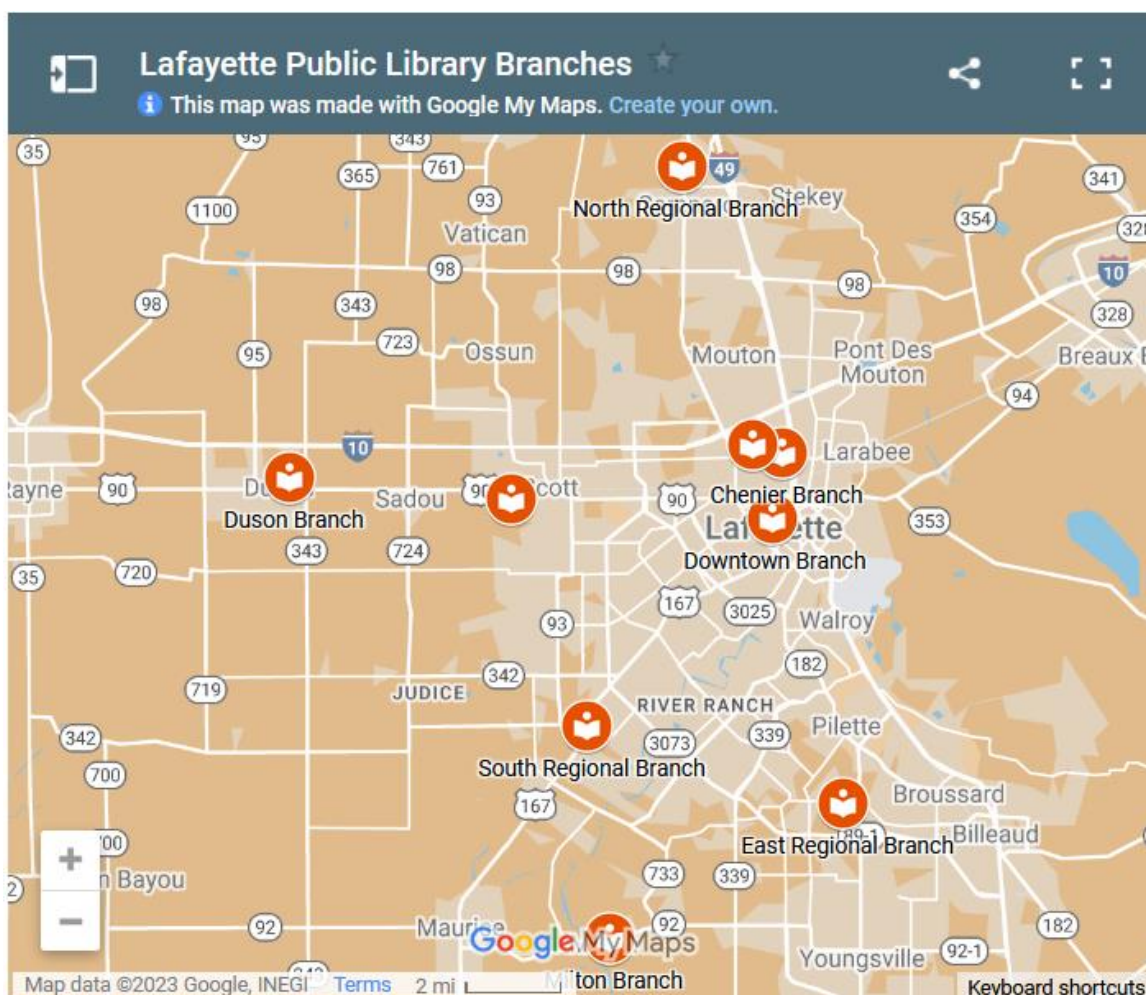


Figure 3 Lafayette Public Library Branches

As Figure 3 shows, the Lafayette Public Library System consists of five branches and four regional libraries. The North and South Regional Libraries were built in 2005 and 2007, respectively, and the West and East Regional Libraries were established about 10 years later. The planning for the Northeast Regional Library started in 2018 and is still ongoing. This new regional library will mitigate the information disparity experienced by people living east of the Evangeline Thruway, where no library branch exists. According to the Public Library Survey 2020, a total of 49 librarians and 106.5 other staff members work at LPL full-time (Pelczar et al., 2022).

Louisiana Revised Statutes 25:214 regulates the appointment of public library board members. The governing authority, which is the Parish Council, appoints five to seven board members, who serve for five years. The Mayor-President of LCG also serves as ex officio, but usually the Mayor-President appointed a delegate for them to serve on the board. This rule was changed in 2023 to eliminate the Mayor-President appointee from the board (Taylor, 2023). Figure 4 briefly describes the process of trustee appointments for the Board of Control of the LPL. The applicants for the Board of Control are instructed to send a resume to the Clerk of the Council. During a regular meeting of the Lafayette Parish Council, each council member can recommend one applicant for a vote. The council members then vote for one applicant among the recommended applicants. When there is a tie vote, a second vote is taken for the applicants who have the same number of votes. Public comment is allowed before votes, and citizens can express their support for or opposition to an applicant by email, mail, or phone call.

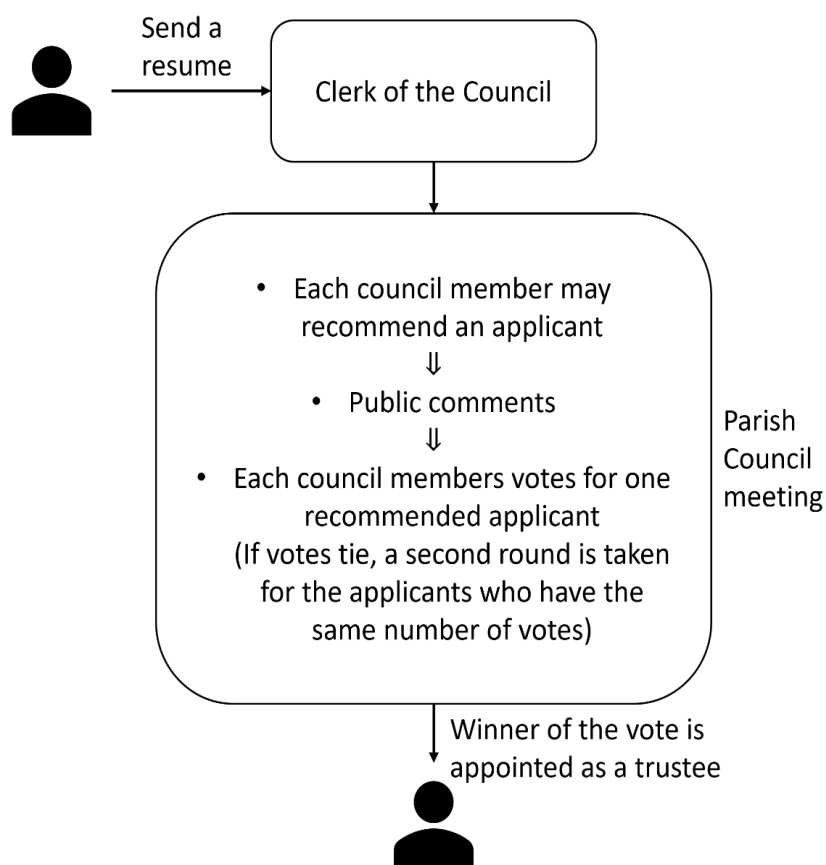


Figure 4 The process of trustee appointments

4.3.2 Controversy at Lafayette Public Library (2018-2023)

Table 3 Key issues and actors of the controversy at Lafayette Public Library

Period	Key issues (Key disagreement)	Key actors
April 2018	Library tax renewal	LPL board, library director, local organization (CNL)
August 2018- February 2019	Hosting a DQST event at the LPL	LPL board, library director, library staff, City-Parish Council, Mayor-President, community members, local organizations (CNL, Acadiana Supporters of DQST, TFP), outside organizations (Warriors of Christ, ACLU)

January 2021	Hosting a reading event about voting rights with the LEH grant	LPL board, library staff, community members, local organization (Supporters of LPL, LWV)
February 2021-December 2023	Appointment and removal of particular community members on the LPL board	Parish Council, community members, local organizations (CNL, Supporters of LPL, LCAC)
October 2021-December 2023	Construction of Northeast Regional Library (Is leasing option or building option better for the Northeast Regional Library? How should the operation of Northeast Regional Library be funded?)	Parish Council, library board, library director, community members, local organizations (Supporters of LPL, LCAC, NAACP, Move the Mindset)
November 2021-April 2022	Reconsideration of TBG and SSHH	Library board, library director, library staff, community members, local organizations (CNL, LCAC)
March 2022	Composition of reconsideration committee (How many library staff and board members should be on the reconsideration committee?)	Library board, library director, library staff, community members, local organizations (LCAC)
May 2022-July 2022	Pride display at the LPL (Is it appropriate to have a pride display at the LPL? Should the library board terminate the employment of librarian who created a pride display in one of the LPL branches?)	Library board, library director, library staff, community members, local organizations (LCAC, NAACP, Move the Mindset)
February 2023	Adding the definition of sexually explicit material and a restricted library card in the collection development policy (Is an opt-in or opt-out option better for the restricted library card?)	Library board, library director, community members, local organizations (LCAC)
August 2023	Termination of the employment of library director	Library board, library director, community members, local organizations (LCAC)
November-December 2023	Disaffiliation of the LPL from the ALA	Library board, community members, local organizations (LCAC)

Since 2018, actors have expressed disagreement over various issues regarding the LPL in public spaces. As of June 2024, these disagreements have not been entirely resolved. However, for the purpose of setting the boundaries of this study, only issues up to December 2023 were analyzed. Table 3 briefly summarizes the issues over which actors have primarily disagreed in public spaces from 2018 to the present. Most issues pertained to material challenges or the contents of services or displays provided by the library. However, some issues were related to the overall operation or governance of the library. These issues were included in this study because the actors involved in these disagreements largely overlapped with those engaged in material challenges. Additionally, while some issues were short-lived, others became recurring disagreements over several years.

The LPL controversy is divided into three phases. The first phase around 2018-2019 is composed of a sequence of events, including library tax millage failure, Drag Queen Story Time (DQST) cancellation, and the rededication of the library fund balance.

The public controversy at the LPL started with DQST in 2018, while some of my interview participants view the millage failure in 2018 as the beginning of the controversy. A local organization, Citizens for a New Louisiana (CNL)², conducted an extensive public campaign against the 2018 tax millage, which subsequently did not pass (Taylor, 2023). Since then, LPL has been operating with a reduced budget. When the LPL announced that the DQST would be held in the LPL, Lafayette Mayor-President Joel Robideaux suggested canceling the DQST by questioning its appropriateness and relevance to the needs of Lafayette Parish (Myers, 2018).

² Since its organization in April 2018, CNL has been reported that it receives support from rich donors and has actively campaigned against taxation. According to a report by the local media outlet KATC (2018), CNL is “funded by business people and property owners in Lafayette Parish, although the identities of these individuals have not been disclosed.” Another newspaper article reported that leaders of CNL act as “mercenaries,” intervening in local politics according to the wishes of donors (Taylor, 2022).

The day after the statement was released, about 20 residents voiced their support for the DQST at a City-Parish Council meeting, while one resident spoke in opposition. The council office received calls from 15 citizens expressing support and 9 expressing opposition. On August 27, Joseph Gordon-Wiltz, the LPL Board of Control president, resigned due to the escalating conflict surrounding the DQST. Citizens for a New Louisiana, a grassroots organization, submitted a petition opposing the DQST, signed by 780 people, to both the LPL and the Lafayette City-Parish Council on August 29. At the LPL board meeting on September 17, 22 supporters and 37 opponents attended and spoke, but no decision was made regarding the DQST. The following day, over 100 supporters and opponents attended the Lafayette City-Parish Council meeting to speak about the DQST. However, the resolution condemning the LPL's decision to host the DQST did not pass, as several members abstained from voting. The following day, Warriors for Christ and Special Forces of Liberty filed a federal lawsuit against the city of Lafayette, the governor of Louisiana, and the LPL. On October 1, the LPL decided to move the event to South Louisiana Community College because of concerns that the crowd would exceed the library's capacity. However, a few days later, the college postponed the event due to its limited security force. As a result, the DQST was not held, and the disagreements subsided.

Although the library tax millage failure was not directly related to the cancellation of DQST, the same local organization, CNL, campaigned for opposing DQST and tax millage, which eventually raised community interest in LPL issues. The rededication of the library fund balance occurred as a result of the souring public opinion about LPL following the DQST controversy and the CNL campaign claiming LPL stocked too much in its fund balance.

The second phase, up to early 2021, has less controversial events, but it was a time when main actors of the later phase started to be deeply involved in controversy. Individuals who had

become interested in LPL during the DQST process applied to the library board, and among the candidates, those who received the support of three conservative councilmen from the Parish Council became board members. Those who supported DQST did not engage significantly with LPL during this period.

The third phase, from late 2021 to 2023, mainly involved material challenges and collection development policy as the primary issues of disagreement. The next disagreement event, now with public members who kept their involvement in LPL's management for a while, arose around the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) grant for a book program about the history of voting rights in 2021. Several board members condemned the library director for applying for the LEH grant without their approval, and they refused to receive the grant. The director resigned after a public reproach toward her during a board meeting. Following this incident, many members of the public showed up at the next board meeting to criticize the board as a conveyor of systemic racism. Some public members founded an activist group called the Supporters of Lafayette Public Libraries around 2021.

In October 2021, the founder of CNL, filed a book challenge against *This Book is Gay* by James/Juno Dawson. In the next LPL board meeting on November 15, many community members spoke to oppose any form of censorship. As a result of the meeting, the board decided to retain the challenged book in the library. However, in February 2022, the board tried to change the composition of the Reconsideration Committee to include two library board members and one librarian appointed by the library director, from one board member and two librarians. In April 2022, a patron requested a reconsideration of *Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood*, a documentary film, and the DVD was eventually moved to the NC-17 section. In February 2023, the president of the LPL board, proposed limiting teen access to sexually explicit books by

modifying library policy. In accordance with policy changes approved on February 15 by the library's board of control, parents of children younger than 17 may request a restricted children's library card that prevents their children from checking out any adult-categorized materials. This policy change was suggested based on Attorney General Jeff Landry's report, "Protecting Innocence" (Noakes, 2023). The report details his office's findings regarding sexually explicit materials in Louisiana's public libraries and suggests solutions to the ongoing debate.

All in all, the LPL case indicates that disagreements on different topics are closely connected, mostly due to the actors and points of view involved. Many actors have maintained their engagement with the LPL and set foot in when any disagreement events happen. Although the focus of this study is on material challenges, other disagreement events, such as those surrounding the Northeast Regional Library and LEH grant, were also examined to provide a full picture of the controversy at the LPL.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the methodology of this research, including method selection, case selection, data collection, and analysis. Additionally, I provide contextual information on the case, a controversy at the Lafayette Public Library in Louisiana, and a brief description of the controversy that started in 2018 with key actors and key issues that actors have disagreed upon.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Throughout the controversy around LPL, actors have mobilized various resources to achieve their goals in the controversy. This chapter focuses on resource mobilization by actors in the LPL controversy to answer the first research question: *How are resources mobilized by actors in controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?* Based on data analysis, I identified three major resources: legal authority, rights, and networks. These three resources were discovered based on a data collection inquiry: *what resources are mobilized?* Their major role in the LPL controversy was further verified with thematic coding.³

In Section 5.2, I focused on how the resources were mobilized in the LPL controversy to answer the second research question: *What is the relationship between the mobilization of resources and the process of controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?* The networks created based on the meta-network framework, particularly the resource-resource network, were used to identify relationships between resources, and the organization-organization network supported the argument that local organizations are platforms in the controversy. The context of relationships and characteristics of resource mobilization were provided by the excerpts from the thematic coding. Lastly, I report the relationship between resource mobilization and controversy based on the chronology of disagreement events.

5.1 RESOURCES IN THE LPL CONTROVERSY

In this section, I focus on the description of resources in terms of what, where, and who based on the data collection inquiries. This section aims to provide an overview of the resources mobilized in the LPL controversy, which serves as the basis for Section 5.2.

³ References, time, and emotional support were also identified during this process. However, they were not central to the progression of the controversy and were therefore excluded from the findings.

5.1.1 Legal Authority

Legal authority is a resource that is *legally granted to certain actors to make decisions regarding public libraries*. This resource is only granted to public officials or public bodies based on regulations. In the LPL controversy, there are three parties that have legal authority, e.g., the authorization to make legal decisions: Lafayette Parish Council, Lafayette Parish Library Board of Control, and Lafayette Parish Library directors. Statutes and Bylaws define each authority as follows.

I. Lafayette City-Parish and Parish Council

Based on Louisiana Revised Statutes Title 25, Joint Ordinance JO-023-2020, and Parish Council Ordinance PO-034-2023, the Lafayette Parish Council has the legal authority to appoint 7 library board members for the Board of Control of LPL. The only requirement for a library board member is their residency in Lafayette Parish. During a regular council meeting, each council member can recommend one applicant for the vote. The applicant with the most votes is appointed as a board member.

1) Appointment of Lafayette Parish Library Board of Control members

During the LPL controversy, the Lafayette City-Parish Council appointed LPL board members twice, and the Lafayette Parish Council appointed them seven times. Until 2018, the Lafayette City-Parish Council had the legal authority to appoint board members. Since the deconsolidation of the City and Parish Councils in 2019, the Lafayette Parish Council succeeded this authority. These appointments of board members were made during Lafayette City-Parish or

Parish Council Regular Meetings. Community members who received the majority vote among the candidates were appointed as board members. If no candidate received a majority vote, a runoff was held between the two candidates with the most votes, and the candidate who then received the majority was appointed as a board member.

II. Lafayette Parish Library Board of Control

The Bylaws of Lafayette Parish Library Board of Control (hereafter “Bylaws”) define the legal authority of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control based on Louisiana Revised Statutes Title 25, §215 (RS 25:215). RS 25:215 prescribes the duties and powers of the board as the establishment of rules in accordance with law, employing librarians, and deciding their salaries and compensation. The board’s legal authority to make decisions regarding the library should be exercised in their regular or special meetings with the majority of the board members at the meeting. Article 5 of the Bylaws again defines the legal authority of the library board to appoint the library director.

Furthermore, Article 4 of the Bylaws grants the board president additional legal authority to “preside at all meetings, appoint all committees, authorize calls for meetings, make decisions on procedural issues arising during meetings, direct and supervise the Library Director to the extent necessary between Board meetings.” The vice president exercises the president’s legal authority when the president is absent. This article means that the board president or vice president can use their legal authority outside of public meetings.

In the LPL controversy, the board and board president utilized their legal authority according to Louisiana Revised Statutes and the Bylaws as follows.

1) Appointment and termination of the library director and staff

During the LPL controversy, a library director resigned in 2021 and one library director was appointed as of June 2021. The resignation of the library director in 2021 happened right after the director was criticized during a board meeting regarding a subscription to the library analytic system and an LEH (Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities) grant. The library director who resigned in 2021 decided to retire when they thought the board was dissatisfied with their decision not to exactly follow the direction from the board.

I walked out of that board meeting. I said, I've got to leave. I got to turn in my resignation. She's got me. [...] She's coming after me. They've already rounded. They already tried to have a board meeting, discussion about me in a board meeting, but they hadn't done it legally, and so I was not able to put it on the agenda. [...] But they had to give you, legal, 24 hours notice that they're going to give you that they're going to talk about you in an executive meeting, and they didn't have 24 hours notice [...] So I walked out of there and turned in my retirement the next day. [Library director A⁴]

This case indicates that the board's legal authority can only be exercised during a board meeting following relevant laws.

The board exercised their legal authority to hire a new library director during a Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control on June 21, 2021. In this hiring process, the board formed a Director's Search Committee consisting of four board members and three community members, and within three months, appointed a new board director.

This new library director resigned when the board indicated their willingness to terminate the director after an evaluation on August 21, 2023. On this day, four board members attended while three were absent. Later, one of the board members who were absent from the meeting

⁴ To protect the privacy of interview partners, I do not use any code name for each interview partners. When I need to demarcate each interview partner in one section, I added an alphabet after the category of the interview partners (e.g., Librarian A). All the names that appear in this research are real names. These interview partners did not wish to be anonymized.

expressed their opposition to firing the director at a special board meeting convened three days later, while other two did not make a comment:

I believe this is truly, in my opinion, very sad concerning our director, because, of course, I had no knowledge that on Monday that he would be terminated. [...] [Library director] has always had an open-door policy with this board. He's always answered our calls and emails. So when I wasn't here on Monday because of work obligations, it was just his yearly annual evaluation. So I was not expecting the outcome of that. [Board member]

The library director recalled the day they received the termination notice as follows:

They come out, they vote to leave the executive session. And I started asking them questions while they're packing up their stuff and leaving about, so what's the deal? Am I still your director? How's this going? I'm sort of joking, and [Board president] comes up to me and says, come in the other room. [...] [Board president] says, so we think you're doing a great job with the budget. And with staff and the personnel side of things. I said, okay. But he said, but we think you're working to undermine the board. [...] And I said, so am I still here? And he says, you're no longer employed by the library board of control. [Library director B]

However, since the termination of the library director did not take place in an open public meeting, the termination of the library director did not occur. Subsequently, the library director made phone calls to council members and board members requesting permission to retire and, the next day, sent a resignation email to the Human Resources director of LCG. In short, in both cases, the board did not effectively use their legal authority to terminate the employment of library directors. Nonetheless, they were able to meet their purpose of terminating the employment since the library directors voluntarily resigned and saved their retirement benefits.

On the other hand, there was another failed use of legal authority to terminate the employment of library staff in 2022. In May 2022, the then library director prohibited any book displays that single out a specific group, due to complaints from board members about a pride

display in June 2021. In June 2022, a librarian created a teen romance book display, attaching a sign that read “LGBTQ romance” to one side of it. According to my interviews, some board members told the library director that this librarian should be disciplined for defying the director’s instructions on book displays. The library director spoke with the librarian but eventually did not instruct them to remove the display. Subsequently, some board members pressured the library director to fire the librarian, but the director responded that they could not prove the display violated their display guideline and therefore could not terminate the employment of the librarian.

Since this librarian is an employee of LCG, proper termination needs to follow LCG’s policy and procedure manual. The librarian’s attorney also noted at the meeting that “she was not informed of the accusation of insubordination until the meeting and as a civil service employee had the right to know the charges against her ahead of time.” Several community members spoke out against the firing of this librarian, and ultimately, the motion to terminate her employment was tabled.

2) Approval of collection development policies

During the LPL controversy, the board approved several library policies. Among them, the collection development policies, which are most closely related to material challenges, were significantly revised twice. On one occasion, the board believed they had approved a revision, but it was not approved because the Bylaws were not followed.

First, the process of amending the collection development policy in 2019 proceeded as follows: a policy drafted collaboratively by the library director and staff was presented to the library board on March 18, 2019. During a regular board meeting on July 15, 2019, board

members requested modifications to the draft. Subsequently, on August 19, 2019, a revised draft was presented during a regular board meeting, and after incorporating several proposed amendments by the board, the policy was approved on the same day by the board.

Second, at the regular library board meeting on February 15, 2023, agenda items were presented by a board member to revise the collection development policy and the library card policy. In this meeting, the board approved resolutions that add a definition of sexually explicit materials to the collection development policy and provisions allowing for the issuance of children/minor's cards in the library card policy. Initially, the resolution put forward was to introduce an opt-out system for children/minors' cards, but after hearing opposition from the library director and community members, the board passed the amended resolution for an opt-in system for children/minors' cards.

On the other hand, the board failed to comply with the Bylaws when voting for the policy approval at the regular meeting on February 21, 2022; consequently, they failed to approve the new collection development policy. During the regular library board meeting, one board member raised an agenda item to amend the composition of the reconsideration committee from one board member and two librarians to three board members. Additionally, two amendments were proposed during the meeting: one to change the composition of the reconsideration committee to two board members and three librarians, and another to change it to two board members and one librarian. Despite numerous public comments opposing the changes, four board members cast affirmative votes for the composition of two board members and one librarian, while three members voted against. One board member was absent. It was perceived that the resolution was approved during this meeting; however, according to the Bylaws at the time, five votes, which is a majority vote of the total board members, was required for any resolution to pass.

Subsequently, one board member notified the library director that the resolution had not been passed according to the Bylaws.

3) Final decision of reconsideration appeal

According to the Lafayette Public Library Collection Development Policy, “The Lafayette Public Library Board of Control delegates the development of the collection to the Library Director. [...] The responsibility for selection ultimately rests with the Library Director, operating within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Control.” However, the collection development policy allows recalling the delegated responsibility of collection development back to the library board, when a community member appeals against the decision of the reconsideration committee.

Between 2018 and 2023, there were two appeals for reconsideration of committee decisions. The first appeal was regarding the reconsideration committee’s decision to move *This Book is Gay* (TBG) to the Teen Health section. At the regular board meeting held on November 15, 2021, board members discussed a resolution to completely remove TBG from the library. Thirty community members made public comments urging not to remove the book, followed by a discussion among board members on what to do with the book. The library director explained the definition of censorship and answered board members' questions, such as who could borrow the book. After discussion, they decided not to remove TBG from the library with five votes against and two in favor.

