EVOLUTION OF LIBRARIES AS COMMONS

Key characteristics and elements for the evolution of libraries as democratic infrastructures

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In the age of e-books, smartphones, firewalls, proprietary media platforms and digital rights management, of atrophying mega-bookstores, and resurgent independent bookstores, and a metastasizing Amazon; of Google Books and Google Search and Google Glass; of economic disparity and the continuing privatization of public space and services – which is simultaneously an age of democratized media production and vibrant DIY and activist cultures – libraries play a critical role as mediators, at the hub of all the hubbub. Thus, we need to understand how our libraries function as, and as part of, infrastructural ecologies – as sites where spatial, technological, intellectual and social infrastructures shape and inform one another. In addition, we must consider how those infrastructures can embody the epistemological, political, economic and cultural values we want to define our communities.

(Mattern, 2020)

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The concept of commons was re-actualized in 2009 when Elinor Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, for her research and empirical work on the commons. In the same year, we witnessed the global failure to resolve the climate change issue at the World Government Summit in Copenhagen, and only a year earlier, the global financial crisis that will cause an economic recession. In that context, the concept of commons was analyzed as a way to manage resources by community self-organization thus enabling the existence of a third model in the state-market dichotomy.

In her research, Ostrom (1990) covered hundreds of examples across the world where communities manage natural resources – pastures, fisheries, water infrastructures, agricultural and other commons. However, after this recognition, there was a surge in interest and re-search with regard to new types of commons (Hess, 2008) and within the framework of those types, various subgroups were defined depending on the resources managed by a community – urban, knowledge, cultural, digital commons, etc. (Hess, 2008; Ostrom & Hess, 2007; Harvey, 2012 and others).

It poses a great challenge to apply the commons concept to various resources, and especially as regards institutionalized practice in to-day's political-economic and social circumstances. The concept of libraries as commons is in that sense a special task, so the aim of this research is to understand various perspectives and challenges that this concept entails and provides. The focus of the research is on li-braries as learning commons – the role of the community, shaping of common spaces, both physical and virtual, as well as the possibilities of organization and management.

COMMONS

In the last ten years, commons have become the main field of action and struggle for many progressive actors, with the aim of achieving social, economic and ecological justice. The first commons on whose account societies started to organize themselves were natural commons. The research done by Elinor Ostrom (1990), towards the end of the last century, dealt precisely with communities in the field of natural commons, but it also paved the way for commons in other domains, becoming both a more actual and a more articulated alternative to capitalist relations. That is due to the fact that commons can simply be defined both as a form of ownership beyond the public-private dichotomy, as well as a type of governance beyond the state -market dichotomy.

Historically, the term commons has been used to denote natural commons, commons such as agricultural land, woods, pastures, lakes, fisheries or irrigation systems, which were used collectively until the period of enclosure, which began in the late 16th century in England. This process is connected to the appropriation of common land and its conversion into private property, which led to the abolishment of free access to these goods, as well as the abolishment of the existing forms of common ownership over them. The commons, which were collectively managed and used by farmers, were used for survival, that is to say, basic reproduction (one could go hunting, fishing, grow plants and raise cattle and collect wood), and at the same time they had a wider social function. As Federici states (2013), in addition to fostering common decision-making and cooperation, commons provided a material basis for the flourishing of solidarity and sociability within the local community. All festivities, dances and gatherings took place on common land. Marx (1967) saw the key role of enclosure in transformation from the feudal into the capitalist system, having in mind that enclosure served as the key mechanism of the original accumulation of capital, which enabled capitalist relations, and privatization of the means of production. Subsequently, Harvey (2012) recognized the concept of *enclosure* in *accumulation by dispossession,* which is a continuous process (still relevant today) of depoliticization by means of privatization of public

resources and services, applying the capitalist logic to ever new social domains (Dolenec et al., 2013).

The concept of commons, which will later be given different definitions, such as *a mode of production* (Benkler, 2004), *social process* (Linebaugh, 2007), *a mode of reproduction* (Federici, 2012), *a type of ownership* (Mattei, 2011), *social relations* (Harvey, 2012), underwent a revival in theory and practice in the last quarter of the 20th century. However, what all the forms of this phenomenon have in common pertains to three key elements: *resource, community and governance regime.* Therefore, we can say that it is *a practice of governing a resource by a community of its users:* (1) *a community* of users is most commonly formed around common interests; (2) *a resource* can be anything that can be of use to a community – whether material or non-material, natural, urban, rural; (3) whereas t*he governance regime* pertains to organization, rules and the decision-making process.