During the board meeting on April 18, 2022, an appeal of *Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood* (SSHH) reconsideration was addressed. The reconsideration committee had rejected

a community member's request to remove SSHH from the library. The board unanimously agreed to a proposal to classify SSHH as NC-17, restricting access to minors.

4) Discretion for the operation of board meetings

The legal authority to enforce the rules governing board meetings lies with the board president. During the LPL controversy, the board president used this legal authority to regulate the actions and statements of community members at board meetings.

a. Control of public comments

Prior to 2021, the board president did not impose any particular restrictions to public comments made during board meetings. A community member who was a board member at the time recalled the September 2018 board meeting, when dozens of community members participated the board meeting to make public comments, as follows:

Here we are trying to show that we are open to hearing everything anybody. [...] I don't know, it was a two- or three-minute time limit for comments. And it was pretty easy. Most people run out of things to say in two or three minutes, but you would get some who are talking. Well, I'm fine with letting people finish a sentence, you know, and your time's about up, but if you want to finish that thought, go ahead. [Board member A]

Another board president explained his application of public comment rules as follows:

[Board member], when he got on, he was wanting to shut people down all the time after their two minutes or whatever, I hated that. And even when I was president, I'd have to. Eventually, you have to cut people off just because that's our rules. But I would usually let people run on because I know people. Part of the process is people just want to be heard, and sometimes, once they know they've been heard, they're, okay. [Board member B]

However, the board president who was elected during the board meeting on October 20, 2021, began to strictly apply the public comment rules. A notable example occurred during the meeting on November 15, 2021, when the board president made the following announcement before starting the public comments:

Just wanted to remind everyone one the general rules for public speaking when we do this, and we welcome the public's input, obviously, is that you have three minutes to speak. And so what we're going to do, something a little different this time, is [Librarian] is going to give a notice at 2:45. So you'll know when her buzzer goes off. That's at 2:45. I'm going to put a timer on as well for 15 seconds, so you'll know when mine goes off. That's when you should be finished. [...] One other thing about comments, please direct your comments to the issue at hand. Everyone has different opinions. [...] And we can speak to each other in charity and respect instead of at each other in vitriol and hatred. And I think the former gets us places where we can come to a conclusion. The latter just simply polarizes us and separates us along whatever lines, artificial lines we decide to draw. [...] Usually the best settlement is when everybody walks away unhappy. But that's just an aside. But the whole idea is we want to be respectful to each other and respectful for everyone else who wants to speak for time's sake as well. [Board member C]

From that day on, a large timer was introduced at board meetings. Placed at the front of the room, this timer symbolized the importance of adhering to time limits when making a public comment.

During the meeting that day, there were multiple instances where community members clapped or made brief comments during the speeches of board members or other community members to show support or opposition. More than 2 hours into the meeting, when the founder of CNL, who had requested the reconsideration of TBG, was making a public comment, other community members began to laugh and make noise, the board president struck the gavel and said the following:

Community member: How many books are being discarded? 4,924? How many people here are upset that you are censoring 4,924... [laughter from the public]

Board president: It's his turn to speak! He sat there, quietly listened everybody talking for 40, 50 minutes. Everybody had their 3 minutes. No. Stop. Everyone's treated equally. Everyone! It's Robert's rule of order. That's how we operate. And it's disrespectful to this gentleman that he gets 3 minutes of time. Just like everybody else. If you don't like what he has to say, either sit there quietly or leave. Those are your options. But constant bickering on the back, comments, and all the other stuff are unnecessary, and we are not going to tolerate it. This is not a riot. This is a public hearing. And we allow people to speak respectfully, even if you vehemently disagree with their opinion. It's okay to disagree with people's opinion. It doesn't mean they are bad people. We just have a disagreement of opinion. It's not a complicated thing, folks. [Board member C]

As mentioned in Section 4.3, considering that CNL and its founder are already known as a political “mercenary” within the Lafayette community, it is not surprising that many public members jeered when he made a public comment. Additionally, his comparison of book weeding to censorship seems to have elicited a strong reaction from the audience.

From September 2022 to January 2023, the board president announced the following as a rule for the public comment period:

When addressing the board, state your name, parish of residence and title for the official record. The three-minute rule for remarks will be in effect. Public comment policy and Louisiana revised statute 14 103 must be followed. No debating confrontational statements or singling individual board members will be allowed. Violators will be removed.

This was accompanied by a notice on the LPL meeting room door regarding maintaining peace.

Finally, during the regular library board meeting on January 9, 2023, the board president interrupted the public comment of a community member for violating the rules in the Speaker's Request Form for public comments:

Community member: We know the evils of board members themselves. We know [Board member] stood on the street corner outside the library protesting drag queen story time, grooming her children and others by her.

Board president: You're out of order.

Community member: There is something pathologically wrong with certain gender and sexual identities, even as she claims to love everyone we know. [Board members] and groomers in the community have pushed false narratives.

Board president: You're out of order. The third time. Could you...[indiscernible] Have her removed, please.

This community member was discussing how board members tried to exclude certain materials from the library and spread “false narratives” about the library being dangerous. When the names of board members started to come up, the board president intervened in the community member’s speech. Following the request from the board president, the deputy officer removed this community member without allowing her to use the allocated 3 minutes for their public comment.

b. Enforcement against the disturbance of peace

When the board president determined there was a disturbance of peace at a board meeting, they used their legal authority to remove the community member from the meeting. This legal authority was exercised by utilizing legal enforcement hired for the board meeting. As an exemplary event, at a regular library board meeting on February 22, 2022, the board president requested a community member to leave the board meeting. The reason for the removal was disturbing the peace. While board members were discussing the Northeast Regional Library, this community member persistently interjected the discussion among board members. A deputy sheriff, who was hired for the board meeting, requested the community member to leave the meeting room. The community member immediately refused. After consultation among the

board president, library director, and attorney, it was decided to allow the community member to continue attending the meeting. However, when the community member spoke out again during another community member's public comment about book reconsideration, the deputy sheriff escorted him out of the library and arrested him.

In September 2022, the board posted a notice excerpted from Louisiana State Law RS 14:103 (Offenses Affecting the General Peace and Order) on the door of the LPL meeting room, which particularly includes only A (2) and (6) from the law:

- A. Disturbing the peace is the doing of any of the following in such manner as would foreseeably disturb or alarm the public:*
 - (2) Addressing any offensive, derisive, or annoying words to any other person who is lawfully in any street, or other public place; or call him by any offensive or derisive name, or make any noise or exclamation in his presence and hearing with the intent to deride, offend, or annoy him, or to prevent him from pursuing his lawful business, occupation, or duty; or*
 - (6) Interruption of any lawful assembly of people;*

Since then, the board or the board president has not utilized legal authority to prohibit disturbances of peace.

c. Control of agenda

The board also has the legal authority to define the agenda for board meetings. According to the Bylaws, preparing the meeting agenda is the role of the library director, but with the board president serving in a consulting capacity. Any board members can request to add an agenda item for the meeting. This legal authority is important because items not on the meeting agenda cannot be put to a vote. Additionally, according to Louisiana's Open Meetings Law, the library board must announce the agenda, date, time, and place of the meeting at least 24 business hours before the meeting.

After the new board president was elected, the board president took on the role of compiling the meeting agenda instead of the library director. In an interview with the researcher, the board president at the time explained the agenda preparation process as follows:

If you read the bylaws, you have to follow the bylaws. So, I mean, they're self-explanatory. The director and the board president meet. That's how I did it. We would meet a week before. [Jieun: With the director?] Yeah. Maybe a couple of weeks before the board meeting. Week and a half. We talk about what agenda items we had. Okay, what you got on the agenda? What do you gotta get done? He'd say, look, I got to get these things done. I need the board approval of duties. Okay. Do you have anything? No, I don't have anything this month. But if another board member says, I want to put something on the board, I gotta put it on the board. [Board member]

As this interview shows, both board members and the library director submit agenda items to the board president, who then uses legal authority to finalize and publicly release the agenda at least 24 hours in advance.

III. Lafayette Public Library director

Article 5 of the Bylaws specifies the responsibilities of the LPL's library director as "the administration of the Library under the general policies approved by the Board and the policies of the Lafayette Consolidated Government" (Section 2), manage the buildings and equipment, employ and direct the library staff based on LCG Civil Service System, and propose and manage budget (Section 4). In relation to the LPL controversy, the legal authority used by the library director is the implementation of the collection development policy and the adoption of the display guidelines.

1) Implementation of the collection development policy

While approving the collection development policy is under the library board's legal authority, implementation of collection development policy is a legal authority of library director and staff. During the LPL controversy, there were two instances where library directors used their legal authority to reshelve certain books to address concerns from board members and/or community members.

The first case involved moving LGBTQ-themed children's books to the highest shelf in 2020 after a community member expressed their concern about having LGBTQ-themed children's books in easily accessible bookshelves. Furthermore, the Library Director and librarians created a sort of small collection by labeling the moved books with 'LGBTQ':

I can't remember the woman because like I said, she wasn't anybody I knew, but she used the west library [...] She didn't want the books removed, but she was afraid her small child might run into a book on being different, I guess, if it was on the bottom shelf, and they wanted all the books moved to the top shelf. And so we agreed to do that. [...] I not only agreed to do that, but I agreed to label every book so we could find it and make sure it was always on the top shelf. Yeah. And so that allowed us to actually label the books for a good thing. So now if you wanted to find them for your child, you actually could. [...] I tried to do everything I could. Kind of subversive. [Jieun: No complaints?] No, because most people weren't looking for those books, you know. [Library director A]

Additionally, they moved LGBTQ-themed picture books to the nonfiction category. Until a formal material challenge in 2021, there were no known complaints from community members or board members about the library's materials.

The next case occurred after the official book reconsideration request for TBG was submitted in 2021. The library director decided to include the entire teen nonfiction collection, including TBG, within the adult nonfiction collection and placed them on the same shelves:

And so by moving all of those books, I believed that I reduced the number of challenges we had. I don't know if I'm right or wrong, but because [community member] spoke about how these books are so easily available to kids, and I moved them into the adult section, if he had said, they're pornography and they shouldn't be in the library, I would have had nothing other than typical librarian response. But instead, I moved them and I thought, well. And so, he actually told me, he says, well, that's a step in the right direction. I still personally don't believe they should be, but because they were aiming at us, protecting children, I thought in my head that this is sort of giving them what they want. [Library director B]

Although the use of this legal authority was triggered by requests from the board and community members, it was ultimately exercised at the discretion of the library director rather than strictly following the requests.

2) Adoption of the display guideline

Introducing library policy falls under the legal authority of the library board. However, in areas of library operations not covered by policy, the library director provided guidelines to the library staff. In other words, the legal authority of the library director fills the gaps where the library board's legal authority through policy does not reach. During the LPL controversy, when board members and council members expressed dissatisfaction with the LGBTQ-themed display (also known as the pride display), the library director introduced a display guideline. Regarding this decision, the library director said in the interview as follows:

May of 22, [Librarian A] and I start talking about, and [Librarian B], we start talking about the display situation, and we're weighing out all of these possibilities of letting people do whatever the hell they want and see what happens. Let's not do displays of any sort anymore at all. Let's take all of the display furniture and put it in our warehouse. What are the other options in between? And I said, my biggest fear is if we do a pride display, that is going to spark someone to go either take those books or challenge every one of those books. But if we don't do a pride display, then we can't do any other displays. [...]

We kept thinking about it, and so that was what we came up with...no displays that separate out any demographic. And I got all kinds of backlash. I got, what about Acadiana history? Cajun history? [Library director B]

When public officials expressed dissatisfaction with the pride display, the library director, along with the library administration, considered ways to address this complaint. As a result, the library director issued a guideline to each branch manager prohibiting displays that single out a specific group.

5.1.2 Rights

As discussed in the previous section, laws and rules establish the legal authority of the actors responsible for the operation of the LPL. Meanwhile, community members, who do not possess this legal authority, exercise other legal rights to support or oppose actors with legal authority. In this study, rights indicate *legal entitlements granted to individuals allowing participation in public library governance*.

I. Submitting material challenges

The LPL collection development policy grants LPL patrons the right to submit material challenges. It notes that “the library welcomes citizens’ expressions of opinion concerning purchased materials,” thus, “A library card holder who wishes to request that a specific item be considered for reclassification or for removal from inclusion in the collection is asked to complete and sign the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form.” The form does not restrict the reasons for requesting material reconsideration. Patrons can submit a reconsideration form if they want to challenge any material “concerning” in the library.

As previously mentioned, three formal material challenges were submitted during the LPL controversy. All three challenges were filed due to concerns about sexually explicit content. In October 2021, the leader of CNL filed two reconsideration forms after learning about the reconsideration process from the library director:

And so, I brought it up, I called [Library director], and I said, hey, we've got a problem. This material is not appropriate. And we went back and forth a little bit, and he's like, yeah, we're not going to do anything about it. He said, well, if you want to file a complaint, you can reconsideration. This is the form. Okay. So I filled it out. It was on the first one. This Book is Gay by Juno Dawson. [Michael Lunsford⁵]

When the reconsideration committee decided to move the challenged book from Social Science section to sex/health section in the teen area, this community member appealed to the board to reconsider the decision. He did not appeal to the committee's decision about another challenged book, V-Word.

Another reconsideration form was submitted around March 2022. This time, the challenged material was a DVD, Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood. When no action was taken at the reconsideration committee meeting, this community member appealed to the board, which resulted in the reclassification of this DVD to NC-17.

II. Participating in library board and council meetings

According to Louisiana's Open Meetings Law, "Every meeting of any public body shall be open to the public unless closed pursuant to R.S. 42:16, 17, or 18 (LA Rev Stat § 42:14)." Both the library board and Parish Council fall under the category of public body; thus, the meetings of library board and Parish Council must be open to the public.

⁵ Mr. Lunsford explicitly declined anonymization during the interview consent process. Thus, I am using his real name.

Several community members involved in the LPL controversy exercised their rights under this law by attending public meetings. Before the board meeting in September 2018, usually none or less than 5 community members participated in library board meetings. However, at least 65 community members were in the board meeting in September 2018, and these 65 community members made comments about DQST at the LPL. Then, until 2021, none or less than 5 community members participated in the board meeting, as one board member mentioned in the interview:

At that point in time where we used to have hardly anybody, and I've told you that many times, we used to have no one come to the meetings. Occasional reporters like [Journalist] or somebody would show up, but [Community member A] started showing up, and she [Community member B] started showing up, and then the rest is history. [Board member]

However, after the board meeting on January 25, 2021, where the board made resolutions that canceled the library director's decision about purchasing analytic software and applying for a LEH grant, more than 5 community members started to participate in board meetings.

Community members perceived that like-minded people sit nearby during board meetings:

Because it was really interesting. As you'll see tonight, they've got the seating arranged in two sections. So all the religious folks would sit on the right and all of us would sit on the left. Yeah. And it was kind of, it just kind of fell out that way. [Community member]

Since the meeting room has two sections divided by a small aisle, community members who knew each other and shared similar opinions sat together in the same section.

In a similar vein, at least 32 community members participated in the City-Parish Council meeting on August 22, 2018, which was held right after the announcement of DQST at LPL. In the following City-Parish Council meeting on September 18, 2018, more than 130 community members participated in the meeting. After this, community members and board members

participated in council meetings when a council meeting had a library related issue on the agenda. For example, on January 22, 2019, 25 community members and board members attended the City-Parish Council meeting to support or oppose a resolution to rededicate library fund balance for other uses, such as drainage.

III. Making public comments

Community members not only attended public meetings but also exercised their rights to make public comments. According to Louisiana's Open Meetings Law, public comments must be allowed at library board meetings or before any action is taken on an agenda (LA Rev Stat § 42:14, 19).

Public comment periods at the LPL board meetings have been used as the primary form of public participation in the LPL controversy. In 2018, there were many public comments at the meeting where the cancellation of DQST was on the agenda. However, for a while after that, very few community members attended board meetings, resulting in almost no public comments. In early 2021, when the library director resigned, interest in the board rekindled, and the number of community members making public comments increased again, with at least one public comment being made at each board meeting afterward.

At board meetings, most public comments were statements opposing the decisions of the library board or the library director. However, there were also comments praising the board's decisions. Some comments did not specify what decisions the library board or director should make but instead expressed personal beliefs. For example, on March 20, 2023, a community member quoted the ACLU, stating, "especially in a public library where the democratic government is by the people, for the people, and that means the diverse people of the community."

[...] Real Christians love their neighbors as themselves, all their neighbors, and especially look out for the disenfranchised.” These types of comments were often made during the final agenda item of the board meeting, “XI. Comments from the public on any other matter not on this agenda.”

Comments made at the Parish Council regarding the LPL were requests for the council to exercise its legal authority over the library board. When the appointment of a library board member was on the Parish Council’s agenda, community members left public comments asking the council to appoint or not appoint specific applicants.

IV. Making public record requests

Requesting public records is another right that has been mobilized by community members in the LPL controversy. “The right to request and receive government-held records” is granted to any person by the Freedom of Information Act (Feinberg, 2004, p. 441). Based on this law, community members occasionally requested records of communication among library board members, library employees, and Parish Council members. The obtained public records were sometimes used as a primary resource to achieve the goals of community members in the LPL controversy.

At the beginning of the LPL controversy, a community member shared the contents of emails detailing LPL’s planning process for DQST, which were acquired through a public record request, during a parish meeting in September 2018:

[Community member], speaking in support of the resolution, stated that the Library staff has been misleading everyone. He stated that the library continues to claim that the fraternity approached them to have the program but on July 1, a Librarian wrote in an email suggesting to a fraternity member that they do a drag queen story time.

In another case, other community members filed public record requests as a way to find evidence of illegality in the appointment of a board member in 2021. Based on text messages among Parish Council members revealed by a public record request, two community members filed a lawsuit to invalidate the appointment of a board member. Although the community members did not win the lawsuit, those opposed to the board’s decisions continued to submit public record requests (Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship, n.d.-b).

In other words, during the LPL controversy, recorded content was often perceived as reliable evidence. Further, because of its publicness and transferability, records obtained by one individual could easily spread among those involved in the controversy.

V. Filing a lawsuit

Community members involved in the LPL controversy also exercised their rights to file lawsuits. Table 4 lists the lawsuits that have been filed during the LPL controversy to date.

Table 4 Lawsuits in the LPL controversy

Filed date	Plaintiff	Defendant	Main issue	Status
September 18, 2018	Aaron Guidry, Mark Christopher Sevier, John Gunter, Jr.	Teresa Elberson, Joel Robideaux	Violation of First Amendment and sale, exhibition, or distribution of material harmful to minors (LSA-R.S. 14:91.11) in hosting DQST	Dismissed without prejudice Case 6:18-cv-01232
December 21, 2018	Amber Robinson and Matthew Humphrey	Teresa Elberson	Violation of First Amendment in prohibiting using a library meeting room	

			for DQST event	
April 9, 2021	Lessie Leblanc-Melancon, Dominique Ducote	Lafayette Consolidated Government, Lafayette Parish Council, Mayor-President Josh Guillory, Kevin Naquin, Joshua Carlson, John Guilbeau, and Bryan Tabor	Violation of Open Meetings Law in the appointment of a board member	Not guilty
March 7, 2023	Lynette Mejia, Melanie Brevis	Lafayette Consolidated Government, Robert Judge, Daniel Kelly and Mark Garber	Violation of First Amendment and Louisiana Open Meetings Law in removing an individual from a board meeting	On going

All the lawsuits were filed by community members, and the defendants were public officials and institutions. When the controversy first ignited in 2018, the issue of hosting DQST at the library was a point of contention in the lawsuit. In a lawsuit filed in September 2018, the plaintiffs argued that DQST was harmful to minors and should not be held at LPL. In response to this lawsuit, LPL required patrons to sign a form that they are not holding private DQST events in their meeting rooms when renting them out. Consequently, community members who wanted to host DQST at the library joined the original lawsuit as plaintiff intervenors, together with the ACLU:

And then as a result, the library director decided that she was going to impose a new meeting room rule. And so the meeting room rule was now that you had to sign a form saying that you would not use this space for drag queen story time purposes. That is a violation of my constitutional rights. An injunction. While the law gets figured out, I can deal. Cancel the event. But you cannot, as a stipulation,

make me sign away my rights to content in a public meeting space. Absolutely not. Got in touch with the ACLU and the ACLU decided that this was grounds for us to be what was called plaintiff intervenors. And effectively our legal interest, our constitutional rights interest, were being affected by steps taken as a result of this injunction. So we were now players in the original lawsuit. [Community member]

Two community members, who were members of Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time, contacted the ACLU of Louisiana to seek legal advice and successfully intervened in the lawsuit.

The lawsuits filed in 2021 and 2023 shifted focus from the library's materials or programs to the composition and actions of the board. The plaintiffs in the 2021 lawsuit claimed that the appointment process of a board member was illegal (Mader, 2021). As mentioned in the previous section, community members were looking for ways to invalidate the board appointment. During this process, text messages between a Parish Council member and existing board members were revealed by a public record request, showing that three Parish Council members had already agreed to appoint a specific candidate (Mader, 2021). The plaintiffs argued that if three out of the five-member Parish Council formed a coalition outside of a public meeting, this would have violated the Open Meetings Law prohibiting walking quorums (Louisiana Legislative Auditor, 2023). This claim was not upheld in court, and the board member continued to serve the board.

In the 2023 lawsuit, the plaintiffs claimed that the library board violated the First Amendment in the conduct of a public meeting. As mentioned in Section 5.1.1, a community member was expelled from the meeting for making multiple derogatory comments during public comment. As a result, two community members filed a lawsuit against the LCG, the board president, and the sheriff with support from Tulane Law Clinic.

A common aspect among different lawsuits is the support from organizations outside the community. Warriors of Christ, ACLU, and Tulane Law Clinic each played a role in providing

human power and knowledge for various lawsuits. This demonstrates that the resources available to community members are not confined to the local community but can extend to broader state or nationwide resources.

5.1.3 Network

In this section, I demonstrate the network as a resource that individuals and organizations utilize to influence the LPL controversy. Here, network means *interactions between individuals or organizations except the interaction during public meetings*. Individual networks include existing relationships among actors and also any interactions identified in interviews or documents. Local organizations, which are constructed upon a network of actors, are described in length to highlight their unique role as a resource in the LPL controversy.

I. Individual networks

Actors used networks between individuals as channels to discuss ways to respond to the LPL controversy and exchange information.

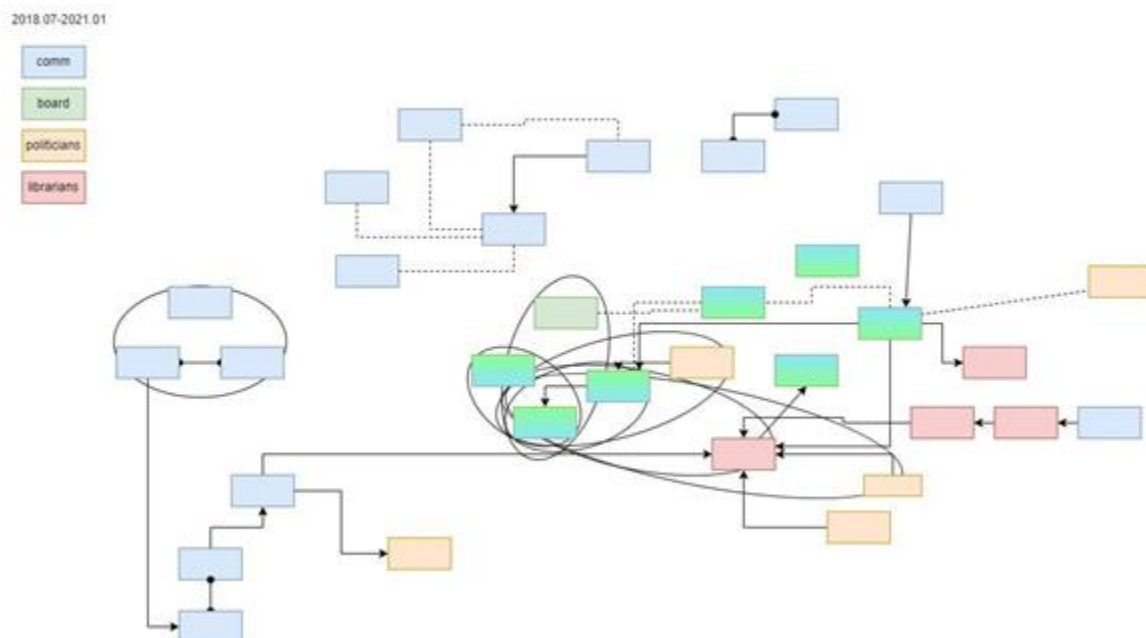


Figure 5 Individual-individual network before February 2021

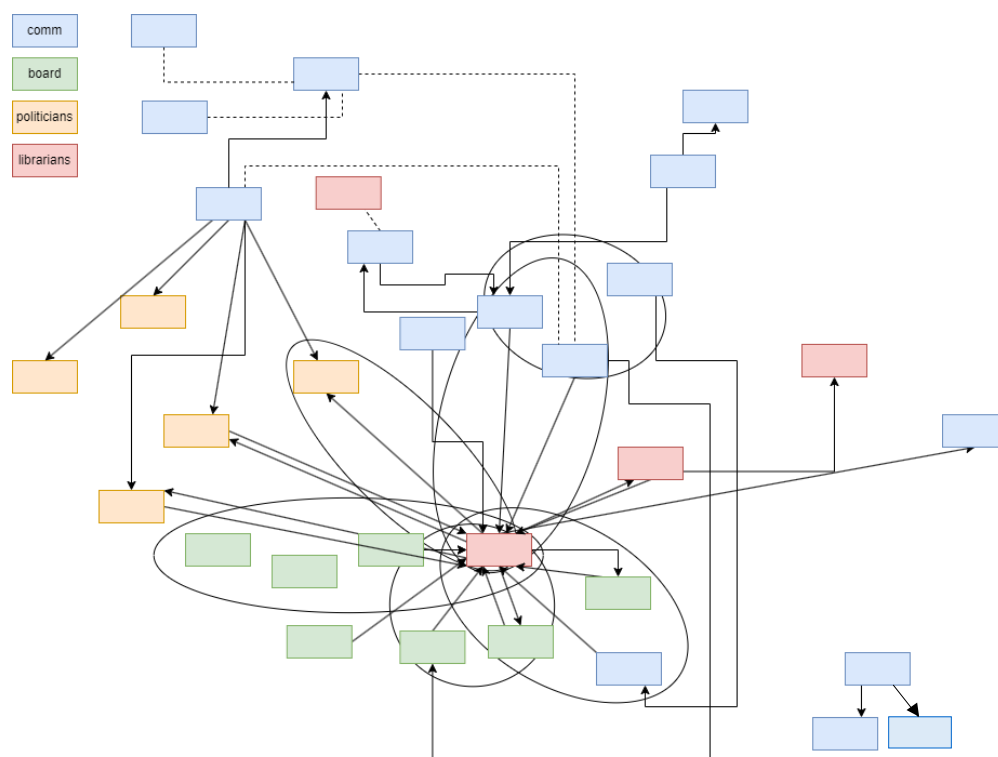


Figure 6 Individual-individual network after February 2021

Based on interviews and documents, the individual-individual networks are depicted in Figures 5 and 6. Figure 5 is an individual-individual network before February 2021 and Figure 6 is an individual-individual network from February 2021 and 2023. In this network graph, actors are represented by rectangles in different colors according to their type. Blue, green, orange, and red colors indicate community members, board members, politicians, and librarians, respectively. The blue-green gradient rectangles signify cases where a board member has become a community member or vice versa. A rectangle with blue at the top represents a community member who became a board member during this period, while one with green at the top indicates a board member whose term ended during this period. Solid lines represent interactions confirmed by the data, while dashed lines indicate relationships that existed before the LPL controversy, such as friends, neighbors, colleagues, etc. Solid circles indicate meetings among the actors contained within them. These two individual-individual networks represent different times based on the change of the library director, illustrating significant changes in the network's structure due to the change in the central actor in the network.

Both Figures 5 and 6 place the library director at the center of the network. The library directors were central to the networks through their interactions with librarians, community members, and local politicians. However, in Figure 5, the library director acted more as a conduit for hearing other actors' opinions when disagreement issues arose, rather than initiating actions with other actors. In contrast, the period depicted in Figure 6 shows the library director still participating in interactions initiated by other actors but also reaching out proactively to various actors, taking a more leading role in the LPL controversy.

During the period of Figure 5, core members among the board members appear to have met multiple times to develop strategies in response to the LPL controversy or to persuade other

actors who attended their meetings. However, there is no evidence that board members during the period of Figure 6 conducted separate meetings among themselves, apart from those with the library director. Due to the burden of public record requests and walking quorum, board members seem to have significantly restrained their communications outside of public meetings.

A characteristic of the period in Figure 6 is that community members frequently attempted individual interactions with politicians or board members. This phenomenon appears to have arisen as local organizations formed to intervene in the LPL controversy began their activities, and organization leaders contacting actors with legal authority to initiate discussions or encouraging community members to contact politicians (Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship, n.d.-a).

The individual-individual network became an important channel for discussions and opinion sharing among actors involved in the LPL controversy. However, a different type of networking occurred loosely within the organization related to the LPL controversy. This type of networking, formed through organizations, is discussed in the following organizational networks section.

II. Organizational networks

The interviews and meeting minutes collected by the researcher featured several organizations based in Lafayette. Some of these local organizations were formed specifically to intervene more effectively in the LPL controversy, while others that existed before the controversy have also provided resources to actors participating in the controversy or intervened at the organizational level in the controversy. Table 5 lists the frequently mentioned organizations in the collected data:

Table 5 Organization in the LPL controversy

Organization	Type	Formation	Purpose
Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time	Social media-based group	2018	Supports Drag Queen Story Time event at LPL
Concerned Women of America of Louisiana's Lafayette Prayer/Action Chapters	Local unit	?	Promote and protect Biblical values and Constitutional principles through prayer, education, and advocacy
Citizens for a New Louisiana	501(c)(4) organization	2017	Advocates for transparency and fiscal conservatism in government to effect change and hold public officials accountable in Louisiana
Tradition, Family, Property Louisiana Inc.	501(c)(3) organization	2006	Promotes and defends the values of Christian civilization, focusing on tradition, family, and private property across several Southern and Southwestern states
Lafayette Citizens against Censorship	Social media-based group	2021	Defends and promotes intellectual freedom, particularly within the public library of Lafayette Parish
Lafayette Loves Libraries PAC	Political Action Committee	2002	Advocates for and secures funding for the LPL system through educational campaigns and voter initiatives
Lafayette Public Library Foundation	501(c)(3) organization	1991	Enhances and supports the LPL system through fundraising, advocacy, and managing endowments, aiming to extend library services beyond what public funding alone can provide
League of Women Voters	Local unit	1945	Aims to empower voters and encourage active participation in democracy

of Lafayette			
Move the Mindset	501(c)(3) organization	2016	Promotes racial and social justice in Lafayette by educating the community about its racial history and addressing divisive misconceptions through dialogue, art, and direct action
NAACP Lafayette Branch	Local unit	?	Ensures equality of rights for all individuals and eliminates race-based discrimination through advocacy, legal action, and community engagement
PFLAG Lafayette	Local unit	2019	Promotes understanding and advocates for the rights and acceptance of LGBTQ+ through education, support, and community engagement
Supporters of Lafayette Public Library	Social media-based group	2021	Support all LPL millages to ensure the effective operation of the existing library system and the expansion of services to underserved areas, while also ensuring that the library board members adhere to state guidelines and serve the community effectively

The local organizations in the LPL controversy have served actors by providing resources based on the network created by the organizations. In this subsection, I illustrate types of local organizations' resource mobilization in the LPL controversy.

1) Information sharing and dissemination

The local organizations in the LPL controversy have become a ground for information sharing and further disseminated information to the public. Lafayette Citizens against Censorship (LCAC) was most often mentioned when the researcher asked interview partners about their information sharing about the LPL.

There's a fair amount that does happen on Facebook with these private groups. Right. Which are not. I mean, they're private-ish. [...] Here's when the next meeting is for anything. Here's the next Parish Council meeting. Here's the next budget meeting. Here's the next planning commission meeting where they'll be talking about approving purchase of land for the Northeast regional Library. So it's a really good place for people to put information to share out about upcoming meetings and to keep people aware of when's the agenda and stuff like that been published. [Community member A]

These community members shared their experiences with the LCAC Facebook group. This Facebook group is a private group that selectively accepts members based on its screening questions. LCAC members have used Facebook as an information sharing platform, where members post agendas for board meetings or council meetings, social events, and inspiring ideas. For example, another member of the LCAC shared a story of a librarian in a different state:

I've suggested this on the Facebook group, and I've posted the librarian from California. He's such an outspoken library advocate, and he is a librarian, and he started a whole campaign, love our libraries, and I suggested to the group and got some likes, but if it's going to happen, I'll probably have to organize it. [Community member B]

As in the above example where LCAC members directly share information, the members of LCAC also expressed gratitude towards the founder for curating a large amount of information and sharing it on the Facebook page:

Well, I see that, you know, first of all, [LCAC founder] is a great leader. I feel like she really does a lot of the... She kind of flogs through the tough research and getting the information together, and then she'll put out, what do y'all think about this? And then there's people that give their input. [Community member C]

In summary, while any member of the LCAC Facebook group can share their opinions on the Facebook group, the founder of LCAC primarily takes on the leading role in information sharing.

Furthermore, the LCAC and Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship both play a role in encouraging members to influence public officials by sharing information that facilitates sending emails or making calls easily. Some of this information is curated and made available on the website of LCAC and Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship. For example, the website includes information on how to call or email local officials, attend board meetings, and participate in public comments (Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship, n.d.).

Local groups that opposed DQST and generally supported board decisions after 2020 also focused on sharing information within the community. During the library tax millage failure in 2018, which several interview participants mentioned as the starting point of the LPL controversy, Citizens for a New Louisiana (CNL) distributed push cards containing information about the LPL budget to oppose the tax millage. A board member recalled this event as follows:

[CNL leader] and them, as I said, ran an effective campaign, but they did it sneaky. What they did is the last. Okay, imagine if the elections on a Saturday, Jieun, they had a push card. It's a political card that, you know, a lot of times announces the candidacy of a candidate. But in this case, it was saying library fund balance sort of, like, aided awful on this push card that dropped in the mailboxes of people in Lafayette on the Thursday before the election. [...] So there was very little time for any of us to respond back about. And what [CNL leader] said on the push card wasn't incorrect. He just painted it incorrectly, basically saying that, ain't it awful? We got \$40 million. They mismanaged. [...] But there was no time to respond and articulate all those issues back to the public. And thus, the public got the idea that, oh, the library doesn't need the millage renewal. [Board member]

CNL's campaign was conducted not only through physical push cards but also via social media and news media:

Or 4.2 million that they had left over. They didn't want people to see that because three days to the election, they're going to lose. Well, guess what? I don't just watch the official government website. We also checked with the bonding agencies and all these other places we saw. It was released here and not here.

And we talked about it. We put it out with our socials and all the things that we do talk to the news media. Look, there it is. \$42.3 million. [Michael Lunsford]

Michael Lunsford, the founder of CNL, mentioned that CNL used information about library funding obtained through cross-checking different sources to argue that there was no need to renew the library millage. Throughout the LPL controversy, CNL has continued to disseminate curated information related to LPL through its webpage and Facebook page. Unlike groups such as LCAC, CNL is not a Facebook group-based local organization; instead, it opts to curate information and opinion pieces collected and written by its founder and staff on social media and webpages rather than allowing all members to post. As multiple posts from CNL criticized materials in the library using negative words like “erotic” and “pornography”, one interview partner commented regarding these posts as follows (e.g., Lunsford, 2023):

They do these smear campaigns, and we have a population of people who believe in conspiracy theories. And the Internet is the news source and Facebook is the news source. So it's like they get a card that shows like a devil on it with the library. [Community member]

In other words, CNL uses Facebook and its website as channels to disseminate their opinions and curate information, often employing provocative language to advocate for restricting certain materials in the library.⁶

On the other hand, a community member who has attended board meetings to support board members mentioned that they obtain information about the board meetings through the Lafayette chapter of Concerned Women of America (CWA):

Well, first of all, [Community member], our leader of CWA, she will text us, anybody like to come next Monday? It's a board meeting you can support. And if

⁶ The posts containing provocative language resulted in a lawsuit in 2022, where a librarian in Livingston Parish sued CNL's leader Michael Lunsford (Jones v. Lunsford, 2023). The librarian experienced damages, including death threats, due to Michael Lunsford mentioning her in a post alleging “promoting pornography and erotic content to kids,” leading to a defamation case.

I'm available. Sure, I'll go. Yeah. That's if I have nothing else. [Community member]

This community member mentioned that they learn about the library board meetings through the Lafayette chapter of CWA and attend the meetings to support the board members if they have no other commitments.

In summary, various local grassroots organizations and local chapters utilize various information and communication technologies to build networks and share and disseminate information to influence the LPL controversy. The local grassroots organizations that emerged in the wake of the LPL controversy primarily use Facebook groups to build networks and share information, while local grassroots organizations and local chapters that founded before the controversy appear to use social media pages or websites for information dissemination.

2) Organizing events

Local organizations not only encourage community members to attend public meetings through information sharing but also host their own events. For example, after the cancellation of LPL's DQST in 2018, in February 2019, Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time held a private drag queen story time event at the South Regional Library of LPL:

[Jieun: So my question would be like, were you working as a group under the name of Acadiana supporters of Drag Queen Storytime?] Basically when we did, I'd have to look at the room request to be honest, for the original. Okay. So I can tell you that the original drag queen story time in front of the Valentine's day tree scheduled at the library was Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time. [Community member A]

On the day of the event, several families attended with their children, while outside the library, a protest organized by Tradition, Family, Property Louisiana took place (Mader, 2019a; TFP

Student Action South, 2020). Among the protestors was one who had become a board member after 2019.

After the establishment of LCAC, its members operated a booth at the Lafayette downtown Artwalk to raise awareness about library issues and oppose censorship. Some community members who participated in the interview described their experiences with Artwalk:

That's just a sidewalk kind of thing. You don't pay for the space. Yeah. And support our librarians and we'd have some material. And we offered to share information with them if they wanted to stop. So we're trying to be more public facing. [Community member B]

The case of Artwalk is at the intersection of information dissemination and event organization. LCAC members used a local event as their opportunity to raise attention from the public. Distributing information physically in a popular area of the town is a strategy to engage a broader range of community members in the LPL controversy, beyond those who use social media. Similarly, LCAC organized events like a banned book reading event and an event on HIV criminal law throughout 2023.

On the other hand, as a government watchdog organization CNL organizes various events, not limited to the library-related events (Citizens for a New Louisiana, n.d.-b). CNL consistently hosts a lunch series featuring a variety of speakers, including local politicians, and recently hosted a lunch event with the founder of SafeLibraries, who have campaigned against ALA for decades, to share “his experience in the battle to keep the children’s section kid friendly” (Citizens for a New Louisiana, n.d.-a; Natanson, 2023). Some library board members participated in this event.

In summary, the local organizations involved in the LPL controversy not only share information online but also organize in-person events to strengthen networks among people and disseminate information.

3) Filing petition

Throughout the controversy, there have been multiple petitions created by local or national organizations, or an individual.

During the conflict around DQST, two petitions were submitted to the City-Parish Council at the City-Parish Council meeting in September 2018 to urge the council to condemn the DQST at LPL. One petition was created by a local organization, CNL, which also included a letter with the signatures of local pastors, including a community member who became a board member in 2022. The petition included signatures of 1,617 individuals. Another petition was collected through TFP (Tradition, Family, Property) Student Action website, which features a petition menu that displays dozens of petitions against abortion, LGBTQ, and blasphemy in Catholic belief (TFP Student Action, 2018). While this petition did not mention the LPL, it carried 17,000 signatures of individuals and submitted to the City-Parish Council⁷.

The third petition in the LPL controversy was submitted to the Parish Council during their meeting on September 5, 2023. The petition, posted on the LCAC website and Facebook page, was to remove the board president from the library board, and garnered about 600 signatures from local community members. However, as the board president stepped down from the role a day after the petition started, the Parish Council did not add the removal of the board president on the agenda for their next meeting.

⁷ These two petitions may or may not include signatures from individuals from outside of Lafayette.

Overall, the petition was not an effective way to affect the decisions of public officers with legal authorities. Sometimes, the boundary of legal authority is suggested as the rationale for not taking action based on the petition, as the DQST case shows. The removal of board president was similar in a way because the legal authority of the Parish Council in removing any board members is unclear in the law⁸.

4) Supporting board appointment

After the DQST, many library board members' terms ended. Consequently, the City-Parish and Parish Council started appointing new board members. In this process, CNL has played a key role in finding board candidates who seemed suitable for the majority of the Parish Council. Michael Lunsford, the founder of CNL, shared how the network created by CNL contributed to the library board appointment:

[Jieun: So I'm curious now how you reach out to them, or do they reach out to you?]

People reach out to us. We have a network. We have a lot of members in the organization now because we've been doing this long enough, and we have people that call and say, look, I'll put the word out to our internal network. It's not on social, but we'll put it out. [...] And everybody's usually like, not me. I don't want any of that drama. But we get a handful of people that are gung-ho and ready to go, and so that's how it is. And if they can get through, then they can get through. [Michael Lunsford]

Further, Michael Lunsford said the CNL utilized its network built over years of local involvement to secure the library board with conservative members, and guide the candidates to contact each council members for support:

⁸ As of June 2024, with the passage of HB 974 legislated by State Representative Josh Carlson from Lafayette, the law now explicitly grants parish and municipal governing authorities the power to remove library board members (House Bill 974, 2024).

But we had to figure out, okay, the director is the problem. Who does the director report to? The library board. Okay, well, who's on the library board? How did they get there? The Parish Council appointed them to the library board. [...] And so systematically, every time one of the appointments came up, we flooded the Parish Council with applicants, and they chose, as a conservative council would. The more conservative applicant. I didn't call them and tell them which person to choose. They chose on their own, based on the list we sent. And next thing you know, six years it took. We replaced every single member of the board that was acquiescent. [...] The people that apply to be on the board, that's their job, to call the council members and tell them why they should be appointed. I don't do that. That's part of the process. You should call all five council members and say, I think I should be appointed, and here's why that's on them if they really want to be on it. [Michael Lunsford]

Since the legal authority is on the Parish Council, and each councilman selects a library board member based on their political idea, the leader of CNL stated that suggesting a “right” person is the key to form a library board that makes decisions aligned with the CNL.

On the other hand, LCAC assembled a group effort to support a candidate for the library board. LCAC posted a poster to encourage people to support a particular candidate, and LCAC's website indicates that communication with the Parish Council members is important because of their authority to appoint the library board. However, this attempt was unsuccessful:

Or sometimes we would, as a group, look at the most qualified and say, like, a lot of times it's [Community member]. I don't know if you've met her, heard of her, but she has applied so many times and she is quite qualified and she never gets chosen because she's too qualified, you know. And so we would be everybody, you know, call or email and in support of [Community member] for this position. [Community member D]

To conclude, the Parish Council of four Republicans and one Democrat that requires only three votes to pass a motion, facilitates the creation of the library board based on the council's major political belief. Consequently, for conservative groups like CNL, it is likely that simply supporting conservative community members to apply for the board could sway the library board

in a conservative direction. The group also provides guidance on how to apply for the board, making it easier for individuals with little civic participation experience to apply. However, if an individual is not sufficiently conservative to the majority of the council, they might not be appointed to the board despite dozens of community members calling the Council.

5) Issuing statements

A statement is a unique involvement of local organizations in the LPL controversy. Many local organizations that existed prior to the LPL controversy published a statement that condemned decisions made by the actors who have legal authorities. While the members of these local organizations themselves participated in library board meetings to voice their concerns, the local organizations also issued statements when the public body's opinion contradicted with the mission or values of the organization.

For instance, the League of Women Voters of Lafayette issued a statement to urge the Parish Council to review the LEH grant approval process and to support autonomy of librarians. The issuance of the statement took place a week after the library board refused to accept the LEH grant for the voting rights reading group (KATC Digital Team, 2021). As the topic of this LEH grant was the history of voting rights and expansion of voting rights, this refusal was closely connected to their mission, which is “voter services, which includes registering voters, sponsoring live, televised, and YouTube-available candidate forums, publishing candidate questionnaires, disseminating nonpartisan voter information, and increasing voter turnout” (League of Women Voters of Lafayette, n.d.).

Similarly, later in 2023, the League of Women Voters of Louisiana passed a resolution to “enable state and local leagues to publicly advocate in support of libraries under the first

amendment and in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion” (Green, 2023). This resolution was prepared by a Lafayette community member, who has been participating in the LPL controversy for years. This community member explained the process and rationale for passing this resolution:

We, at our state convention last March, March 2023, took a resolution about what we call library freedom and proposed to do a study on library freedom, which is, the league is known for a very careful process of state, or sometimes local leagues doing studies of issues. [...] However, it is kind of a slow process, and we are now trying to get a resolution to the national League of Women Voters meeting this June. [...] We’re working on this with a number of states. But when we pitched the idea to national that we were proposing to first do the study. And now we’re thinking we don’t want to do the study. We want to make it a resolution and get it before the group immediately, that we have to do everything at the league in a way that’s grounded in our [...] [Community member]

Thus, starting from the involvement in 2021, the League of Women Voters have been participating in the LPL controversy by using its local, state, and national network.

In June 2022, two different organizations published statements that opposed the prohibition of book displays in LPL. The NAACP issued their statement against the display ban at a press conference they had in front of the Main branch of LPL (NAACP Lafayette Branch, 2022a). In this statement, they clarified their mission and reason for intervening in the LPL controversy:

The mission of the NAACP has always been to achieve equity, political rights, and social inclusion by advancing policies and practices and practices that expand human and civil rights, eliminate discrimination, and accelerate the well-being, education, and the economic security of Black people and all persons of color. Working to find a solution to this community problem is aligned with our mission and we invite you to join us in our fight.

The NAACP’s statement indicates that the display ban is considered as the opposite of the mission of NAACP; thus, the NAACP has a role to play in the LPL controversy. The intervention of NAACP was not new, since another prong of the LPL controversy has been the construction of

Northeast Regional Library, which is planned to be built in the area with high population density of Black community members. In 2021, the NAACP issued a statement recommending voting no for a library tax renewal if there is no solid commitment to build the Northeast Library (Taylor, 2021). The significant delay of the construction of the Northeast Library is partly owing to the earlier tax renewal failure in 2018, which led to uncertainty in the operating budget for Northeast Library. Due to the Northeast Regional Library issue, Black leaders have been participating in library board meetings and Parish Council meetings and spoke up about the Northeast Regional Library and other issues, such as censorship.

Move the Mindset is another local group that issued a statement against the prohibition of book displays. This statement connects how the library displays regarding specific groups of people are important ways to tell stories of unheard voices. Further, they illustrated how the revelation of hidden stories of racism led to their successful mission to remove a Confederate general's statue in Lafayette's downtown (Move the Mindset, 2022).

These five types of activities are enabled by the networks created and maintained by various local organizations. Without involving networks between individuals, the organization influenced the LPL controversy by using their network as a platform, which will be discussed further in Section 5.2.3.

5.2 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN THE LPL CONTROVERSY

In the previous section, I illustrated the resources in the LPL controversy by focusing on what resources existed, where the resources used by whom. Based on the previous section, this section centers on analyzing how the resources were mobilized during the LPL controversy and why the resources were mobilized in such a way, if possible.

5.2.1 Mobilization of legal authority in hierarchy

In this section, I focus on the mobilization of legal authority by public bodies and officials in the LPL controversy. I argue that each public body and official has different legal authorities, which are hierarchically structured with one another. Due to this hierarchical structure and vagueness of regulations that grant legal authority to public bodies and officials, actors constantly negotiate the boundaries of their legal authority. The negotiated boundary determines which actor makes which decisions in library governance. Therefore, examining how this boundary fluctuates helps in understanding the role of legal authority as a resource in the controversy.

I. Uncertainty in the council's legal authority

As described above, the legal authority of the City-Parish Council and Parish Council was clear and did not incur any questions from community members. Meanwhile, no specific statute or ordinance defines in what case the council can terminate the library board member. According to current legal provisions, if the Parish Council is dissatisfied with a board member's performance, they can choose not to reappoint the board member at the end of their term. There are no regulations specifying the reasons or procedures for the council to remove a board member. It is worth noting, however, that in 2023, Louisiana's Attorney General issued an opinion stating that the local governing authority could remove library board members. This contrasts with the opinion issued by Louisiana's Attorney General in 2001 (Op. La. Atty. Gen. 23-0015, 2023).

In this legal context, the council did not mobilize their legal authority but utilized other means to oversee the library board. When community members demanded the removal of a board member in 2022, the Parish Council was uncertain whether they had the legal authority to remove the board member. According to a news article in the Daily Advertiser, many constituents and council members consulted with attorneys to verify the authority of the Parish Council to remove a library board member in 2022 (Capps, 2022).

The community members' demand for the removal of this board member continued into 2023. After the Parish Council expressed frustration at the August 22, 2023, council meeting regarding the library board's slow progress on the Northeast Regional Library project, the board member stepped down from their leadership role on August 28, 2023. Discussions about the board member's removal did not take place at the next council meeting. Instead, one council member left the following personal comment during that council meeting:

I just want to be on the record tonight. I know we talked about putting the termination of [board member] on the agenda tonight. We pulled it off the agenda. I just wanna go on the record to say that I personally would like for [board member] to off for the library board. [Council member]

As demonstrated by the above cases, the Parish Council members criticized the library board and expressed dissatisfaction with a specific board member through personal comments during council meetings. Given the uncertainty surrounding the Parish Council's legal authority to remove board members, the Parish Council attempted to ensure the library board's accountability through statements at public meetings.

II. Extension of board's legal authority

Throughout the LPL controversy, the board's legal authority has expanded while library directors' legal authority has decreased accordingly. In this process, library directors did not have much resources to resist the expansion of the board's legal authority.

One example of expanded legal authority of the board is policy making. As defined in RS 25:215, the library board has the legal authority to establish rules and regulations for its library. Before 2020, the policy changes were typically led by the library director and approved by the board, while multiple policies were suggested and approved by the board after many new board members joined after 2020.

Multiple library policies were changed after the cancellation of DQST at LPL in 2018. After the ACLU filed a federal lawsuit in opposition to the meeting room policy, the library director began revising the library policy at the advice of legal counsel. According to an interview with this library director, there appear to be two main reasons for revising the policy:

We were always lax at writing policies. [...] The change that came about came when we were sued, and the lawyers had to have us put some clarification in it, and that's the only change, I think, that we made to the meeting room policy. [...] Yeah, to make clear. So I didn't change anything about what we were doing. And then we had the board approve that because they approve all policies. [...] And I knew the time was coming that somebody would question that. [...] And so we wrote down what we did in practice, basically, and we clarified that policy was approved by the board, but that was what we'd always done. [Library director]

When updating the collection development policy in 2019, it was customary for the library director and staff to prepare the policy draft. When asked in an interview if they remembered this policy change, a board member could not recall the specifics and commented as follows:

Yeah. The whole collection policy thing, I think, is a blur to me because I really firmly believe that we should allow our administrators as professional librarians,

to do their job and get out of their way. And so I probably didn't pay as much attention to all that as maybe I should have. [Board member]

Based on these interviews, it appears that prior to 2020, librarians were responsible for preparing policies, while the board's role was to review and approve them. In other words, even though the library board held the official legal authority, the utilization of this authority was predominantly driven by the librarians.

After new board members joined in 2020, revisions to library policy began to be made based on suggestions from the board members. A notable example is the regular library board meeting on February 15, 2023, where a board member presented agenda items to revise the collection development policy and the library card policy. The board approved resolutions that add a definition of sexually explicit materials to the collection development policy and provisions allowing for the issuance of children/minors' cards in the library card policy. Initially, the resolution put forward was to introduce an opt-out system for children/minors' cards, but after hearing opposition from the library director and community members, the board passed the amended resolution for an opt-in system for children/minors cards.

A board member drafted this revised collection development policy based on wording from a report titled "Protecting Innocence," published by Jeff Landry, who was the Attorney General of Louisiana at the time. This board member explained the reason for referencing the report as, "he's the attorney general of the state of Louisiana. So he's the attorney who represents the state of Louisiana," emphasizing the opinion of a public figure with significant authority in interpretation of legal issues in Louisiana, rather than the library director or staff. The definition proposed for sexually explicit material and the issuance of children/minors' cards were later

reflected in Louisiana Senate Bill 7, enacted on August 1, 2023, making it mandatory for all libraries in Louisiana to adopt policies similar to those adopted by LPL in February 2023.

In contrast, the role of the library director in policy revisions was significantly reduced in this case. Reflecting on the experience of the policy revisions in 2023 and before, the library director at the time recalled the following:

And so our board decided that they wanted to change the policy, and policy does fall under the library board. So they didn't show me what the policy was going to be. They didn't tell me. I asked [Board member]. I said, so you want to give me a hint? He goes, you'll see it. You'll see it. [...] And then most of my comments were about making cards, opt in and stuff like that. [...] They did everything that a board was supposed to do. [...] Ordinarily we would propose policy changes, because I had proposed changes in the past. [Library director A] proposed changes in the past. [Library director B] tried to get rid of fines and stuff, and I was a proponent of that. [Library director]

Although the library board duly exercised their legal authority over changes to library policy, the library director had to negotiate their participation in policy agenda setting with this new governing body that did not wish to share legal authority to change library policies. Thus, the library director's role in this policy change has become reactive:

One of the reasons I said opt in instead of opt out was because staff has to deal with this. And when the people come in, when you come into the library and you go to check out a book, and I say, I'm sorry, you can't check out that book. Why? It's an adult book and you're not an adult. And then, so then I'm on the phone with mom, or mom's got to come over or dad's angry [...] I'm not the person getting that. It's the person at the front line who's dealing with telling the child, you can't check out the book, telling the parent when the parent's mad. [Library director]

During this board meeting, the library director argued that an opt-in card was a better policy choice because an opt-out card would place an excessive burden on the library staff. This

situation exemplified how the library director had to reactively respond to the existing policy agenda in order to effectively implement policies, which is their fundamental legal authority.

III. Library director's bounded freedom in legal authority

The legal authority of library director has decreased over time during the LPL controversy. However, library directors were still able to exercise their legal authority to implement the collection development policy based on their discretion and professional ethics in the face of requests from other actors. Nonetheless, they were bound by the board and community's opinions and thus compromised their ideal use of legal authority.

In both cases when the library directors reshelfed library materials according to the community members' and board members' complaints, the library directors weighed between the importance of information access and community's requests. When a community member requested that LGBTQ-themed children's books be made less accessible to children, the library director used their legal authority to move those books to the top shelf. Additionally, exercising their discretion, the library director labeled these books with an LGBTQ label. This labeling facilitated easier access for patrons seeking LGBTQ books, demonstrating that the library director, while adhering to the community member's request, also made an independent decision to improve access to these materials. This case illustrates that the library director has a degree of freedom in policy implementation, allowing them not to fully comply with other actors' demands but still satisfy other actors.

When an official book reconsideration request for TBG was submitted in 2021, the library director again used their legal authority to reshelve books. The library director decided to integrate the entire teen nonfiction collection, including TBG, into the adult nonfiction

collection, placing them on the same shelves. Although the library director had not been asked to reshelve the books, this proactive decision was likely made to prevent additional challenges. The community member who submitted the reconsideration request for TBG was satisfied with the library director's decision and did not file any further material challenges:

And so [Library director]'s like, I know what he's doing. He's trying to make me miserable. We're going to fix this right now. We're going to take all these books out of the kids' section and move them to the adult section system wide, all on his own. He moved it. And so, I didn't file an appeal to the reconsideration request because he moved all the books out. And it's not perfect. They're not all gone, by the way. They're not all. [...] And [Library director] figured it out quickly and he nipped it in the bud. [Michael Lunsford]

Michael Lunsford, the community member who filed the reconsideration, accepted the relocation of the challenged book to the adult collection as a reasonable compromise since his goal was to reduce minors' chance to encounter the material. Consequently, he did not submit any more reconsideration forms, and since then, only one more material challenge was filled, which was about a movie.

These two cases are censorship if we follow the definition of censorship provided by the ALA, as the purpose of reshelving might appear to limit minors' access to information. However, both library directors mentioned that this reshelving was not significantly different from regular reshelving practices and still provided access to the materials. Both library directors explained that the purpose of the reshelving was to reduce challenges and to avoid completely removing the books from the library. In other words, the library directors mobilized their legal authority to implement the collection development policy within a bounded condition where other actors might mobilize resources and eventually impede the operation of LPL. Compared to the board,

library directors are under more pressure to consider higher legal authority and any other resource mobilization from other actors.

The display guideline implemented by the library director is another example of preemptive mobilization of legal authority. The legal authority to create this guideline is shaped by higher-level policies and the board's opinions. At the June 22, 2022, board meeting, a board member referenced LPL's Bulletin Board, Exhibits, and Displays Policy, stating, "it would appear that [Library director]'s decision was in complete congruence with the policy that we have as a library," indicating that the display guideline had to align with board-approved policy. Furthermore, the library director's status as an at-will employee influenced the creation of this guideline (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2008). Since the library director could be dismissed at any time with the board's majority agreement, opposition from several board members to the pride display likely compelled the library director to use their legal authority to create the guideline:

If you ordered me to move these [book displays], I would take them down, because, as we discovered in August of last year, I'm an at-will employee. So, you ordered me to take them down. I do understand where I am in the pecking order, and they did not order me to take them down, and I did not tell anyone to take them down. [Library director]

In the context of the LPL controversy, the characteristic feature of the library director's mobilization of legal authority was that it was both reactive and proactive in response to community and board member opinions. In all cases examined, while the library directors changed library operating policies based on the demands of some community or board members, the actual changes were not completely reactive. Instead, they preemptively anticipated similar future demands and made broader policy changes.

Additionally, the use of this legal authority was mindful of the higher legal authority held by the board or Parish Council, while also considering the professional ethics of librarianship. To uphold the principle of providing access to information, as emphasized in the ALA Code of Ethics, which forms the foundation of American librarians' professional ethics, the library directors aimed to ensure community information access as much as possible while responding to requests for limiting information access. Although not all actors involved in the controversy were satisfied with the outcomes and the result was still censorship, the library directors were cognizant of professional ethics in making those decisions (Magi & Garnar, 2015).

IV. Summary

In this section, I have examined how the actors have utilized their legal authority. As a result, I found that legal authority exists within a hierarchical structure.

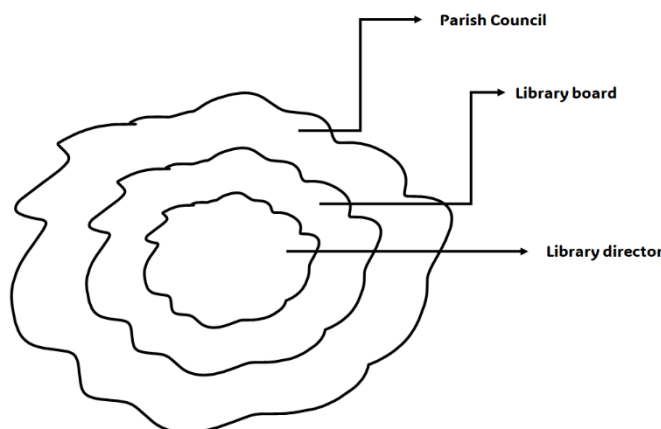


Figure 7 Hierarchical structure of legal authority

As shown in Figure 7, legal authorities have a nested structure. An actor with higher legal authority delegates part of their authority to another actor, who in turn delegates it to a subordinate actor. Therefore, legal authorities are not simply in a mutual influence relationship

but have a unique relationship where the expansion of one legal authority results in the reduction of another. As seen in the cases of policy making when the board extensively exercises its legal authority, the library director loses opportunities to utilize their legal authority.

Moreover, the boundaries of legal authorities used in the LPL controversy were flexible. Although each actor's legal authority is based on written law, applying it in practice requires interpretation. Since the boundaries of each legal authority are interconnected, actors typically participate in negotiating these boundaries. This situation echoes one of the significant questions in public management proposed by Behn (1995) - the micromanagement question. Behn (1995, p. 317) viewed micromanagement as an extension of the governance problem, posing a series of questions: "Micromanagement and trust are simply a reformulation of the old question about governance. How should government function? How should we decide what government will do? How should responsibilities be divided between the legislative and executive branches? How should responsibilities be divided between political executives and career civil servants? To what extent should one branch be able to check the other?" Nonetheless, as the LPL case exemplifies, the nested, hierarchical legal authority structure grants more power to the library board compared to the library director and staff. Thus, the burden of negotiation and interpretation often falls under the library director and staff, who have bounded legal authority.

The legal authority between the library board and the director illustrates how legislative and executive roles are adjusted on a micro level. Unlike national-level legislative-executive tensions, this conflict occurs under the higher authority of the Parish Council, and community members can easily express their opinions on the conflict. Additionally, the involvement of librarians with distinct professional ethics in executive roles differentiates them from general civil servants. Therefore, while public library governance aligns with general governance issues,

future research is imperative to understand the governance of public libraries due to the nested structure of legal authority and the significant role of professional groups in library operations.

5.2.2 Tug-of-war between legal authority and rights

The previous section examined how the legal authority as resources held by the board and library administration influence each other and are enacted. This section focuses on how legal authority and rights counteract to control over the board meetings and influence LPL governance.

I. Control over the board meeting

The authority to oversee the proceedings of board meetings has given rise to several new issues of disagreement in the LPL controversy, including infringement of freedom of speech. As community members increasingly used their rights to participate in public meetings and make comments as a resource to counter the board's legal authority, the control of board meetings has become a contentious issue. The board president and community members participating in board meetings argued over the control of the meeting by using their legal authority and various rights, respectively.

The board president, who was elected in October 2021, strictly enforced the three-minute limit on public comments and the prohibition of derogatory comments about individual board members starting with the November board meeting. It is unclear if the stricter application of the rules or the topics of the board meeting made the public comments more critical, but at the November 2021 board meeting, public members in attendance clapped or cheered outside the

allocated time for public comments. In response, the board president used the gavel to indicate that community members were violating the rules.

As community members continued to speak outside the allotted public comment time and made comments about individual board members over several meetings, the board president used legal authority to regain control of the meetings. First, during public comments, the board president actively raised a “point of order” whenever there seemed to be a rule violation. Second, when a community member repeatedly violated the rules despite multiple warnings, the board president involved sheriff officers to remove the community member from the meeting or even arrest them. Third, excerpts from Louisiana State Law RS 14:103 (Offenses Affecting the General Peace and Order) were posted at the front of the meeting room.

In response to these stricter rule enforcement measures, community members attempted to balance control of the meetings in three main ways. First, by ignoring the rules. As seen in the November 2021 and February 2022 meetings, some community members continued to make personal comments or speak outside their allocated time despite being called out by the board president or other community members. One community member explained their reason for ignoring these admonishments as follows:

I think that the system only works if we demand vigorous honesty from our members, and that I think that if they throw the rules out the window, we have to throw them out as well. The system doesn't hold if everybody doesn't play by the rules. And you can't sit up there because you've been appointed and lie public. I don't get a vote. I get to tell you how I feel about it during a specific time frame. So you effectively get to sit up there and lie in real time, unchecked from a position of authority over the people in the audience. [Community member A]

According to this community member's comment, when the board in authority makes false statements, community members have the right to violate the public comment time to call them

out. This indicates that the community member is challenging the structure of the public meeting itself, which restricts their expression of opinions to public comment periods, and thus they are unwilling to pass control of the meeting to the board.

Second, community members used their right to make public comments to highlight the unfairness of the public comment rules. For example, one community member made the following public comment at the January 10, 2022 meeting:

I just wanted to raise something that has been discussed among the public lately concerning the three-minute limit on the comment time here. [...] as someone who testifies to the state legislature from time to time seems restricted. The state legislature seems to have a default of five minutes. [...] Also, this past legislative session, we passed HB 285, which extended the time that the public can spend in the voting booth from three to five minutes. I think there's some idea there that certain civic acts take time, and the limitation to three minutes is experienced by some as oppressive of people who maybe are not used to public speaking, who may just want to come to weigh in. [Community member B]

In this comment, the community member argued that the library board's three-minute rule for public comments was excessively restrictive by citing the state legislature and Louisiana House Bill (HB).

Third, following an incident where a community member was removed from a meeting, some community members mobilized their right to file a lawsuit to limit the board president's strong control over the meetings. This lawsuit pointed out that the board president's strong control over the board meeting violated the First Amendment and Louisiana Open Meetings Laws. An attorney from the Tulane First Amendment Clinic attended as legal counsel in this lawsuit.

According to the complaint for this lawsuit (Mejia v. Lafayette Consolidated Government, 2023), the community members stated that the issue was not merely about a community member being expelled from the public meeting:

[...] Members of the public are threatened with criminal prosecution for engaging in protected free speech, and Plaintiff Brevis was forcibly removed from a public meeting for her exercise of protected free speech. [...] The posting and threatened enforcement of the portion of the disturbing the peace statute facially prohibits and chills a large swath of protected speech.

As this excerpt illustrates, a larger problem is the board meeting environment, which does not welcome open conversations, thereby constraining opportunities for free speech.

Resource mobilization regarding control over the board meeting between community members and the board is accompanied by emotional responses such as lack of efficacy and hostility. First, many community members who were dissatisfied with the board's decisions continued to make public comments at library board meetings yet felt a lack of efficacy in their comments.

They [board members] hear you, maybe, but they're not listening. Their decisions are made. That's how I think. It doesn't matter what the people stand up and say. It doesn't matter. Except for the guy, [Board member]. He seems like he's here to support the library, the librarian. [Community member D]

A community member, who attended a board meeting for the first time in December 2023, also felt that the board members seemed not to be paying attention to the public comments:

But the rest of them were just sort of sitting back almost. It's a foregone conclusion as to what they were going to do, and they just wanted to be done with it. They couldn't care less. In fact, most of them had contemptuous looks on their faces. [Community member E]

The public comments and hearing in front of the public library board is a one-directional communication with a low level of feedback from the board.

Second, another repeating issue with the conflict over public comment period is that actors are exposed to hostile comments, which have exacerbated confrontational setting of the meetings. While community members opposing the board's decision felt dismissed by the board during the public comment periods as mentioned in the previous section, a number of board members shared their negative experiences during the public comment periods:

And I had people in this meeting telling me, you're a racist, you're KKK, Ku Klux Klan. And I'm just like, you've got to be kidding me. This is absolutely ridiculous. And in that meeting, I really thought, I'm quitting because it was breaking my heart. [Board member A]

But then there are a lot of them that are just simply personal attacks. You're going to hell. You're a KKK fascist, bigot, those kinds of things. [Board member B]

While I was not able to find the comments including “racist” or “KKK” from the board meeting recordings, I verified from the recordings that the board was called “fascists” multiple times but mostly from one community member.⁹ Still, during board meetings with a significant number of public members, such as those on November 15, 2021, and February 15, 2023, there were numerous negative comments directed at board members, in addition to the terms mentioned in the interview.

Not only board members but also a librarian who made a public comment about the LGBTQ community reported having negative experiences, as revealed in an interview:

And I got up there and basically spoke, we need to stop treating people like political classes. This isn't the elites versus the working class or anything like that. These are real people, and we are trying to ostracize them from society and treat them as if just their very existence is sinful in nature. And as I was speaking, a

⁹ There are potential reasons why I could not find these comments in the board meeting recordings. First, the volume of the comments was not loud enough. If these comments were made without using a microphone or if there was too much noise around, the comments are not discernible. Second, the meeting recordings before February 2021 are not public. These comments might have been made before this time period.

person in the audience called me a groomer, which just devastated me in that moment. [Librarian]

For potential reasons mentioned above, the term “groomer,” which this librarian reportedly heard from the audience, is indiscernible in the meeting recordings. Nonetheless, the important point is that public meetings are a stage for attacks between actors with differing opinions, rather than offering a chance to reconcile conflicts between actors.

II. Control over the board membership

Similar to the tension between legal authority and rights regarding board meetings, community members used their rights to attempt to control board membership. In this case, unlike in board meetings, community members did not try to overturn the rules for board member appointments. Instead, they continuously provided input on board membership at public meetings and worked to expose any illegality in the appointment process.

The use of rights to control board membership primarily aimed to influence the Parish Council’s legal authority to appoint board members. Several community members explained in interviews why the Parish Council’s decisions are crucial for LPL governance. For example, one community member stated:

And even to go to the Parish Council. [Jieun: Oh, I see.] And ask for them to consider the qualified candidates because they posted all of the resumes when people were applying to be on the board, and then they appointed somebody whose resume was probably in last place. I mean, if you looked at them and evaluated them. [Community member]

This community member both attended library board Parish Council meetings. This member explained that they join Parish Council meetings specifically to ask for the appointment of qualified candidates.

Community members attempting to influence board membership expressed support for their preferred candidates or demanded the removal of existing board members through public comments. A lawsuit filed in 2021, claiming that the board member appointment violated Open Meetings Laws, was another form of resource mobilization by community members to influence board membership.

However, neither the Parish Council nor the library board responded significantly to these efforts. Officially, the Parish Council did not attempt to remove any board members, nor did it appoint board members based on the public comments supporting or opposing specific candidates. This indicates the difficulty of influencing legal authority solely through the rights held by community members. Although the exercise of these rights is protected by various laws, there is no legal obligation for authorities to consider community input when exercising their legal authority. This accountability structure makes it challenging for community members to control public bodies through their rights.

Interestingly, a conservative local organization successfully helped community members be appointed as board members by using their network and information without actively participating in public comments or lawsuits. This success contradicts the efforts of community members who mobilized their rights to make public comments, which did not have a significant influence on the council. This trend in LPL indicates that the allocation of legal authority follows a different logic, which does not significantly value direct input from community members.

III. Control over the library materials and programs

In the LPL case, community members' attempts to use their rights to control legal authority of the board and library directors also extended to library materials and programs. The

cancellation of DQST, which sparked the LPL controversy, was an instance where community members actively exercised their right to make public comments and to file lawsuits. Coupled with the active use of these rights, the reasonable prediction that physical conflict could occur due to community members' opposition ultimately led to the cancellation of DQST, as no suitable venue could be found. The library director recalled this period as follows:

So there's a rumor going around that a busload of this minister in West Virginia is coming, and he's carrying a whole busload of people, and we can't find a room. Now we've got so many people wanting to come to drag queen story time. We don't have a big enough room to hold all the people that are coming. So the community college has a big auditorium, and they decide, well, they'll host it. [...] And so we go over there and we talk to the police because the police are worried about these crazy people showing up. And I'm just like, oh, man, this is just out of control. And the guys are getting nervous because they've never done a drag queen story. [Library director]

In other words, it wasn't merely the use of rights by community members that made it difficult to hold DQST; the heightened conflicts within the community also contributed to making it practically impossible to host the event.

Submitting a reconsideration of materials is an official channel through which community members can use their rights to control library materials. As mentioned in the previous section, community members have the right to submit reconsideration requests, and library staff and the board are obligated to review these requests. The three reconsiderations that occurred during the LPL controversy resulted in different outcomes. V-Word remained in the library without any appeal to the reconsideration committee. In the two cases where community members appealed against the reconsideration committee's decisions, the library board followed the committee's recommendation to reshelve TBG in a different section. For SSHH, the library board overruled the reconsideration committee's recommendation and classified it as NC-17. Throughout these

reconsideration appeals, community members actively used their right to make public comments to express their opinions to the board on how to handle the materials. While it is unclear how these public comments influenced the board members' decisions and the resulting mobilization of the board's legal authority, an interview with a board member who participated in these two appeals provides an interesting perspective:

I doubt if I would ever vote to ban a book, this book or any other book. It's not to say every book is not every book is maybe valuable, but if it's been ordered by librarians, if it's been vetted by librarians, it has some value. I mean, it has a value to be in the library. I would think. I'm just pacing my opinion on respecting the professional career of a librarian. [...] [Jieun: There was a motion to treat DVD as other NC 17 DVDs, and then everyone anonymously agreed to do so. And then. Could you explain about that one?] Okay. It's not banning it. It just puts it in a separate section where it's understood that it's very. You're getting a warning before you even check it out that it could be racy or whatever word people want to use about it. So that's not something you maybe would want. It's not banned. It's just in the area... [Board member]

These interview responses suggest that board members already had criteria for making decisions regarding material challenges before the appeal. In this case, voting in favor of a particular decision at the board meeting was merely an act based on these criteria, not the outcome of the public comments and discussion among board members. Ultimately, while making public comments was an important exercise of rights by community members, the board's decisions were more likely influenced by the individual values and beliefs of the board members.

IV. Summary

So far, we have examined how legal authority and rights have conflicted with or influenced each other in the LPL controversy. By looking at three areas where legal authority and rights fight for control, I have identified characteristics in the mobilization of legal authority and rights.

First, actors with legal authority reacted when public meetings or events were actively disturbed by some community members, while they often did not respond to community members' input when there is no responsibility. Generally, when public comments are made, the board or council is not obligated to make decisions based on them. Therefore, in many cases, it was difficult for community members to influence legal authority by exercising their right to public comment. On the other hand, when public meetings or events are physically disrupted, public bodies have responded by using legal authority. For instance, when community members actively defied the board's interpretation and implementation of meeting rules during board meetings, the board president reacted by mobilizing various forms of legal authority. Similarly, in the case of DQST, when it was perceived that the event might be physically disrupted, the library director used legal authority to ensure the event was held safely in various ways. Ultimately, in the LPL controversy, legal authority was driven more by obligations and conflicts rather than rights.

Second, community members primarily used their right to public comment by attending public meetings to influence legal authority. In the current LPL governance, public comment is the only avenue for public participation, so attending public meetings and leaving comments is one of the few rights available to community members to provide input to legal authority. Public participation is considered a crucial element of a democratic society; it provides resources such as information and new perspectives to public decision-makers and enhances the legitimacy of public decision-making (Quick & Bryson, 2016). However, the data analysis suggested that the method of public participation solely through public meetings appears to have contributed more to dissonance among actors than to positive impacts on governance. Therefore, it is necessary to

reconsider whether the current methods of public participation, which focus on public comments in open meetings, are fulfilling the original purpose of public participation in public governance.

Third, dissatisfied with the limited public participation in LPL governance, community members sought judicial intervention. In the LPL controversy, community members filed lawsuits several times to argue that the public body violated the laws to operate the LPL, using evidence obtained through public record requests or experiences in the meetings. Dembowski (1999), in a case study of environmental litigation in Calcutta, argued that the judiciary becomes a public sphere due to a lack of trust in the administration. In the Calcutta case, NGOs dissatisfied with the government's environmental policies sought legal investigation of the policies' legality by the judiciary due to a lack of government transparency and responsiveness. Dembowski (1999, p. 49) claimed that as a result, "the judiciary happens to be the only arm of government, providing rudimentary relief to citizens." Citizen organizations in Calcutta drew judicial power as a resource to influence the government's legal authority that cannot be impacted otherwise. However, while the Calcutta case involved lawsuits seeking to overturn local authorities' execution of city planning through a form of judicial activism, multiple lawsuits in the LPL controversy focused on the process of LPL governance, not the execution of library operation per se.

In conclusion, there is an imbalance between legal authority and rights in the struggle for control over LPL governance. In a situation where legal authority ultimately determines LPL governance, it is difficult for opposing community members to influence legal authority, even if they mobilize various rights. The role of local organizations as platforms, which will be discussed in the next section, is significant in keeping these community members consistently engaged in the controversy.

5.2.3 Local organizations as a Platform

As examined in section 5.2.2, actors in the LPL controversy have been striving to achieve their objectives by utilizing legal authority and rights. Particularly, local organizations have functioned as platforms to effectively mobilize rights, which have a lower capacity to achieve objectives compared to legal authority.

I. Characteristics of platform

By platform, I mean “a set of stable components that supports variety and evolvability in a system by constraining the linkages among the other components” (Baldwin & Woodard, 2011, p. 19). Platforms have primarily been studied as digital platforms or business models developed for profit purposes (e.g., De Reuver et al., 2018; Kapoor et al, 2021). De Reuver and his colleagues (2018) described the characteristics of non-digital and digital platforms in their research agenda paper on digital platforms as follows. Firstly, non-digital platforms mediate between various groups of users. Secondly, as multiple user groups participate, network externalities arise as the scale of the network increases. Thirdly, platforms are key actors in the ecosystem. They argue that digital platforms inherit non-digital platform characteristics but are different from non-digital platforms due to the features of digital technology. For instance, “there is no single owner that owns the platform core and dictates its design hierarchy” (De Reuver et al., 2018, p. 126). Since a platform is based on a networked structure, “it suggests a progressive and egalitarian arrangement, promising to support those who stand upon it” (Gillespie, 2010, p. 350).

The general traits of platforms derived mostly from digital, for-profit organization platforms are applicable to non-digital and/or non-profit systems. For instance, O'Reilly (2011) presented a set of interesting questions, suggesting that government per se is a platform:

This is the right way to frame the question of Government 2.0. How does government become an open platform that allows people inside and outside government to innovate? How do you design a system in which all of the outcomes aren't specified beforehand, but instead evolve through interactions between government and its citizens, as a service provider enabling its user community? (O'Reilly, 2011, p. 15)

He further argues that government is a platform by using an example of the network of roads:

For example, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, which committed the United States to building an interstate highway system, was a triumph of platform thinking, a key investment in facilities that had a huge economic and social multiplier effect. Though government builds the network of roads that tie our cities together, it does not operate the factories, farms, and businesses that use that network: that opportunity is afforded to "we the people." (O'Reilly, 2011, pp. 15-16)

In other words, the government is a platform operator who mediates between different groups and yields a wide range of outcomes from the network.

Some might question how the network, infrastructure, and platform are different. In their study about biomedical platforms, Keating and Cambrosio (2000) provide succinct demarcation of platforms from these neighboring concepts. First, they suggest that "as opposed to a passive and transparent infrastructure, platforms are active, generative, and opaque. As opposed to infrastructures that show or are supposed to show some sort of historical continuity, platforms are made for contingencies" (Keating & Cambrosio, 2000, p. 359). Between networks and platforms, they are similar in a sense that they are "flexible and subject to distributed, as opposed to centrally planned, forms of coordination" (Keating & Cambrosio, 2000, p. 359); nonetheless, they argue that networks are the result of the platform. Ciborra (1996, p. 114), which Keating and

Cambrosio based their argument on, suggests that the platform is “a system of scheme, arrangement, and resource,” not a network.

In short, platforms are 1) generative, 2) create networks to connect various actors, and 3) a key actor creates an ecosystem. The characteristics of this platform are found in various local organizations aiming to influence legal authority in the LPL controversy, most notably in the LCAC, which emerged as a result of the controversy.

II. Platform characteristics of local organizations

As mentioned in Section 4.1.3, various local groups have been involved in the LPL controversy. Some groups have consistently participated in the controversy, while others have participated intermittently or ceased their involvement. This study analyzes local organizations as platforms based on the previously mentioned platform characteristics, focusing on local groups that have generally opposed the board’s decisions since 2021, due to the limitations of the collected data and interview participants.

First, the various local organizations involved in the LPL controversy have generated diverse strategies to achieve their group’s objectives or missions. As discussed in Section 4.1.3, many local organizations have devised various activities such as information sharing, hosting events, supporting board appointments, and issuing statements to accomplish their missions. These local civic organizations typically do not have predetermined activities; they provide a foundation for actors to flexibly discuss and implement appropriate strategies based on the situation. Since the use of community members’ rights is often reactive to the board’s agenda setting, the local organization as a platform prioritizes adaptation to situations over continuity.

One community member mentioned the following about the changes in strategy regarding LCAC's activities:

Again, we're really responsive at this. The board issues its agenda usually late on Friday before the Monday meeting. I mean, that might be kind of a problem for us right now, that we're really too reactive and not using the meeting space. [...] So we could maybe be doing more proactively to push that information and demand more programs, maybe organize the community too. [Community member B]

As mentioned by this interview partner, to oppose the board's legal authority using rights, the LCAC had to respond swiftly to the board's agenda. To encourage many people to use their rights, this local organization mobilized its existing networks and communication tools, such as Facebook group and messengers. Simultaneously, feeling the limitations of this reactive strategy, LCAC members collectively developed proactive strategies, such as hosting events.

Secondly, the various local organizations involved in the LPL controversy help connect actors to form new networks. When individuals join a local organization, they gain access to the organization's pre-existing network. Additionally, since individuals join the organization with common interests and engage in activities together, the newly formed interpersonal networks are strengthened over time. The following are experiences shared by two interview partners regarding networking within LCAC:

[Jieun: I know you can always skip this question, but you mentioned about friends who also advocate for public library. Could you tell me more about them?] Just the same, [Community member A]. I have a friend named [Community member B] and just various people. We live in different cities, but we still come together to ensure that the north side has a library and have access to material. Others in our community may overlook this need. So it's just about bringing this to the forefront. [...] They became my friends through this journey. [...] By advocating. [Community member C]

And she had asked in the Facebook group if anybody wants to go with her to the legislature. And I knew I have to do something about, you know, if the bill gets

passed, then it's going to be a law. [...] So I went with her to the legislature, and that was a learning experience. [...] But that was a positive experience for me, because even though the bill got passed into law and felt like I was making connections with people and we were working together to do to combat. [Librarian]

As these two interview partners mentioned, the process of discussing through digital technology or participating in in-person events provides opportunities for individuals who were not well-acquainted to form strong networks. Not only in the case of the LCAC, but also for groups like Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time and CNL, hosting in-person events likely facilitated networking among individuals within the community.

Thirdly, local organizations that have opposed the board's decisions, particularly since 2021, have formed networks among themselves, creating an ecosystem of local organizations. This coalition has the potential to function as network externalities, allowing access to a broader network (De Reuver et al., 2018).

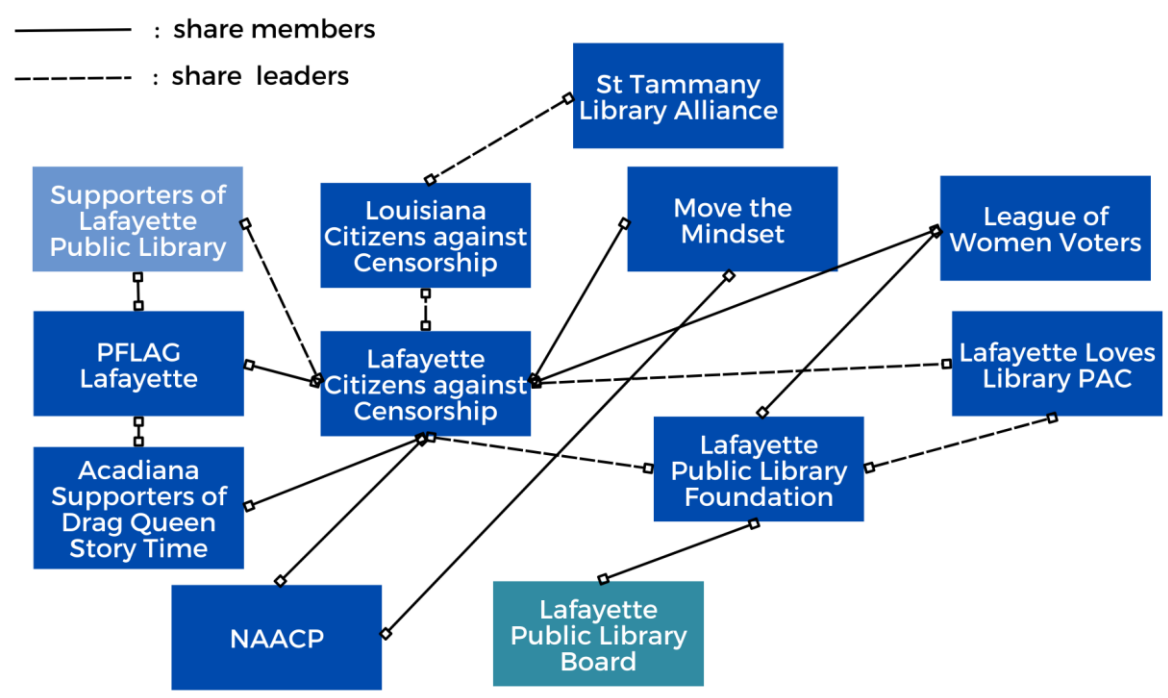


Figure 8 Organizational ecology of local groups

Figure 8 shows the network of local organizations, centered around the LCAC, that have opposed board decisions since 2021. This figure is based on the collected data, so it cannot be ruled out that unconnected organizations may share members.

LCAC commenced library activism in early 2021, coinciding with the reignition of the LPL controversy. LCAC's leader and members participated in other local organizations, and other local organizations collaborated with LCAC to support LPL. The following excerpt shows how Move the Mindset, a racial justice grassroots organization, and LCAC are connected:

How did I learn about that? I think one of the ladies in move the mindset brought it up at one of those meetings because there's the Lafayette Citizens against Censorship. [LCAC leader] and [LCAC member], [redacted personal information], was involved already. [...] [Move the Mindset leader] brought the library situation to the group, and [LCAC member] was already part of the group as well, of Move the Mindset. [Community member]

Similarly, LCAC forged an alliance with PFLAG Lafayette, a local LGBTQ ally group:

I've been to an art walk with [LCAC leader], and we handed out. [...] We were passing out flyers. We were passing out information about the library. I got some friends of mine who are trans to come over and talk to them about how important it is for them to object to what the library is doing. [Community member C]

As the LCAC leader and this community member, a member of PFLAG, shared, local civic organizations opposing the board's decisions have formed alliances through member sharing. As a result, organizations have come together to lend each other support, creating a larger ecosystem for information sharing and sharing important resources such as human power and networks.

III. Summary

In this section, I argue that the grassroots organizations or local chapters of national organizations observed in this LPL case can be considered as platforms. In the LPL controversy,

numerous local organizations emerged as key actors in rallying community members and support achieving or mobilizing other main resources in controversy. These organizations form loose organizations under specific organization names and rules, making it difficult to describe their structural features as merely spontaneously formed networks.

Local organizations as platforms actively utilize social media platforms and digital technology to form networks within the local community. Due to the locality of these organizations, the network extends beyond the digital platform, with people gathering in physical spaces within the local area and forming tighter in-person relationships. Digital and in-person networks supply local organizations with funding, information dissemination channels, and human power. In other words, the larger the network created as a result of platforming, the more amplified the externalities become. Moreover, local organizations as platforms do not support a single purpose but rather support various activities and goals depending on the local community's situation and controversy, which indicates the contingent nature of platforms (Keating & Cambrosio, 2000).

Conceptualizing local organizations as a platform provides a perspective that balances the research on public participation and platforms, which has been focused on the design and use of digital platforms in public participation. The various local organizations observed in this LPL case can be considered as socio-technical platforms that are actively integrated with digital platforms. Researching local organizations as platforms can build on existing socio-technical platform research to highlight how socio-technical platforms manifest when they coexist in physical and digital spaces. Moreover, while platform competition has been extensively studied, this research observed platform coalitions. This phenomenon that local organizations formed

larger networks while maintaining their identities, can contribute to expanding the concept of platforms (e.g., Rochet & Tirole, 2003).

5.2.4 Relationship between resource mobilization and the evolution of controversy

Then, what is the relationship between resource mobilization and the LPL controversy? Based on the answer to the first research question and the chronology of disagreement events (see Appendix A), I identified how these three resources are related to the evolution of LPL controversy to address the second research question. While acknowledging that the LPL controversy might be a process and result of elements other than just resource mobilization, the identified resource mobilization contributes to the evolution of LPL controversy in two ways.

I. Network keeps the controversy going

As previously examined in the definition of controversy, for a controversy to exist, there must be actors involved. Like in the case of the LPL controversy, for a controversy to persist, individuals with opposing views must continuously participate in the public space where the controversy occurs. These individuals do not always have to be the same people, but there must be opposing factions, and individuals must keep engaging to maintain continuity in each faction. In the LPL controversy, local organizations played a role in supplying actors to the controversy.

For example, during the first phase, organizations like CNL, TFP, and Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time became focal points, disseminating information that encouraged many individuals to attend board or council meetings to express their opposition or support for DQST at LPL. These organizations differed from local media in that they specifically guided community members what actions to take and what rights to mobilize. While local media only

reported events or provided positive and negative interpretations of events, local organizations actively encouraged community members to attend public meetings or to sign petitions or letters.

After 2020, Supporters of LPL and LCAC stood in opposition to the board. LCAC actively formed coalitions with other local organizations sharing similar interests to continuously encourage individuals to participate in the controversy. Additionally, the coalition helped to spread LCAC's information more widely. LCAC also expanded its network beyond Lafayette Parish, interacting with library-related organizations in other parishes where CNL was active, reaching a broader range of actors. As a result, since late 2021, community members opposing the board's majority opinion have been attending almost all board meetings to present their views, and also attending Parish Council meetings to express opinions contrary to the board.

Particularly, organizations like CNL, LCAC, Supporters of LPL, and Acadiana Supporters of DQST have a few leaders who are most actively involved in the controversy. These leaders collected and processed information to disseminate both within and outside their organizations and attended most public meetings to communicate their views to public bodies. While it is difficult to generalize, it seems that if the leaders no longer participate in the controversy, the organization ceases to be a place where networks are cultivated. For instance, when the leader of Supporters of LPL stopped participating in the controversy at the end of 2021, the organization's activities halted. Instead, an individual who had been actively involved in the Supporters of LPL formed LCAC, and it appears that individuals who were active in Supporters of LPL became members of LCAC.

However, while most of the mentioned local organizations have been successful in consistently supplying individuals for the controversy, only some have succeeded in reflecting

their views in the LPL governance. Why only some local organizations succeeded despite using similar strategies will be discussed in more detail in the discussion chapter.

II. Legal authority fuels the controversy

The presence of actors alone does not establish a controversy. A controversy also requires disagreement and issues, as has been analyzed in the definition of controversy. The analysis of the resource mobilization shows that the controversy continues when specific decisions made by public officials with legal authority, or discussions about issues, triggered disagreements among actors within the community. In other words, decisions and discussion on issues draw actors into the controversy. Public comments made by community members at board meetings or council meetings can be considered active participation in the controversy. Therefore, the issues discussed in these public meetings are the ones that drive the controversy forward.

As Barry (2012) and Rip (1986) have reported the changes in controversial issues, LPL controversy also experienced multiple issues that actors disagreed on. The issues that triggered many public comments include the hosting of DQST, the appointment of specific board members, two reconsideration appeals, the revision of collection development policy, the termination of a library staff's employment, and ALA disaffiliation, as mentioned in Chapter 4. The most attention-grabbing issues were related to library materials and programs, and later, ALA disaffiliation became a broader issue of disagreement over the ethics of the library itself. That is, the suitability of certain materials and programs in the library, and the ethics guiding them, became the issues that generated the most disagreement.

One notable aspect is that, in addition to disagreements over issues, there can be secondary disagreements about how public bodies make decisions on these issues. In conflicts where the

termination of employment or the appointment process of a specific board member became an issue, whether the termination or appointment followed proper procedures became a derivative issue. In the disagreement over a librarian's dismissal, many actors commented in public meetings that the dismissal did not go through due process. Some board members agreed, thus resulting in the librarian's employment not being terminated. Similarly, when a particular board member was being appointed, many community members disagreed whether this board member had the appropriate qualifications, and further, a public record request revealed potential legal issues in the appointment process, making the appointment process another issue of disagreement that perpetuated the controversy.

In conclusion, networks encourage actors to keep mobilizing their rights in the LPL controversy, and legal authorities keep providing issues to disagree on in the LPL controversy. The interplay between three resources is playing key roles in continuing the LPL controversy. I propose a more generalized discussion about resource mobilization and controversy in Chapter 6.

5.2.5 Summary

This chapter analyzed how the resources identified in 5.1 were mobilized and interacted with each other in the LPL controversy. As a result, I discovered how each resource was mobilized and how legal authorities, legal authority and rights, and networks and other resources interacted in the LPL controversy.

First, different actors possess different legal authorities, and these legal authorities are hierarchically structured. Therefore, for an actor to mobilize their legal authority, they must continually negotiate the boundaries with other actors within the hierarchy. However, higher-level legal authorities in the hierarchy have greater freedom when negotiating.

Second, there was a constant tension between legal authority and rights over control of LPL governance in the LPL controversy. Exercising prescribed rights, such as public comments during board meetings, did not significantly counter the absolute legal authority within LPL governance. This is likely because public bodies with legal authority are not obligated to address public input.

Third, in the LPL controversy, local organizations function as platforms that form and maintain networks to help actors acquire legal authority and exercise their rights. By assisting actors, local organizations and their networks bring actors to participate in the controversy. These organizations create new networks and use them as a basis to assist actors in mobilizing resources in the LPL controversy.

In conclusion, the three key resources that played a significant role in the LPL controversy were mobilized through mutual influence. The next chapter proposes a model of resource mobilization in controversy, based on the resource mobilization and relationships identified in the LPL case.

5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reports findings related to resource mobilization in the LPL controversy. Each section was scaffolded to answer two research questions: 1) How are resources mobilized by actors in controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library? and 2) What is the relationship between the mobilization of resources and the process of controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?

Addressing the first research question, I identified three major resources mobilized by actors in the LPL controversy: legal authority, rights, and networks. Legal authority is granted to

public bodies and officials, such as the Parish Council, library board, library board members, and library director, to make decisions regarding the library. In the LPL controversy, legal authority exists in a hierarchy. In this hierarchy, higher legal authority can limit lower legal authority. However, when the legal provisions granting authority were ambiguous, actors continuously negotiated the boundaries of legal authority.

Rights are legally granted to community members, allowing them to participate in LPL governance to a certain extent. Rights were often mobilized by community members to counter legal authority. However, legal authority only responded and was mobilized when it was obligated to respond to the mobilization of rights.

Networks refer to the interactions between actors in the LPL controversy, including both individual and organizational networks. Local organizations forming organizational networks played a crucial role in the LPL controversy by supporting the mobilization of legal authority and rights. By providing a stable platform for resource mobilization, local organizations strengthened networks between individuals and organizations, enabling actors to collaborate effectively for resource mobilization.

I addressed the second research question through the chronology of disagreement events and the analysis of the three resources. First, networks gathered actors to participate in the LPL controversy and kept them engaged. Local organizations acted as stable structures that supplied actors to the controversy, which contributed to its continuation even when participating actors changed. Second, legal authority supplied issues for disagreement to the controversy. Legal authority played a role in setting issues related to the public library, and actors without legal authority responded by using their rights to support or oppose the legal authority. This process repeated itself, driving the progression of the controversy.

These findings reveal that resource mobilization provides essential elements for the evolution of a controversy. Therefore, analyzing which resources are mobilized and how they are mobilized can be a useful approach to understanding the process of a controversy.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

In Chapter 5, I analyzed how actors mobilize various resources in the context of the LPL controversy based on the data. In this chapter, I discuss more generalizable insights derived from the empirical findings. First, I present a model illustrating how resources are mobilized in public governance controversies like the LPL controversy and how this resource mobilization drives the controversy. Second, at a more abstract level than my research questions on resource mobilization, I discuss how the schemas of governance can also contribute to controversy. Third, as an alternative to the current governance schema, I propose public deliberation as a new direction for governance for public controversy situations.

6.1 MODEL OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN PUBLIC GOVERNANCE CONTROVERSY

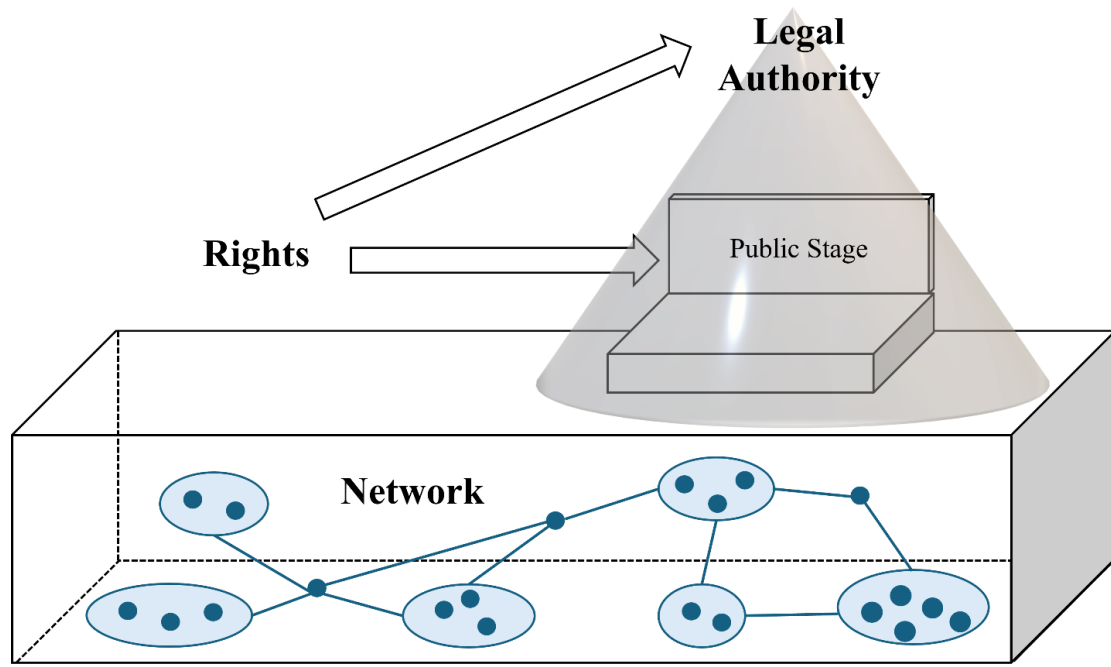


Figure 9 Model of resource mobilization in public governance controversy

Based on the three resources identified in the LPL controversy and their interweaved resource mobilization, I propose the model of resource mobilization in public governance controversy as shown in Figure 9. I define public governance controversy as *a series of disagreement events during the process of public problem solving among public and private actors in a public space*, and the LPL controversy is one example of public governance controversy.

I. Public stage

This model conceptualizes the public stage as an important spatiotemporal element of resource mobilization. Open meetings laws and other laws ensuring transparency stipulate that public bodies must make decisions in open spaces accessible to everyone. For instance, in the LPL controversy, public meetings are a prime example of the public stage. These public spaces have operating rules, and only certain actors who have been assigned roles can be on stage, like a theater. In other words, not just anyone can take the stage; only actors who have obtained legal authority through proper procedures can do so. Among these actors, some have exclusive legal authority to decide how the stage will be operated. For example, in the case of LPL, the LPL board has the exclusive legal authority to decide when and how to hold and operate board meetings within the bounds of Louisiana Open Meetings laws.

Interestingly, the play performed on this public stage is an audience participation play. In other words, based on the rules stipulated by legal authority and the rights defined in laws, some audience members can take the stage to express their opinions. For instance, in a Parish Council meeting, community members can express their views on the agenda items and request council members to make decisions in a certain direction. However, since the hosts of the public stage

are public officials and public bodies with legal authority, the use of rights by community members is also bounded by these actors with legal authority. Since actors with legal authority operate on the public stage at their discretion, they hold absolute power over the decision-making process and outcomes on the public stage. In contrast, community members have relatively weak influence over the public stage.

Public governance controversy arises when actors do not agree during the decision-making process about public problems on this public stage. Unlike typical controversies where actors start controversy because they cannot “ignore each other,” public governance controversy occurs when community members find the decisions of public bodies incompatible with their beliefs or interests (Shön & Rein, 1994; Venturini, 2010, p. 260). When community members with little influence over the public stage disagree with the operating rules of the public stage or the decisions made there, they attempt to counter the legal authority by mobilizing their rights both inside and outside the stage. As controversy continues, some community members use their rights to support the legal authority, and, alternatively, some community members might obtain legal authority themselves and become regular actors on the public stage. However, if actors with legal authority significantly influence the process of acquiring legal authority (e.g., board member appointment), it becomes difficult for individuals opposing these actors to become public officials.

II. Networks

The disagreement among actors mobilizing legal authority and rights is underpinned by the networks to which these actors belong. As previously examined, local organizations as platforms particularly support community members in utilizing their rights. Additionally, these networks

also support individuals in acquiring legal authority in public governance controversy. As Martin (2012) stated, leaders in controversies who maintain support for specific positions ensure continuity by forming local organizations, thus sustaining “sides” within the controversy. Therefore, while the individuals involved may change, the presence of organizations ensures the stability of the “sides” within the controversy.

As the controversy persists, organizations with similar values may increase the size of the network through alliances. This is similar to the formation of coalitions among actors with similar belief systems in the advocacy coalition framework in policy studies (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). The very nature of public governance controversy, where many actors gather on the public stage to express their opinions and meet each other, may contribute to the creation of a nascent policy subsystem.

All in all, a public governance controversy is a unique type of controversy, with a powerful resource concentrated in the hands of a few actors, unlike the scientific controversy (e.g., Barry, 2012) or social media controversy (e.g., Garimella, 2018; Popescu & Pennacchiotti, 2010). The quantitative and qualitative imbalance of these resources has acted as a key factor in determining the course of the controversy. Exploring what similar or unique resources are used in other types of controversies will help in understanding the phenomenon of controversy.

6.2 CLASH OF SCHEMA IN PUBLIC GOVERNANCE CONTROVERSY

The model of resource mobilization in the public governance controversy highlights the imbalance in resource allocation. As legal authority has superior influence in the controversy, examining how this resource is distributed can provide hints for resolving controversies. In this section, I step up to examine the rules or schemas found in LPL governance to understand how

legal authority is allocated to actors. According to the conceptualization of resources and power by Giddens and Sewell, on which this study is based, schemas are the societal rules that distribute resources while simultaneously being reproduced through resource mobilization. I discuss the underlying schemas of the current governance in the LPL case and diagnose why these schemas cause controversy, based on interviews and public comments made in public meetings.

In Giddens' and Sewell's argument about social structure, the methods of governance can be considered schema (Sewell, 1992) or rule (Giddens, 1984). The definition of schema by Sewell follows the definition of Giddens: "generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social life" (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). As Sewell (1992, p. 13) argues, "if schemas are to be sustained or reproduced over time - and without sustained reproduction, they could hardly be counted as structural - they must be validated by the accumulation of resources that their enactment engenders." This means that the schema, which are the "generalizable procedures" of governance, remain as they are because resources are smoothly reproducing the schema.

6.2.1 Current schema: Majoritarianism

Then, what is the grand schema in the governance of LPL? Upon reviewing the basis for the LPL Board of Control as the legitimate governing body, it becomes clear that the fundamental schema of LPL governance is majoritarianism. The governing body of LPL is appointed by the Parish Council on behalf of the local community. Local legislatures in the United States, including Lafayette Parish Council, are formed through majority vote of local community, and this legislative body appoints other local committees or boards to extend its

legal authority. Since individuals vote in local elections according to their partisanship and ideology, the ideological composition of the community is reflected in the local legislative body (Warshaw, 2019). Therefore, these elected officials that possess legal authority reproduce the ideology of the majority of people who voted through the electoral process. Logically, the decisions made in the public stage incorporates at least the ideology of the majority of community members who voted, and “power... ‘flows smoothly’ in processes of social reproduction (and is, as it were, ‘unseen’)” (Giddens, 1984, p. 257) until community members who do not share the ideology of the majority of the council, exert their power to make changes in their community.

Public meeting recordings and interviews also evince that various actors involved in the LPL controversy perceive majoritarianism as the fundamental schema of governance. During a City-Parish Council meeting on September 18, 2018, a number of public members referred to the characteristics of the majority of the community to support the resolution to condemn DQST at the LPL:

Not in South Louisiana where we still have very strong Christian beliefs. And regardless if you're a Democrat or a Republican, you still have a strong sense of what is right and wrong and what represents. [...] Also, the drag queens represent such a small fraction of the population of our city. It just doesn't bear out as something that would even be considered. [Community member A]

As you've seen here tonight, our community is filled with people of faith in God and what His Word says. [...] and I believe it's important for everybody to understand that we as Christians, we as people of faith we follow what's written in the Word of God and this particular scripture verse addresses the reason that we're here tonight. In Deuteronomy 22 verse 5, it says women shall not dress up in men's clothing, and men shall not dress in women's clothing. [Community member B]

Both community members argued that the DQST event should not be hosted at LPL because the event opposes the predominant religious belief in Lafayette. Community member A acknowledged that drag queens exist in Lafayette, but an LPL event does not need to represent them since they are a small group.

The following quote is from an interview with a board member, explaining why DQST is not suitable for Lafayette:

I'm not an anti-drag queen. I'm not anti any of that stuff. But at the same time, if somebody asks me my opinion on those things, I'll say, I may not necessarily agree with that lifestyle, but that's none of my business, right? [...] And the thing that bothered me about the drag queen story time thing as a citizen was that, look, to me, this is an agenda you're trying to bring. It's just ridiculous. If you did come down here, Lafayette is a very loving, accepting community, but we are very conservative. There's a very strong Roman Catholic base. This drag queen thing, that might have been a great idea in San Francisco or New York or a big city [...] And I think the general consensus of the community, the majority of the community being conservative, was that that's just not something that works here. [Board member A]

This board member does not have a negative view of DQST itself but mentioned that hosting DQST at the LPL would disregard the majority opinion of the community.

Similarly, another board member argued that the LPL, as a tax-funded institution, should remain neutral on social issues because of the majority opinion in the Lafayette community:

It's really the issue of, is this appropriate one for taxpayers to fund this type of social position? [...] And government agencies should be pretty neutral in respect to the social discussion that's going on, if you will, or political discussion that's going on. It can be a neutral playing field, maybe, and certainly politically. But these social issues belong in a public square, not funded or promoted by public entities, because then it ostensibly takes a position. And here in Lafayette, in this community, the majority of the people don't want that. They've made that clear. [Jieun: by...?] Who's on a Parish Council. [...] Jeff Landry won Lafayette by a majority of... If you look at the voting of Lafayette Parish, it's very conservative,

*about 65, 66%. Lafayette Parish is not San Francisco. It's not New York City.
[Board member B]*

When I asked how they knew the majority opinion, the board member mentioned that community members express their views through the Lafayette Parish Council and Louisiana governor elections. The board member used Jeff Landry as an example. Shortly after announcing his candidacy for governor in 2023, Jeff Landry released a report called “Protecting Innocence,” proposing a policy to restrict the provision of sexual content in public libraries. Landry won the 2023 gubernatorial election and has been serving as the governor of Louisiana since 2024. While there is no evidence to claim that all 60% of Lafayette voters who supported Jeff Landry did so solely because of his library policy, it can be inferred that at least 60% of Lafayette voters did not consider his library policy to be a deal breaker in voting for him (Louisiana Secretary of State, 2023).

Likewise, CNL’s leader who has assisted library board applicants perceived that individuals appointed as board members align with the Parish Council’s ideology:

Every time one of the appointments came up, we flooded the Parish Council with applicants, and they chose, as a conservative council would, the more conservative applicant. [...] We didn't tell anybody how to vote on new members. We went out and found people that were like minded in the community, good Christian, conservative people who wanted to be involved. [Michael Lunsford]

Under this perception, he has successfully helped conservative Christians get appointed to the library board. The Parish Council reflects the conservative, Christian ideology in the community, and candidates who share this ideology are more likely to be appointed to the library board. Thus, in the LPL case, the schema of majoritarianism has operated as a principle that incorporates the ideology of the majority of those who voted into the governance process.

One board member succinctly explained the issue of majoritarianism and its relationship with local elections:

It's a clashing ideology with an existing method of selection that somehow has tanked this method of selection in its fairness. I mean, it was fair. It always was fair. It appears that it's still fair. But when you take off a layer, it isn't as fair because you have to be a certain ideology or get the push from someone. [...] It's the voter that needs to fix that, the voter votes to get the powers that be to make the changes that they want. If we're happy with material challenges, if we're happy with restricting children's library, if we're happy with not letting out of parish people use our library, that's great, then you're okay with it. But if you're unhappy, then it's your job as a voter to vote, to vote your Parish Council in a way that makes that change. [...] It starts with the people and ends with the people. [Board member C]

As this board member mentioned, community members who are dissatisfied with the decisions of the governing body can express their dissenting opinions through elections.

However, if their opinions do not represent the majority, there must be other channels for their views to be communicated to the governing bodies of the local community, including the library board.

As mentioned earlier in Section 4.3, the turnout for the 2019 Parish Council election was about 43.92% (Louisiana Secretary of State, n.d.). The fact that less than half of the total voters participated in the election and not everyone voted for the election winners suggests that the actual majority ideology within the community could be different. Nonetheless, the governance methods of the LPL are fundamentally based on the logic of majoritarianism, which is evident both in the laws and in the perceptions of the actors with legal authority. With majoritarianism, the opinion of the community's majority may define what materials can be in the public library and what services the public library can offer. Following this logic, thus, the decisions made in

the governance are required to reflect ideologies supported by the perceived majority in the community.

6.2.2 Counter schemas: Elitism and pluralism

While the governance of LPL is fundamentally based on majoritarianism, competing schemas also coexist, particularly in material selection. First, elitism is also inherent in LPL governance, as professional librarians play crucial roles in decision-making and library operations. Second, pluralism is evident both in the ethics of librarianship and in the counterarguments posed by actors against the current LPL governance methods. Here, elitism and pluralism indicate:

Elitism is based on the idea that power should be concentrated in the hands of a few groups or individuals, whereas pluralism departs from the belief that power should be dispersed among a variety of groups rather than concentrated within the hands of a single, elite group. (Spruyt et al., 2023, p. 538)

This subsection explores how elitism and pluralism are proposed as counter-schemas of majoritarianism in the LPL controversy, despite the contradictions between elitism (power to a few groups or individuals) and pluralism (power to be dispersed among various groups). I analyzed board meeting recordings and interviews to identify these counter-schemas.

I. Elitism

During the public comment periods regarding the reconsideration of library materials, public members supported the idea that librarians should be in charge of selecting library materials because they have professional knowledge of literacy. Furthermore, many viewed that community members with professional knowledge should be appointed as board members. In

short, they perceive that professionals, including librarians, are apt to make decisions for the library due to their specialized knowledge.

In the interviews with community members, I was able to gather more nuanced opinions regarding the participation of professionals in LPL governance. Community members who have opposed the board's direction since 2020 mentioned qualifications for library board members, such as knowledge related to libraries, experience in leadership positions, and experience as a knowledge professional:

And then you look at the people who actually apply to get on these board, and you've got college professors, actual librarians, people who are in our library foundation, people who give money in their time to support the library are being cast aside because they don't meet the political agenda of others, despite the fact that they are the most invested in this community and they're the ones that are trying to make it a better place. [Community member A]

Very moderate, has important credentials, and political science and religion now has left at the academic sector, and is working for an organization that does like data voting, so I think that's amazing. Yeah. She's a very well qualified person who has never gotten on. [Community member B]

Because we had outstanding, overqualified applicants that submitted their resumes to the Parish Council for consideration. And they were just getting passed over by people that had nothing. I mean, university deans, professors, community members that had served in executive positions, all of these. And they were just passed over. [Community member C]

When the Parish Council began appointing citizens with extensive religious backgrounds to the library board in 2020, these community members critiqued that unqualified individuals were being appointed to the library board. The qualifications for library board members mentioned in the interviews were mainly related to professional expertise. In other words, individuals with specialized knowledge should be the main actors in library governance, even if their expertise is not directly connected to the library.

The practice of appointing library board members since 2020 differs from the previous tradition. One of the library directors described the earlier tradition as follows:

Usually, nobody wants to serve on the board. [...] We always had a lawyer. We always had an accountant, and we always had a UL professor. When the lawyer got off, when it was time for them to rotate, they usually found somebody they knew that was a lawyer that wanted to serve on the library board, and they'd bring them to the board. [...] Accountants, the same thing. They'd find an accountant friend that wanted to do it. So we always had this tag team going, or it would be a business person, somebody that was interested in the library and could do something for us, like understood finance, understood law. [Library director]

According to the interviews, previous LPL board members were mostly individuals with professional expertise and were recruited based on the social networks of incumbent board members. This aligns with research findings that nonprofit board members are typically composed of community elites (Yoon, 2021). Yoon's (2021) study on nonprofit board interlock suggested that such an elite-centric board composition could hinder the organization's community representation. Although elite board members provide the organization with resources such as knowledge and social networks necessary for the board's fundamental roles of control and service, they may fall short in adequately reflecting community needs (Forbes & Milliken, 1999).

From this perspective, the change in library board appointment practices since 2020 seems to prioritize community representation over the knowledge and networks held by elites. Although the new board appears more representative, it has faced strong resistance from community members who disagree with their decisions. In other words, a governing body that appears to prioritize community representation does not necessarily represent all community members. If the opinions of all community members are not represented, it can become a source of conflict.

This complex situation at LPL raises questions about how governance can ensure community representation when opinions within the community are not unitary.

II. Pluralism?

In my interviews, community members who have opposed the board's decisions since 2020 mentioned that the majority of the community does not represent its plurality. For example, one community member opposed a board composed of individuals with religious backgrounds making decisions for the entire community:

Religion should not dictate the decisions for the people, because we are a plurality. I don't know that they're [the library board] all of the same mindset or the same, but I know as a parish, Lafayette is very diverse. There is a strong catholic population, a strong Christian population, too. It's diversified. [...] Even in this heavily Catholic and Christian parish, we're still a plurality. [Community member D]

This community member, who identified as Catholic, argued that even though the majority of Lafayette's population is Christian, it is wrong to make public decisions for the entire community based on religious values. This opinion questioned the legitimacy of the library board's decisions, despite the board being appointed through a legitimate process.

Interestingly, these community members have argued that elite groups should be the key actors in LPL governance to ensure the representation of diverse community needs in the library. In the reconsideration committee meeting on SSHH, two community members referred to the expertise of librarians, who are trained to select materials for libraries:

I think that librarians are trained with education experience to stock the library with materials that appeal to the entire community. This is their job. This is what they're trained to do. It is not the board's job. We've been over this ad nauseam. The board members know that. [Community member B]

Let's not call it removing from the shelves. Let's call it what it is. The move to change the composition of the committee will determine which films or books will be banned with two board members and one librarian. This will result in political appointees being in a position to screen what the public has access to instead of trained professionals. [Community member F]

The first comment implies that librarians with professional education can better select books for the entire community than the community representatives on the Board of Control. The subsequent public comment clearly pointed out that board members are selected by politicians and therefore may not be in a favorable position to reflect the demands of the entire public. As an alternative, the community member supported a reconsideration policy allowing trained librarians to make a final decision for library materials.

It is not surprising that community members connect library professionals with a more inclusive reflection of community in the library. This is because the pluralistic idea is apparent in the professional values of librarianship, specifically in collection development. While acknowledging that public libraries have not always upheld these values in practice by ostracizing certain races or sexualities, professional ethics in American librarianship have emphasized pluralistic values (Wiegand, 1996). The ALA, which provides the ethical standards of librarianship as a profession, suggests values that should be pursued in collection development through various statements. For example, the Library Bill of Rights declares the following about library materials:

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves.*
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval. (ALA, 2006)*

These first two provisions emphasize that library materials are for “all.” Specifically, the second provision stipulates that libraries should not only hold “partisan or doctrinal” materials but must reflect “all points of view” in their collections.

The ALA Code of Ethics also highlights the importance of serving “all users” in its very first provision:

We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests. (ALA, 2017)

These ethical guidelines are often referred to in collection development policies, extending their influence beyond mere declarations by national professional organizations to the policies and practices of local public libraries (Johnson, 2018).

The ethical guidance of these professional associations diverges from the schema of local governance acting under majoritarianism. According to the logic of majoritarianism, the library’s collection should consist of materials that are most preferred by the majority of constituents. The notion of “community standards” frequently mentioned in the LPL controversy, which the library board decides and uses as the criteria in collection development, positions public libraries as institutions serving the majority. Conversely, the role of librarians with professional knowledge for library and their professional ethics can be significantly degraded when they do not align with “community standards.” Considering that professional ethics are generally an essential element of a profession, majoritarianism as a schema can even affect the professional state of librarians (Hansson, 2017).

This intersection of elitism and pluralism reflects the view that elite groups are more suited to make decisions for a pluralistic community rather than just the majority. However, since current LPL governance is based on majoritarianism, counterarguments rooted in elitism are a

potential source of controversy. Furthermore, librarianship values the representation of the entire community in the library, which naturally creates dissonance with the majority-focused schema.

In conclusion, the inherent conflict between the schemas of elitism and majoritarianism is the fundamental dilemma of the LPL controversy. If library governance is based on the majority opinion, actors with differing views will be dissatisfied and participate in the controversy. Conversely, if professionals lead library governance based on elitism and their professional values, and some community members disagree with these values, they will likely engage in controversy.

Since the conflict over DQST in 2018, the implicit elitism schema in LPL governance has shifted to a majoritarianism schema. Subsequently, the Parish Council and library board's legal authority resources have reproduced the majoritarianism schema, ensuring that the perceived majority opinion is effectively reflected in governance. Meanwhile, actors advocating for a return to elitism struggle to reproduce the elitism schema as they lack legal authority to invalidate the current legal authority. Despite this, these actors are utilizing resources other than legal authority to actively participate in LPL governance. Thus, disagreements at the schema level perpetuate controversy and also incentivize public members to actively engage in governance.

6.3 NEW DIRECTION FOR GOVERNANCE IN CONTROVERSY: PUBLIC DELIBERATION

To realize the potential benefits of public participation, it is essential to design public participation methods that align with the purpose and context of the participation (Bryson et al., 2013; Nabatchi, 2012). It is not new to see an emphasis on “two-way interaction between

decision makers and the public as well as deliberation among participants” in research and practice to better design public participation (Abelson et al., 2003, p. 239). Based on this stream of public participation, I suggest a new direction for public participation in LPL governance that focuses on the resolution of controversy.

There are unique features in the LPL controversy that should be considered in the design of deliberative public participation:

- Controversy has lasted for years
- Controversy has embedded contradicting schema
- Many community members want to participate in public library governance
- The library board only use traditional, one-directional public participation methods

Except for the first feature, three features can be similarly found in controversy at public libraries, such as a controversy around material challenges. Thus, while this research focuses on the case of LPL, the suggestion can be applied to any public library that experiences or expects controversy.

As mentioned above, disagreement can remain even when actors and issues change. Thus, it is imperative to resolve the disagreement itself. Specifically, in a setting like the LPL controversy where motivation for public participation is already high, excluding community members who want to participate in public library governance would create another issue to disagree with. To resolve the controversy, the current conventional form of public participation in the LPL controversy and most other public libraries is not helpful to resolve controversy or prevent controversy as this research analysis demonstrates and other studies have verified (Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015).

While many scholars question the effectiveness of public participation, public deliberation is still considered as a way to resolve conflicts that originate from fundamental values (Bohman, 2000). Since the deepest conflict in the LPL controversy is a clash of schema between majoritarianism, pluralism and elitism, deliberative public participation might open a new avenue to resolve the controversy.

As a starting point to speculate the deliberative public participation for public libraries, it is possible to utilize Nabatchi's (2012) design elements for identifying and understanding public values from public participation. Table 6 shows brief application of the elements to a controversy around material challenges at public libraries:

Table 6 Application of design elements to material challenge-related controversy

Design elements (Nabatchi, 2012, p. 705)	Application to material challenge-related controversy
Be interest-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on understanding values of each participant rather than discussing if the challenged material should be removed
Use deliberative communication modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reframe the issue in a way that can be solvable ● Focus on reaching a solution with respect to each participant's opinion
Have moderate to high levels of shared decision authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise a reconsideration policy to guarantee the result of public participation to be reflected on the final decision for material challenges
Use small table formats with trained facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Avoid rigid physical structure of conventional public participation ● Have a small group to deliberate with a facilitator out of the town
Provide informational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a definition and history of censorship as a

materials	<p>common ground</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain the value of public libraries
Select participants from members of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actors who are already involved in the controversy can join, but they have a quota to guarantee wider participation
Use recruitment strategies that minimize participation bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure including participants who are less likely to participate in governance
Have more than one session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet at least twice before the final decision for material challenges

However, there are at least two concerns in my suggestion of deliberative public participation for public libraries. First, what is the role of expertise, librarians in this case, in public participation? In other words, if librarianship as a profession is based on elitism (i.e. ‘we know what is best for users’), how can librarians and the public scope their roles?

The tension between technical expertise and the public has already been reported. Araos (2023) investigated a case of East River Park in New York City to examine how the result of lengthy public participation was overturned with technical experts’ opinion. The city government devalued the result from public participation as unfeasible based on experts’ opinion, thus leading to conflict among community members.

This case of East River Park might be repeated in any deliberative public participation in public libraries. Especially, as a profession that upholds intellectual freedom, it is difficult to follow a decision to remove a material from a library as a result of public participation. Although Araos (2023) states that his article does not provide any solution, it is worthwhile to contemplate on his conclusion:

This paper ultimately argues that solutions to complex problems will require political legitimacy gained through a public that can recognize their own influence on plans, as well as the input of technical experts necessary to arrive at feasible solutions within the timeframe demanded by the fast-approaching problem of climate change. This article does not provide a roadmap to achieve such legitimacy. (Araos, 2023)

As Araos argues, balancing the input from both community members and trained librarians in public participation would mitigate the concern about potential censorship. Especially, conservative regions like Louisiana would benefit from this public participation based on deliberation, since it will offer a chance to both library staff and community members to learn about public library values and community's concerns.

Another concern is the power imbalance in the controversy. As discussed in detail, legal authority defines what can be done in public stages and how public stages should be organized. When the actors possessing legal authority perceive the current situation as 'a controversy to be resolved' and are interested in resolving controversy, there is no obligation for them to implement a new method for public participation.

Then how can deliberative public participation be implemented? A hint might be found in studies about the attitude of public managers toward public participation. Zhang and Yang (2009) found that the professional norm of city managers affects the adoption of participatory budgeting. As public participation became a norm in local governance, more cities started implementing public participation methods. Migchelbrink and Van de Walle (2022) also similarly suggested that awareness of successful public participation in other municipalities builds positive attitudes toward public participation. However, they also reported that managers have strong

negative attitudes toward public participation when they are exposed to harsh criticism from the media or public.

In conclusion, deliberative public participation may provide a compromise between majoritarianism, pluralism, and elitism. Instead of solely relying on electoral votes to understand the community's value, I argue that having a better public forum is imperative to resolve long-lasting controversy around public libraries.

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 6 provides more generalizable knowledge that can be applied to similar controversies based on the findings.

First, I propose the model of resource mobilization in public governance controversy. This model explains how the relationships among key resources and their imbalanced allocation to actors contribute to the controversy. Derived from the LPL controversy, this model is particularly applicable to the specific type of controversies that arise in the public governance process when addressing public problems.

Second, I interpret the reason for the imbalanced allocation of legal authority in public governance controversies as a clash of schemas. Legal authority allocated through a majoritarianism schema may fail to adequately reflect the opinions of actors with minority views within the community. When this possibility is actualized, actors with minority opinions propose an alternative schema situated at the intersection of elitism and pluralism, opposing the majoritarian governance schema.

Lastly, I propose public deliberation as a governance direction to mitigate the imbalanced allocation of legal authority. This direction focuses on fostering mutual understanding among actors through deliberation to support the resolution of public governance controversies.

In summary, public governance controversies are not phenomena confined to the LPL case; they can arise whenever challenging public problems exist. The model and analysis of schema presented in this study provide foundational knowledge for resolving this type of controversy.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

This study investigates the resource mobilization in the public governance controversy surrounding material challenges at a public library system. For this research, I used an in-depth single case study as my main research method. Lafayette Public Library in Louisiana was selected as the case based on case selection criteria. I collected data from public meeting recordings and minutes, interviews with 33 interview partners, news articles, social media posts, and websites. I analyzed the collected data by thematically coding public meeting recordings and interviews, creating networks based on meta-network framework, and constructing a chronology of disagreement events.

The findings from each research question are as follows:

1) How are resources mobilized by actors in controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?

I identified three resources that have significant impact in the LPL controversy: legal authority, rights, and networks.

First, legal authority is granted to public bodies and officials, such as the City-Parish and Parish Council, the library board, and the library director. Legal authority, assigned to different actors, exists within a hierarchy. When the boundaries of each legal authority are unclear in laws, actors negotiate to determine the extent of their legal authority. In boundary setting, higher legal authority holds greater discretion compared to lower legal authority.

Second, rights are a resource used by actors without legal authority to influence LPL governance. When legal authority takes an action, actors with rights use them to oppose or

support the action. Particularly, actors opposing the actions of legal authority use rights to strengthen their control over various aspects of governance, such as board membership, the operation of board meetings, and library material selections. However, when legal authority is not obligated to respond to the mobilization of rights, it often ignores such mobilization.

Third, networks support the mobilization of legal authority and rights. Local organizations play a crucial role as platforms that facilitate the acquisition of legal authority and encourage the use of rights to influence the LPL governance.

2) What is the relationship between the mobilization of resources and the process of controversy surrounding a challenge in a public library?

The three major resources continuously supply the three essential elements necessary for the existence of a controversy. Legal authority provides issues for the controversy by setting the agenda and making decisions on public problems. Actors who disagree with these issues, but lack legal authority, use rights to express their disagreement. Networks act as a stable structure within the controversy, encouraging actors to remain engaged and continue their participation. In summary, the mobilization of these three resources is directly linked to the progression of the controversy.

Based on these findings, I generalized the relationships among the mobilization of these three major resources through the model of resource mobilization in the public governance controversy. This model emphasizes that legal authority has the power to establish and manage the public stage (e.g., board meetings) where decisions on public problems are made. Actors with legal authority also decide who can be on the public stage. Due to this setting, it is challenging for actors with only rights to counter the mobilization of legal authority on a public stage

dominated by actors with legal authority, who often require all actors to play by the rules set by the legal authority.

Furthermore, I examined how legal authority as a crucial resource is allocated to actors in public governance controversies through the concept of schema (Sewell, 1992). In the case of the LPL controversy, the schema of majoritarianism acted as the rule for granting legal authority, which may exclude individuals with minority opinions within the community from the governance process. As an alternative, a schema situated at the intersection of elitism and pluralism was proposed by actors within the LPL controversy. I suggested public deliberation as a direction to resolve controversies that arise from governance based on the schema of majoritarianism.

7.2 CONTRIBUTIONS

The methodology and results of this study contribute to controversy studies, governance studies, and library studies.

7.2.1 Controversy studies

This research identified the three fundamental elements of controversy and examined how each element is intertwined with resource mobilization in controversy. Methodologically, this study proposes a method to dissect controversy from multiple angles using a meta-network framework, chronology of disagreement events, and thematic coding. This method makes the data manageable through “temporal bracketing” while breaking down the controversy into various elements and their relationships (Dionne et al., 2019; Langley, 1999; Shön and Rein, 1994). Dissecting controversy through a network is meaningful because it simplifies

understanding of the controversy while allowing for the examination of the connections between different elements from multiple perspectives.

Theoretically, I defined public governance controversy as a form of controversy and empirically examined how this type of controversy is sustained by resource mobilization. I demonstrated that resource mobilization itself drives the controversy and that the distribution of specific resources is crucial to the initiation and progression of the controversy. This implies that understanding how resources are allocated and mobilized is essential to resolving controversy. Additionally, I elucidated that issues of controversy include the question about the schema that defines resource allocation in controversy.

The conceptual framework of this study, which conceptualizes power through resource mobilization, can be applied to various types of previously studied controversies. This study provides an opportunity to enhance the understanding of controversy through an empirically analyzed framework of how power drives controversy. Furthermore, comparing the resource mobilization within public governance controversy and other types of controversies offers an opportunity to create generalizable knowledge about controversy.

7.2.2 Governance studies

This research contributes to governance studies by connecting the concept of controversy to governance. Through an in-depth case study of controversy, I illustrated the imbalanced power dynamic in public governance controversy and why the imbalance contributes to the continuation of controversy.

This empirical study of public comments in open meetings contributes to the understanding of the current state of public comment periods. In this study, open meetings existed as spaces where public officials and the general public contested control and where controversy unfolded.

The study's results suggest that open meetings, as currently designed by law, may have a greater potential to exacerbate conflicts within the community more than to create the positive effect of enhancing government transparency (LoMonte & Calvert, 2018). Therefore, this study calls for action to redesign open meetings for governance studies.

Furthermore, this research identified a potential case to investigate further the relationship between experts and community members in public participation. As librarianship still struggles to secure professional status, the idea of deliberative public participation in library governance may be perceived as a challenge to the profession (Garcia & Barbour, 2018). Moreover, many community members in the controversy argued that library management should be in the hands of librarians. Future research on material challenges can help develop knowledge about the role of experts within public participation while involving community members in governance.

7.2.3 Library studies

This research demonstrated a process-based approach to studying material challenges to identify the dynamics among actors and their resource mobilization. As criticized in the conceptual background section, the literature about material challenges lacks a holistic understanding of material challenges by focusing on a particular group of actors (e.g., Floegel et al., 2020; Oltmann, 2016a) or discourse (Chabot & Helkenberg, 2022; Knox, 2015). To fill the gap in the literature, this research included multiple components in analysis to improve understanding of the process of material challenges by focusing on a single case.

Furthermore, by analyzing the process of controversy around material challenges, I pinpointed the schema of public participation as one of the key causes of controversy around material challenges. This finding supported a design idea for deliberative public participation as

a new mode of public participation in public library governance. Additionally, this research highlights how legal authority impacts the governance of public libraries, which leads to the need for further research on public library boards.

7.3 LIMITATIONS

In this section, I report the limitations encountered in the research design and data collection process. Firstly, I address the issue of generalizability inherent in the single case study approach. Secondly, I describe the limitations identified during the data collection phase.

I. Limited generalizability

This study is a single case study, focusing on one case for an in-depth analysis. The results of this study and the model developed based on these results may not be applicable to other cases. Additionally, since this case might be more extreme compared to other controversies or material challenges in public libraries, it may not be widely generalizable to other cases. Instead of examining multiple cases to enhance generalizability, this study chose a case with a prolonged controversy to conduct an exhaustive analysis. The in-depth analysis allowed for a detailed examination of how various resources were utilized in this case, logically demonstrating how these resources influenced the controversy. By providing a thick description, this study enables others to decide whether the findings are transferable to different cases.

II. Limited access to data

The six-year controversy left a wealth of materials and personal experiences. In this study, I did not have access to all these extensive materials; instead, I collected a selection of data based

on importance. Examples of the important data include documents from public meetings and interviews with key actors.

The limitations in data collection primarily arose during the process of recruiting interview partners and conducting interviews. As the data collection focused on key actors, information about individuals and organizations that participated in the controversy for relatively short periods was less represented in this study. Additionally, some actors declined multiple invitations to my interview, and others who agreed could not be interviewed due to scheduling conflicts.

During the interviews, some interview partners could not recall details of events that occurred several years ago. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I prepared aids to help recall; nonetheless, memories were sometimes elusive. There were frequent difficulties in remembering specific dates or individuals' presence at events, leading to approximations or omissions in the chronology of disagreement events. Furthermore, some interview partners refused to answer certain questions, especially when they had to describe the actions of others. They often shared information very cautiously or not at all.

To mitigate this limitation in the interview data, I used triangulation with document sources and online data. Future research aims to improve comprehensiveness of data by interviewing a wider range of actors, such as politicians and journalists.

II. Limited scope

This study focused on a controversy related to material challenges within a single public library system as its unit of analysis. Therefore, it did not address other libraries in Louisiana experiencing simultaneous material challenges or the handling of library-related legislation at the state level. However, during the analysis of this case, I found that the actors involved in this

controversy were also connected to material challenges and controversies in other public libraries, and state lawmaking. Additionally, while national organizations provide resources for material challenges, this study did not emphasize this aspect in its analysis. Consequently, to understand this case exhaustively, a broader understanding of contexts outside the unit of analysis would have been necessary.

Instead of addressing this limitation within the current study, it proposes future research to explore how multiple controversies occur simultaneously within a region and how material challenges and controversies unfold concurrently at the national, state, and local levels (see Section 7.5).

7.4 REFLECTIONS

This section presents reflections on the assumptions I held during the study, my experiences in the field, and what I would do differently if I were to conduct this research again.

I. Assumptions

In designing this study, I held several implicit assumptions that I was unaware of until I entered the field, met people, and analyzed the data.

The first assumption was that people would not agree to participate in my research because I am a foreigner and Asian. My knowledge of Louisiana was limited to the ethnography of Tea Party members in Arlie Hochschild's (2018) *Stranger in Their Own Land* and basic information about the demographics, economics, and politics of Lafayette that I gathered during my research. As noted in Section 4.3, 65% of Lafayette Parish's population is White, 30% are Black Americans, and only 2.4% are Asian. This demographic information led me to believe that, as an

Asian, I would be an unfamiliar presence to many in Lafayette and likely to be ignored. The prospect of recruiting interview partners in an unfamiliar place where I knew no one posed a significant psychological barrier for me. Consequently, the time it took to move from research design to data collection was longer than anticipated due to this psychological resistance.

The second assumption was that there were two distinct *sides* in the LPL controversy. Before conducting interviews, I was already aware of the extensive conflicts at LPL through news articles. These articles led me to perceive that the board and community members were in conflict, each on opposing *sides*. This conflict structure became internalized as my assumption, and it was further reinforced when interview partners used adversarial language like *us-them*. While the interviews confirmed my assumption to some extent, believing in distinct *sides* created a burden for me, making me feel as if I had to choose a side. I will elaborate on this in more detail in the Reflection section.

II. Experiences in the field

I considered my research to be a case study, not realizing that having a field and gaining experiences there would significantly impact my study, much like ethnography. As I boarded the plane to New Orleans, Louisiana for interviews in Lafayette, I felt I was experiencing what Daynes and Williams (2018) described as “entering the field” in *On Ethnography*. Physically moving to a new place different from where I lived marked a clear distinction between being inside and outside the field.

The day after I arrived in Lafayette was a Sunday. Seeking some comfort and a familiar identity, I visited a Korean church in Lafayette to understand the local area better. Korean churches typically serve as core communities for Korean immigrants living in the U.S. (Jeong,

2004). When I entered the church during the service, around 20 people curiously looked at me. I stayed for lunch, sharing Korean food with the congregation and discussing what Lafayette was like. They gave me the impression that Lafayette was a friendly and peaceful city. This experience reassured me that I could manage well in Lafayette despite being a foreigner. Additionally, whenever I was in doubt of my ability to study *Americans* as a foreigner, I went back to the memoir of Korean ethnographer Kim Choong Soon, who studied southern towns in the 1970s (Kim, 2002). His positionality as an Asian in southern towns helped him to talk to both Black Americans and white Americans, since he was not part of any group. His successful ethnography became my hope that I could also successfully do this research.

During my two visits to Lafayette, I attended library board meetings, Parish Council meetings, and conducted interviews with various individuals. My unique identity as a foreigner and Asian did not negatively impact my interactions; rather, it often proved beneficial. For instance, many interview partners would check if I was familiar with the political contexts they mentioned. Most of the time, I was not, and I would admit my lack of knowledge, prompting them to provide detailed background information. This process revealed many implicit assumptions held by my interview partners.

Experiencing Lafayette in person provided me with more contextual information than recordings or news articles could. An interview partner who hosted me took me on a tour of Lafayette's landmarks, helping me understand how the city was structured and perceived. To better understand the Northeast Regional Library, which was a key issue in the LPL controversy, I also visited the east side of Evangeline Thruway. This experience allowed me to witness redlining in American cities firsthand and helped me understand why people considered building a library in the Northeast area so important.

When I attended board meetings in person, I was surprised how divisive the meeting setting was. Board members sat in a line at the front of the room, facing the public members, whose seats were divided into two sections by a central aisle. A public member explained that people with similar opinions tended to sit together in the same section. To appear *neutral* so I could talk to all *sides*, I chose not to sit with public members I had already interviewed and sat alone instead. This experience motivated my desire to propose new directions for governance.

III. Reflections

Overall, my research experience was positive. Interview partners were open and shared their honest opinions with me, and I felt welcomed when I navigated different library buildings, churches, restaurants, and other places in Lafayette. However, conducting the interviews took an emotional toll on me, and I reflected on how I would approach the research differently if I were to do it again.

The most challenging aspect of the research was interviewing people on different *sides* of the controversy. Building rapport with interview partners is a crucial step for a fruitful interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). At the beginning of my interviews, I naturally formed a rapport and deeply empathized with the experiences and values of my interview partners as I had been doing in my previous interviews in other research projects. My empathy was genuine. However, as mentioned earlier, my internal conflict began when I instinctively chose to sit alone at the board meeting to appear *neutral*. I realized that acting as if I did not know the interview partners with whom I had shared emotions, sometimes even tears, might help when interviewing people on the other *side* of the controversy. This made me feel like a liar. Pretending that the emotions I felt

during interviews did not exist felt deceitful. From that point, I became more cautious about forming rapport.

Despite this, I was able to interview people from the other *side* of the controversy. During these interviews, I tried to maintain neutrality. However, keeping an open mind during the interviews made it difficult to avoid empathizing with their experiences and values. There were also times when interview partners asked for my opinion on the removal of books, putting me in a difficult position. Ultimately, I continued to empathize during the interviews and shared my sincere answers to questions. After returning to my room in one of the interview partners' places, I realized that I had empathized with conflicting experiences and values. It felt as though I, both as a person and a researcher, was being torn into pieces.

This feeling of fragmentation was intensified by using different aspects of my identity to form rapport. When interviewing individuals active in the LGBTQ community, I shared my bisexual identity. When interviewing librarians, I relied on my identity as a librarian. When speaking with Christians, I shared my new identity and experiences from dating a Christian man and attending Catholic church. It felt as though my interview partners were meeting different pieces of me.

In conclusion, even though I did not lie, I felt a deep discomfort as if I were deceiving everyone. If I have the opportunity to interview opposing sides again, I will clarify my neutral position and my intention not to share my opinions during or after the interviews at the outset of an interview. This might provide clarity for both the researcher and participants, alleviating the pressure to take a side and allowing interviews to proceed with less empathy. However, setting such boundaries might limit rapport-building, so this approach may not be the definitive solution. On the other hand, intentionally refusing the *sides* narrative might help researchers be open to

any opinion that comes from interview partners. However, if interview partners have already subscribed to the *sides* narrative, it would be challenging for the researcher to refuse this narrative since it will flow during interviews.

Since controversy inherently involves disagreement, interacting with people holding different views is essential for data collection. To my knowledge, there have been few studies on controversy conducted through face-to-face interactions like ethnography. Determining how to reduce the emotional burden on researchers while recruiting interview partners with diverse opinions requires more shared experiences from researchers.

7.5 FUTURE WORK

The findings and discussion of this research provide multiple future research directions. First, I plan to expand this research to other public library systems in Louisiana to verify my findings from the LPL controversy. I aim to conduct a multiple case study to find similarities and differences in the evolution of controversy around material challenges in a similar cultural context. Not only expanding the width of the research scope, but I also intend to include another layer of controversy that focuses on state-level controversy in adopting library-related bills. The purpose of this multiple case study is to record the whole process of controversy around material challenges. Furthermore, it is also worth exploring the rising trend of material challenges nationwide and how the support and information provided by national organizations influence controversies at the state and local levels.

Second, based on the literature review and data from the case selection process, it is possible to create a typology of challenges. To further knowledge about challenges, I aim to examine why some challenges become a controversy while others do not by investigating

various cases of challenges in terms of actors, topics of the material, format of challenges, etc. This research will provide a fundamental understanding of challenges that will help library practitioners handle material challenges better without significant conflict.

Third, future research may apply the resource mobilization framework to other types of controversies. For example, scientific controversy often does not have a group of actors with legal authority but has expert groups and the general public. Thus, it is worth investigating how resources are mobilized differently when actors and their relationships are different from public governance controversies. This study aims to identify the characteristics of different types of controversies and understand the common features that exist in all controversies. Ultimately, the goal is to generate knowledge that contributes to resolving controversies before they result in excessive negative impacts.

Lastly, another potential research is on local grassroots organizations as a socio-technical platform. The interviews and online materials from local grassroots organizations indicate local grassroots organizations mobilize resources in local communities by utilizing digital media and in-person networks simultaneously. Especially, the use of digital media by local organizations seems to vary based on the mission of the organization and the major generational group of the organizations as Agarwal and her colleagues (2014). Potential research on local grassroots organizations will expand the understanding of platforms outside of digital media and business strategies and the practices of local grassroot groups in public participation in local governance (De Reuver et al., 2018).

As of 2024, the United States is still amid waves of material challenges. Various states are discussing legislation either to tighten control over libraries and librarians or to strengthen

protections for librarians (Gutman, 2024; Perdomo, 2024). Louisiana, too, debated several library-related bills in 2023 and 2024, among which the bills allowing local government authorities to remove library board members and to issue restricted library cards to minors were passed (H.B. 974, 2024; Starr & KTBS TV, 2024). This trend indicates that the controversial attention towards public libraries in American society is unlikely to dissipate anytime soon.

While acknowledging the national or state influence on local communities, material challenges at public libraries are at the intersection of controversy, local governance, and the power dynamic in a local community. While every town is different and public libraries operate inside of the unique characteristics of each town, the question of ‘who gets to decide which book can be in our public library’ can be raised in any town. Understanding the power dynamic inside of controversy around material challenges provides a valuable case where we can contemplate the issue of public library governance and also public participation. With this knowledge, the next step is to review public library governance models and redesign them to serve the community better.

Appendix A – Chronology of Disagreement Events

Event	Result	Month/ (date)/year	Resource	Main actors	Detail
		4/19/2018	Network	Community members	CNL was founded to succeed Lafayette Citizens against Taxes
		4/26/2018	Network	CNL	CNL sent mailers opposing library tax millage
		4/26/2018- 4/27/2018*	Legal authority, network	Library board, library director	Library board arranged a few media outlet interviews for the library director
		4/27/2018	Legal authority	Library director	Library director posted a video supporting the millage
Library tax millage election	Library tax millage was failed	4/28/2018			
		?/?/2018- 8/19/2018*	Network	Community members, UL fraternity, library staff	UL fraternity collaborated with LPL library staff to organize DQST at LPL
		?/?/2018- 8/20/2018*	Legal authority	Library director, library staff	Library director approved the DQST at LPL
		8/20/2018- 8/21/2018*	Network	Community members	City-Parish Council members received emails and calls opposing DQST from

					community members
		8/20/2018- 8/21/2018* 10	Network	City-Parish Council members	City-Parish Council members contacted the Mayor-President about community opinion against DQST
		8/21/2018	Network	Mayor- President	Mayor-President stated his opposition to DQST
The Lafayette City-Parish Council Regular Meeting	-		Legal authority, rights	City-Parish Council, community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments on DQST • Community members signed in to support/oppose DQST
		8/25/2018	Network	Community members	Community members founded a Facebook group, Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time
		8/26/2018- ?/?/2018*	Network	Community members, CNL	CNL collected 1,617 signatures, letters from pastors, and letters from state legislators against the DQST
Regular meeting of		9/17/2018	Network, legal	Library board,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made

¹⁰ An asterisk (*) next to a date indicates that the exact timing of the resource mobilization is unknown, but it occurred within the specified period.

the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control			authority, rights	community members	public comments on DQST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members signed in to support/oppose the DQST
The Lafayette City-Parish Council Regular Meeting	A resolution denouncing DQST at LPL did not pass	9/18/2018	Network, legal authority, rights	City-Parish Council, community members, CNL, TFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members made public comments on DQST Community members signed in to support/oppose the DQST CNL submitted a petition, letters from pastors, and letters from state legislators against the DQST TFP Louisiana submitted a petition with 17,000 signatures
		9/18/2018	Network, right	Warriors for Christ, community member	Warriors for Christ filed a lawsuit to cancel DQST at LPL
		10/1/2018	Network, legal authority	Library board, library staff, South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A board member requested the SLCC rent a space for DQST

				Louisiana Community College (SLCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLCC agreed to rent a space for DQST
	LPL DQST canceled	10/4/2018	Legal authority	SLCC	SLCC stated that they are no longer able to rent a space for DQST
Two private story times at LPL		10/6/2018	Network, right	Community members, people from outside of Lafayette, Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DQST opponents from outside of Lafayette had a story time at a library meeting room DQST supporters from Lafayette had a story time at the children's department
		9/8/2018-12/20/2018	Legal authority	Library director, library board	The library director changed the meeting room form to prohibit using a library meeting room for DQST event
		?/?/2018-12/20/2018 *	Network	Community members, ACLU	Two community members from the Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time asked for legal support to ACLU
		12/21/2018	Network, right	Community members, Acadiana	Two plaintiff intervenors were added to the lawsuit

				Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time, ACLU	against the library director and Mayor-President
		1/10/2019	Legal authority	Magistrate	The Warriors for Christ was dismissed without prejudice
The Lafayette City-Parish Council Regular Meeting	A resolution to hold a special election to rededicate the library fund was deferred until April, 2019	1/22/2019	Legal authority, right	Mayor-President, library board, community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members and library board members made public comments on deferral Community members signed in to support/oppose the resolution to rededicate the library fund
Private DQST at LPL		2/3/2019	Network	Community members, Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time, Tradition, Family, Property Louisiana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time organized the private DQST Community members, including members of Tradition, Family, Property Louisiana protested in front of the LPL
		?/?/-2018-	Network	Library	Library board

		4/8/2019		board, library director	members met with the Mayor-President multiple times to persuade him not to reallocate the library fund balance
The Lafayette City-Parish Council Regular Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resolution to hold a special election to rededicate the library fund on 10/12 was passed • A resolution to change the rededication amount to \$10M was passed 	4/9/2019	Network, right, legal authority	Mayor-President, library board, library director, community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members, the library director, and library board members made public comments on deferral • Community members signed in to support/oppose the resolution to rededicate the library fund
The Lafayette City-Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	8/6/2019	Legal authority	City-Parish Council	The City-Parish Council appointed a new library board member
Library fund balance reallocation election	\$10M library fund balance was reallocated to drainage and recreation	10/12/2019			

The Lafayette City-Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	11/5/2019	Legal authority	City-Parish Council	The City-Parish Council appointed a new library board member
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	8/4/2020	Legal authority	Parish Council	The Parish Council appointed four new library board members
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A resolution was passed to table discussion of paid library card for outside-Parish patrons ● A resolution was passed to cancel the subscription of Gale Analytics ● A resolution was passed to deny accepting LEH grant 	1/25/2021	Legal authority	Library board	Community members made public comments to oppose the paid library card

		1/27/2021	Network	Community members	Community members founded a Facebook group, Supporters of Lafayette Public Library
		1/29/2021	Right	Library director	The library director retired
		1/31/2021	Network	League of Women Voters of Lafayette	League of Women Voters of Lafayette issued a statement that opposed the refusal of the LEH grant
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	2/9/2021	Legal authority, network, rights	Parish Council, community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments to oppose the appointment of particular nominees • Community members emailed to support/oppose the appointment of particular nominees
		6/1/2021-6/21/2021*	Network	Library board	Library board members complained about pride displays at LPL
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library	A resolution was passed to hire a library director	6/21/2021	Legal authority	Library board	

Board of Control					
		10/29/2021	Network	NAACP Lafayette Branch	NAACP Lafayette Branch issued a statement that opposed the library tax millage renewal due to a lack of the library board's support to build the Northeast Regional Library
		6/21/2021-11/12/2021	Network	Library director, library board, community members, library staff	Library director, staff, library board members, and community members met local council members and spoke at local organizations' meetings and council meetings to support library tax millage renewal
		?/?/2021-10/30/2021 *	Network	Library director, CNL, library board	The CNL founder had a meeting with the library director and a board member to learn about the library material reconsideration process
		10/2021*	Right	Community member, CNL	The CNL founder filed a reconsideration of TBG and V-Word to the LPL

Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Reconsideration Committee	-	11/8/2021-11/15/2021 *	Legal authority	Library board, library staff	The reconsideration committee decided not to take any action for TBG
Library tax millage election	Library tax millage was approved	11/13/2021			
		10/20/2021 - 11/14/2021 *	Legal authority	Library director	The library director ordered the inclusion of teen nonfiction in the adult nonfiction section
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northeast Library Exploratory Committee was initiated A resolution to remove TBG was failed 	11/15/2021	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, Supporters of Lafayette Public Library	Community members made public comments to oppose the motion to remove TBG from the library
Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Reconsideration	-	11/2021*	Legal authority		The reconsideration committee decided not to take any action on the <i>V-Word</i>

on Committee					
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	12/1/2021	Legal authority	Parish Council	The Parish Council appointed a new library board member
		12/8/2021	Network	Community members	Community members founded a Facebook group, Lafayette Citizens Against Censorship
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast Library RFP was approved based on Northeast Library Exploratory Committee • A resolution to change the reconsideration committee to 2 board members and 1 librarian was passed 	2/21/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments to oppose the motion to approve the Northeast Regional Library RFP for lease • Community members made public comments to oppose the motion to change the composition of the reconsideration committee • Community members made public comments to support/oppose a restricted library card for minors

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member was arrested for disturbing peace
Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Reconsideration Committee	-	3/9/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library staff, library board, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments against censorship • Community members made public comments to oppose the change of reconsideration committee
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motion was passed to charge out-of-parish patrons 	3/21/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments to oppose the fee for out-of-parish patrons • Community members made public comments to oppose the change of reconsideration committee
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	A motion was passed to categorize SSHH as NC-17	4/18/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments to urge transparency in the board agenda • Community members made

					public comments to support/oppose restricting SSHH
		5/26/2022	Legal authority	Library director	The library director prohibited any displays that single out a group of the population
		6/1/2022-6/30/2022*	Network	Library staff	A library staff who created a teen romance display later circulated a petition opposing the display prohibition
		6/10/2022	Network	Move the Mindset	Move the Mindset issued a statement that opposes the LPL display policy
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	6/21/2022	Legal authority	Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members made public comments to support the appointment of a particular nominee The Parish Council appointed a new library board member
		6/22/2022	Network	NAACP Lafayette Branch	NAACP Lafayette Branch issued a statement that opposes the prohibition of displays at LPL

		6/24/2022*	Legal authority	Library staff	A library staff created a teen romance display that includes LGBTQ-related books
		6/24/2022-6/30/2022*	Network	Library board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library board members complained about the teen romance display to the library director Library board members discussed firing the library staff who created the teen romance display with the library director
		6/24/2022-6/30/2022*	Legal authority	Library director	The library director called in the library staff who created the teen romance display
The special meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	A motion was passed to table the decision to terminate a librarian's employment due to insubordination	7/25/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC, Move the Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An attorney for the librarian argued that the termination of a civil servant should follow due process Community members made public comments to oppose the termination of the librarian's

					employment
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	-	8/2/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Community members, LCAC	Community members made public comments to request the removal of the library board president
The Lafayette Parish Council Budget Hearing	-	8/11/2022	Legal authority	Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Parish Council member criticized the board president for not following the Northeast Library Exploratory Committee's recommendation • A Parish Council member questioned who can remove a library board member
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	A motion was passed to purchase a land for Northeast Library	8/15/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC, Move the Mindset	Community members made public comments to support purchasing land for the Northeast Regional Library
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	10/4/2022	Legal authority, rights	Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments to support the appointment of particular nominees

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parish Council appointed a new library board member
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	Board officers were elected	10/17/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	Community members made public comments to support particular board members for officers
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	A motion was passed to restrict R and NC-17 DVDs to 17+	11/21/2022	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	Community members made public comments to support/oppose the policy change regarding R and NC-17 DVDs
		12/9/2022	Network	Community members	Community members founded a Facebook group, Louisiana Citizens Against Censorship
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	-	1/9/2023	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	A community member was escorted out of the meeting due to her disturbance of peace
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library	A motion was passed to add the definition of sexually explicit	2/15/2023	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	Community members made public comments to support/oppose the policy changes

Board of Control	material and an opt-out restricted card to the collection development policy and card policy				
		3/7/2023	Rights	Community members	Two community members filed a lawsuit against LCG and the board president due to a violation of the First Amendment and Louisiana Open Meetings Law
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	4/4/2023	Legal authority	Parish Council, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community members made public comments to support/oppose the appointment of particular nominees ● Community members emailed to support/oppose the appointment of particular nominees ● The Parish Council appointed a new library board member

Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control		8/21/2023	Legal authority	Library board	The library board decided to terminate the employment of the library director, but the decision was ineffective
		8/21/2023	Network	Library director	The library director called council members and board members to reverse the board's decision
		8/22/2023	Right	Library director	The library director resigned
The special meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	A motion to accept the resignation of the library director	8/24/2023	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	Community members made public comments to support/oppose the board's decision to terminate the employment of the library director
		8/27/2023-9/5/2023	Network	LCAC	The LCAC circulated a petition to remove the board president
		8/28/2023	Right	Library board	The board president resigned from the president role
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	-	9/5/2023	Legal authority, network, rights	Parish Council, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members and librarians made public comments to support/oppose the removal of the

					<p>board president</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LCAC-led petition to remove the board president was submitted to the Council
		9/7/2023	Network	PFLAG Lafayette, LCAC	The LCAC founder gave a presentation at a PFLAG event
The Lafayette Parish Council Regular Meeting	Library board member appointment	11/7/2023	Legal authority, network, rights	Parish Council, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community members made public comments to support the appointment of a particular nominee • Community members called to support/oppose the appointment of particular nominees
Regular meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control	A motion was passed to disaffiliation LPL from ALA	12/18/2023	Legal authority, network, rights	Library board, community members, LCAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library staff made public comments to oppose the disaffiliation of LPL from ALA • Community members made public comments to support/oppose the disaffiliation of LPL from ALA

Appendix B – Interview protocol

Location _____ Date/time _____ Participant
ID# _____

My name is Jieun Yeon. I am interested in understanding your experience in relation to material challenges at Lafayette Public Library, LA. I am using the American Library Association’s definition of a challenge, which is “an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group.”

I expect that our interview will take approximately 30–60 minutes. I hope our conversation will be open and freeflowing, but please note that I am following a set of predetermined questions that I’ve designed as an interview guide.

Prior to the interview, I sent you an introductory letter and a consent form. Did you have a chance to take a look at them? I’d like to go over some specifics about the confidentiality of your answers. [Read the description under “How will my data be maintained to ensure confidentiality?” on the consent form] Do you have any questions about confidentiality or anything else? If not, please sign the form.

If there are no further questions, let’s get started with the first question.

Ice breaking

1. What year were you born?
2. How long you have lived in Lafayette?
3. Can you explain your relationship with (or your role at) the LPL?

Community members: When did you start using the LPL?

Library staff: When did you start working at the LPL? Why did you want to join? How long have you worked as librarian/library staff?

Library board members: When did you become a board member? Why did you want to join?

Narrative

I have collected data about what happened at the LPL in relation to material challenges over the last few years. I'd love to use these as discussion points for our conversation.

4. In 2018, there was disagreement about Drag Queen Storytime at the LPL. Do you remember the event? Can you talk about the event? Did you do anything related to the event?

[If the participant was involved in]

* 3-1. What motivated you to get involved?

3-2. Did you have a specific goal you wanted to achieve? If so, could you explain it?

3-3. Could you describe what you did to achieve the goal you mentioned?

3.3.1 What did you do? (Where? When? How?)

Probe: Is there a reason you decided to do X?

3-4. Were there things you considered/wanted but did not actually do?

Probe: Is there a reason you decided not to do X?

3-5. How would you describe the challenges you experienced in this period (if any)? *

[If the participant was not involved in:]

Let's move on to the next one.

5. In 2021, some materials in the LPL were challenged, and the reconsideration policy was changed to include two board members on the reconsideration committee. Do you remember the event? Did you do anything related to the event?

[If the participant was involved in]

Ask *

[If the participant was not involved in:]

Let's move on to the next one.

6. This year (2023), the board changed the library policy to issue a restricted children's library card. Do you remember the event? Did you do anything related to the event?

[If the participant was involved in]

Ask *

[If the participant was not involved in:]

Let's move on to the next one.

[Share a 'timeline']

Can you help me make sense of this timeline?

7. I briefly put the events I mentioned on the timeline. Can you help me understand what I've missed (if anything)? How do you see these events related to one another?

[If the participant mentions a specific event:]

[Optional] In-person interviews: You can write or draw on the timeline.

Ask *

Repeat 6 until the participant finishes sharing all the events leading up to the present moment. (Prepare slides for participants who were not in the events)

[Note: the researcher will present interview artifacts to the participant to stimulate recall of their actions. Especially, the researcher will use the artifacts to help the participant recall an event when the participant skips sharing an event that they participated in. Interview artifacts were

created by the participant or recorded the participant's actions or statements. For example, board meeting minutes, board meeting recordings, news articles, and social media posts will be prepared and used as needed. In specific, the researcher will present interview artifacts when the participant misses significant details or the whole event in their description.]

8. From your perspective as (community member/library staff/library board member), I'd be curious how you would describe LPL at the present moment.

a. Prompts: Have there been any recent material challenges? Do you expect any material challenges in the future? How are you currently involved?

b. [Optional: During or after the timeline interview]

Members of grassroots organizations:

6. Who started the group? How did it start?

6-2. How did you learn about the group? Why did you decide to join the group?

6-3. How did you interact with other members of the group?

6-4. How did the group decide what to do as a group? What does the group consider when deciding their next move?

6-5. What do you get from this group? How does this group impact the whole situation?

Board members:

6-1. How did you interact with other members of the group?

6-2. How did the group decide what to do as a group? What does the group consider when deciding their next move?

6-3. What do you get from this group? How does this group impact the whole situation?

Wrap-up

7. Is there anything we have not discussed that might be important for me to know about?

8. Is there any other person you think might be interested in this research whom I should contact?

Thank you for your participation. [*Note: how to deliver a gift card as compensation is being discussed with the iSchool. Information regarding compensation will be added here*]

[If the participant agreed to be recorded]

As we've seen from the consent form, I am going to transcribe this interview. I will send a copy of the transcript to your email about a month from now. When you receive it, please read the transcript carefully and let me know if there is anything you want to remove from it in one month. I will delete those parts from the transcript, so that they are not included in my dissertation. I will again provide details about logistics when I send the transcript.

[If the participant did not agree to be recorded]

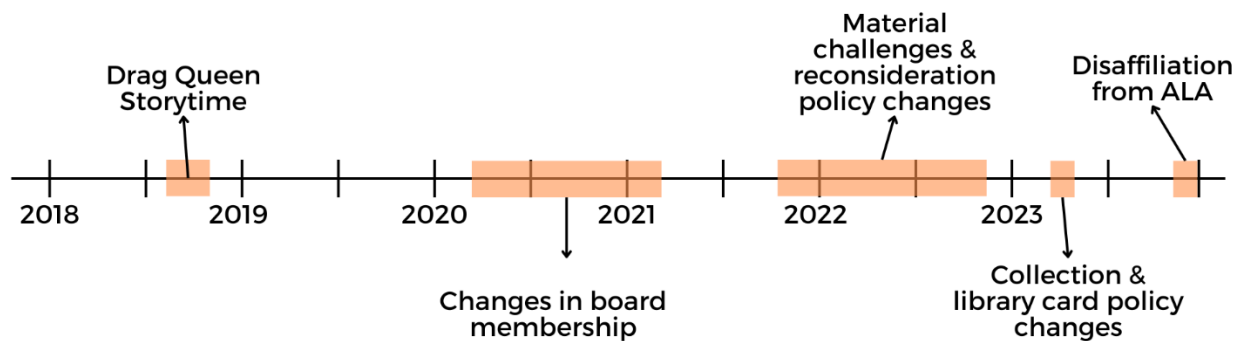
I will email my dissertation before submitting it so that you can tell me if there is anything you don't want to be published. This email will be sent to you about six months from now with details about logistics. I will probably ask you to reply to me within one month of the email.

Could you please leave your email?

If you have any questions or concerns about my research, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you so much for your time.

Appendix C – Interview protocol: Timeline of Controversy

TIMELINE OF CONTROVERSY



Appendix D –Interview Consent Form

Protocol Title: Power and Controversy: Examining the Process of Controversy surrounding Material Challenges at a Public Library

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rachel Ivy Clarke

Student Researcher: Jieun Yeon

Introduction

I am a student researcher, Jieun Yeon, who is conducting this interview to write a dissertation. Dr. Rachel Ivy Clarke is my advisor and supervises my dissertation project.

The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about participation in a research study and offer you the opportunity to decide whether you wish to participate. You can take as much time as you wish to decide and can ask any questions you may have now, during or after the research is complete. Your participation is voluntary.

What is the purpose for this research study?

This case study investigates the experiences in relation to material challenges at Lafayette Public Library, LA. A challenge is defined as “an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based upon the objections of a person or group,” according to American Library Association. The research study also aims to find out if you have faced any difficulties in the process.

What will I be asked to do?

- You will be required to participate in a 30–60-minute interview with the researcher.
- The researcher will ask you questions about your experiences with material challenges at the LPL, such as “could you tell me how you first got involved in the material challenges at the LPL and what has happened since then?” or “what was your goal to achieve when you were participating in the situation regarding material challenges?”

What are the possible risks of participation in this research study?

- Certain events over material challenges at the Lafayette Public Library have been covered in local and national news media. There is a risk that your identity may be identifiable in subsequent research publications despite the fact that I will use a pseudonym and obscure facts to protect your privacy. Identifiers such as your name might be removed from the identifiable private information and that, after such removal, the information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without additional consent. This may harm your reputation or

bring hostility from individuals or groups that do not agree with your opinion. More details about confidentiality are provided on page 2.

What are the possible benefits of participation in this research study?

- There are no direct benefits to you. You will have a chance to reflect on their experiences in the material challenges and understand the impact of their actions. For library officials and staff, this research will support them to identify how to resolve book challenges. The research will also produce valuable knowledge about power dynamics that exist in a material challenge, which will support community members and library staff to effectively handle material challenges at public libraries.

How will my privacy be protected?

- In-person interviews will be conducted in public spaces or your home/private offices where both you and the researcher can access it conveniently without significant interruption in the sound recording of the interview. However, your privacy and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if the interview is conducted in a public setting. The interview will be audio recorded.

How will my data be maintained to ensure confidentiality?

- Data will be stored on the researcher's password protected laptop.
- Data sharing will be kept to a minimum, only between the researcher and her advisor. In the case of sharing data files between members of the research team, files will be saved on a USB drive and shared. Every file will be protected with a password.
- You will be assigned an ID number, and your names and assigned ID number will be recorded in a separate spreadsheet file. The researcher will have access to the key to the spreadsheet file.
- Since the current research extensively utilizes contextual data to provide rich analysis and assess the research quality, your affiliations will be collected and stored within the transcribed interview data.
- Your name will be anonymized with an ID number. However, the anonymization will not guarantee the confidentiality of your identity since the research explicitly states that the Lafayette Public Library is the case, which makes your identity easily identifiable. The result of this research may be published as the researcher's dissertation, conference presentations, or academic journal papers.
- To ensure the desired confidentiality of participants, the researcher will provide the transcription of the interview to you within one month from the interview. You may redact words or sentences from the transcription if you think those should not be

published. The communication with the researcher to redact should occur in one month after you receive the transcription.

Will photographs, audio, video, or film recording be used?

- The interview will be audio recorded if you agree to. The purpose of recording is to create a transcription of interview, which will be used for data analysis. The recording will only be accessed by the researcher, but the transcription may be shared with her advisor. The recordings will be kept for 5 years after the completion of the research and then be destroyed.

Will I receive compensation for participation?

- A \$25 Amazon gift card will be awarded per interview.
- If you decide to withdraw after the initiation of interview session, a \$25 Amazon gift card will be awarded. If you withdraw before the initiation of interview session, no compensation will be awarded.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary.
- You may skip and/or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

Whom may I contact with questions now, during, or after the research is complete?

- For questions, concerns or more information regarding this research you may contact *Jieun Yeon* (jiyeon@syr.edu, 646-894-0715) or *Dr. Rachel Ivy Clarke* (rclark01@syr.edu).
- If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at (315) 443-3013.
-

All of my questions have been answered, I am 18 years of age or older, and by signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this research study. I have received a copy of this form for my personal records.

For in-person interview: I agree to be audio recorded. Yes No

----- Date:

Printed Name of the Participant

Signature of the Participant

----- Date: -----

Printed Name of the Researcher

Signature of the Researcher

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Public meeting materials¹²

Agenda Item No. 15 - O-082-2019 for Council Meeting of 6-4-2019 by CITY-PARISH

COUNCIL

Agenda Item No. 17 - O-159-2019 for Council Meeting of 9-17-2019 by CITY-PARISH

COUNCIL

Agenda Item No. 27 - CPC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of November 5, 2019

Agenda Item No. P13 - PC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of August 4, 2020

Agenda Item No. P18 - PC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of February 9, 2021

Agenda Item No. P22 - PC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of December 1, 2021

Agenda Item No. P13 - PC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of June 7, 2022

Agenda Item No. P10 - PC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of October 4, 2022

Agenda Item No. P17 - PC Board Appointments for Council Meeting of April 4, 2023

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control from June 4, 2018, to
December 18, 2023

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Finance Committee on
April 30, 2019

Minutes of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Special Meeting on May 6, 2019

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Finance Committee on
September 11, 2019

¹² LPL board meeting minutes are from <https://lafayettepubliclibrary.org/board>.

LPL board meeting recordings are from

<https://lplibrary.sharepoint.com/sites/LPLBoardDocumentsSite/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FLPLBoardDocumentsSite%2FShared%20Documents%2FLPLBoardMeetingAudio&p=true&ga=1>.

Lafayette City-Parish and Parish Council meeting minutes and agenda items are from

<https://apps.lafayettela.gov/obcouncil/index.html>.

Lafayette City-Parish and Parish Council meeting recordings are from <https://video.ibm.com/channel/lafayette-consolidated-government-council-meeting>

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search
Committee on March 8, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search
Committee on March 22, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search
Committee on May 13, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search
Committee on June 9, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Northeast Library
Exploratory Committee on December 13, 2021

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Northeast Library
Exploratory Committee on January 5, 2022

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Northeast Library
Exploratory Committee on May 11, 2022

Minutes of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Reconsideration
Committee on March 9, 2022

Minutes of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Special Meeting on July 25, 2022

Minutes of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Special Meeting on August 24, 2023

Minutes of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Special Meeting on September 11,
2023

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State
of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of August 21, 2018.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of September 18, 2018.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of October 2, 2018.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of January 22, 2019.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of April 9, 2019.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of May 21, 2019.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of August 6, 2019.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of September 17, 2019.

Proceedings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of November 5, 2019.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of August 4, 2020.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of November 4, 2020.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of December 16, 2020.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of February 9, 2021.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of December 1, 2021.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of January 4, 2022.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of June 7, 2022.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of June 21, 2022.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of August 2, 2022.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of October 4, 2022.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of November 1, 2022.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of March 7, 2023.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of April 4, 2023.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of September 5, 2023.

Proceedings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of November 7, 2023.

Recordings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of August 21, 2018.

Recordings of the Lafayette City-Parish Council Meeting of The City-Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of September 18, 2018.

Recordings of the Lafayette Parish Council Budget Hearing of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken on August 11, 2022.

Recordings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of September 5, 2023.

Recordings of the Lafayette Parish Council Meeting of The Parish of Lafayette, State of Louisiana, Taken at a Regular Meeting of November 7, 2023.

Recordings of Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control from November 16, 2020, to December 18, 2023

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search Committee on March 8, 2021

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search Committee on March 22, 2021

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search Committee on May 13, 2021

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Director's Search Committee on June 9, 2021

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Northeast Library

Exploratory Committee on December 13, 2021

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Northeast Library

Exploratory Committee on January 5, 2022

Recordings of the Meeting of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Northeast Library

Exploratory Committee on May 11, 2022

Recordings of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Special Meeting on August 24,

2023

Recordings of the Lafayette Public Library Board of Control Special Meeting on September 11,

2023

Vita

Jieun Yeon

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** Information Science & Technology June 2024
Syracuse University, New York, U.S.A.
Title: Power and Controversy: Controversy surrounding Material Challenges at a Public Library
Advisor: Dr. Rachel Ivy Clarke
- M.A.** Library and Information Science February 2019
Yonsei University, Seoul, Republic of Korea
Title: Employment Information Needs and Information Behavior of North Korean Refugees
Advisor: Dr. Jee Yeon Lee
- B.A.** Library and Information Science February 2014
Public Administration (Double major)
Yonsei University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Yeon, J., & Dudak, L. T. (Submitted). Potential for trauma in public libraries experiencing book banning and material challenges. *Public Library Quarterly*.

Yeon, J., Smith, M., Youngman, T., & Patin, B. (2023). Epistemicide beyond borders: Addressing epistemic injustice in global library and information

settings through Critical International Librarianship. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion*, 7(1/2).

Kim, G., Kim, C., Lee, G. E., **Yeon, J.**, & Lee, J. Y. (2022). What makes a “happy” workplace for librarians? Exploring the organizational functions of academic libraries in South Korea. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 48(6), 102594.

Yeon, J., & Lee, J. Y. (2021). Employment information needs and information behaviour of North Korean refugees. *Information Research*, 26(4).

<http://informationr.net/ir/26-4/paper914.html>

Patin, B., Sebastian, M., **Yeon, J.**, Bertolini, D., & Grimm, A. (2021). Interrupting Epistemicide: A Practical framework for naming, identifying, and ending epistemic Injustice in the information professions. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 72(10), 1306-1318.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24479>

[the Annual ASIS&T SIG-IEP Best Information Ethics and Policy Paper of 2021]

Yeon, J., & Kim, G. (2018). A study for identifying the affecting factors on the intention of public library use: Based on Ajzen’s Extended Theory of Planned Behavior. *Journal of the Korean Society for Library and Information Science*, 52(1), 401-423.

Yeon, J., & Kim, G. (2017). An analysis of the agenda-setting process to appoint a library professional as the director of the National Assembly Library: Based on Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Model. *Journal of the Korean Society for Library and Information Science*, 51(3), 293-322.

Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings

Patin, B., Sebastian, M., **Yeon, J.**, & Bertolini, D. (2020). Toward epistemic justice: An approach for conceptualizing epistemicide in the information professions. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 57 (1).

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

Patin, B., Smith, M., Youngman, T., **Yeon, J.**, & Kambara, J. (2021). Epistemicide and anti-Blackness in libraries, archives, and museums: Working towards equity through epistemic justice practices. In K. Black & B. Mehra (eds.) *Antiracist Library and Information Science: Racial Justice and Community*. Emerald Publishing.

Patin, B., Sebastian, M., **Yeon, J.**, Bertolini, D., & Grimm, A. (2021). The Mis-education of the librarian: Addressing curricular injustice in the LIS classroom through social justice pedagogy. In Mehra, B. (ed.) *Social Justice Design and Implementation in Library and Information Science*, Routledge.

POSTERS

Yeon, J. (2023). Power and controversy: A study of material challenges in the U.S. public libraries. ALISE '23, October 2023.

Yeon, J. (2023). Thinking outside of the box in the age of book challenges: Reimagining public library governance. 2023 ALA Annual Conference, June 2023.

Yeon, J. (2022). Exploring the dynamics of public library board: From a perspective of agency theory. ALISE '22, October 2022.

Yeon, J. (2021). How do public library boards work?: An exploratory study. ALISE '21, September 2021.

PRESENTATIONS

Nutt, R., Gray, L., Simpson, E., & **Yeon, J.** (2022). Visualizing collective voices online: Narrative, literacy, and African American information communities in a photographic archive. 54th Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association. August 2022.

Gray, L., Simpson, E., & **Yeon, J.** (2021). Information community identity: examining the photographic legacy of Henry Booth Settlement House in Chicago, 1900-65. Library History Seminar XIV: Libraries without Borders, June 2021.

Yeon, J. (2021). How do public library boards work?: An exploratory study. Syracuse University 1ST Annual iSchool-wide Research Symposium, April 2021.

Gray, L, Simpson, E., & Yeon, J. (2020). (Re)Constructing an African American communal space: An Information analysis of a Chicago Public Housing archive, 1955-1970. 2020 SIG AH Virtual Symposium: Data Curation and Visualization in the Arts & Humanities, August 2020.

Patin, B., & Yeon, J. (2019). Ending Epistemicide: Amplifying knowledge systems in libraries. Library Research Seminar (LRS) VII, October 2019.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY & PARTICIPATION

Panel Organization & Moderation

Charbonneau, D., Hawamdeh, S., Oltmann, S., Winberry, J., Yeon, J. & Zalot, A. (2023). Challenging Book Challenges: Understanding the Background, Examining "Astroturfing" as a Current Political Strategy, and Finding Ways Forward. 86th Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology. October 2023.

Colloquium Participation

ASIS&T Doctoral Colloquium

85th Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology. October 2022.

AWARDS

Annual ASIS&T SIG-IEP Best Information Ethics and Policy Paper **2021**

Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)

Doctoral Student Travel Grant **2021**

To The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)

GRANT/FELLOWSHIPS

Yonsei Honors Full Fellowship**2008-2017**

- Full tuition for the undergraduate and master's program
- A stipend for 12 semesters

RESEARCH ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE*Syracuse University***INTERCONNECTED: Library Disaster Management (Dr. Beth Patin)****2021-2022**

- Literature data collection; qualitative coding

Epistemicide (Dr. Beth Patin)**2019-2022**

- Journal article, conference paper, and book chapter manuscript writing; poster creation and presentation

TEACHING EXPERIENCE*Syracuse University – Instructor***Library Leadership and Management (online)****Fall 2023**

- Full responsibilities in leading weekly online live sessions, activities, and grading

Foundations of Research Methods in Information Studies (online)**Summer 2023**

- Full responsibilities in leading weekly online live sessions, activities, and grading

Data and Society (in-person)**Fall 2022,**

- Led weekly recitation sessions

Spring 2023

- Graded weekly assignments and long essay assignments

Syracuse University – Other

The Public Library as An Institution (Guest Lecturer) Spring 2023

- Created a lesson plan for a 3-hour lecture
- Provided a lecture about public library governance
- Led a case study of controversy at a public library system

Metadata (Guest Lecturer) Fall 2020

- Provided 2 lectures about metadata schema

Foundations of Research Methods in Information Studies (Teaching Assistant) Fall 2019

- Graded research proposal assignments

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Board of Trustees 2022-Present

Central New York Library Resources Council (CLRC)

Reference Librarian 2016-2019

Seoul National University Library, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Research Performance Management Librarian 2014-2016

Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology (UNIST) Library, Ulsan, Republic of Korea