ELEMENTS OF COMMONS	GOVERNANCE	TERMINOLOGY OF COMMONS	
resource	object	common good	
community	subject	commoner	
institutions	regime	commoning	

Constitutive elements of the relational theory of commons, based on Dellenbaugh et al. (in: Tomašević, 2018, 49)

It is important to emphasize that commons are neither public nor private goods of individuals. They belong to a community that jointly establishes the rules of use and collective control. Yochai Benkler (2003) also states two additional parameters, which are relevant for the understanding of the private-common-public relations. The first parameter relates to t*he accessibility of resources* – whether the resource is open

to everyone or whether it is exclusively accessible to the members of the community that has ownership over the resource and determines the rules for managing it. The second parameter relates to *the degree of regulation,* which can range from strictly defined rules to a completely free access (open access commons) (Benkler 2003, 6-7).

Many critically oriented researchers have placed commons in a wider socio-economic context, power relations and progressive social change. Nightingale (2019) argues that commons are important for creating new political communities. Namely, if we understand commons only as a re-source shared through collective rules of governance, not directly linked to the market or the state, then they might not necessarily bring forth the desired, progressive social and political change. . In other words, an empty building that is transformed into the social community center can, for example, cause disruption to the homeless who used it as their shelter, but also to a criminal gang that used it for its own purposes. The feminist perspective reminds us to always remain aware of our own privileges and think about how open and accessible the struggles for commons and practices of commoning are, especially to those who are directly oppressed, or those whose even most immediate needs are not fulfilled: the hungry, the homeless, those persecuted on gender, religion or race (Marcuse, 2009). Hence, the critical theory relies on a strong normative dimension in order to assess the progressive value of the commons. One aspect of this dimension encompasses a set of normative criteria that corresponds to progressive values, while another aspect deals with the feminist perspective within the context of commons.

In this regard, Silke Helfrich (in: Hopkins, 2012) proposes three nor-mative criteria of the commons – *sustainable use, fairness and social control* – as progressive values directly connected to (1) material or ecological sustainability, (2) social justice through fairness and (3) democracy through social control.

NORMATIVE CRITERIA	ELEMENT OF COMMONS	PROGRESSIVE VALUE
sustainable use	resource	material, financial and ecological sustainability
fair access	community	social justice
collective control	institutions	democracy

Commons normative criteria based on S.Helfrich, with the elements of commons and progressive values (in: Tomašević et al., 2018, 51)

By using the example of local distribution of water as commons, Tomašević (2018, 50) develops the abovementioned criteria in the following manner:

1   *Sustainability* includes three aspects – material sustainable use, i.e. careful use (without causing damage to the plumbing); financial sustainability, i.e. covering managing and running costs (water distribution, to renew infrastructure connected to water); ecological sustainability in a manner that prevents overuse and pollution.

2   *Fair access* refers to a community in terms of who belongs and who does not belong to the community using and governing a resource, because commons do not necessarily have to provide open access but rather fair. As regards water distribution, that means that, in order to prevent overuse, it is necessary to limit the number of users needs, but all community members should have access, since water is a fundamental human right. Fair access then depends on the agreement made through the institutions of collective control.

3   *Social or collective control* therefore, is, connected to the resource governance rules. These rules can be formal and non-formal, but it is most important that they – in order to meet the commons normative criteria – be designed and defined by the entire community of users.

The other aspect of the normative approach stems from the feminist theory and the gender perspective, which shed light on everyday practices, social relations, spaces of creativity and social reproduction where people gather, which they share and wherein they act collectively (Federici 2012; 2019). The feminist perspective is especially important in this discourse, as it examines the structural forms of social disparities such as gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, ability and other categories. Consequently, access to resources and control over them are intersected with the feminist analysis of gender relations of power relations and disparities. A growing body of feminist political ecology refers to gender power relations shaped by everyday interaction, where power plays a role not only between the sexes, but is also an important factor in terms of class, race, culture and place, in different social-economic and cultural systems (Clement et al. 2019). In that respect, as Nightingale (2019) states, taking into consideration the political commitment to enhancing better ways of living, it is important to ensure that attempts of commoning do not produce better access to resources and their distribution among elite groups or give rise to new forms of marginalized others.

LIBRARIES AS COMMONS

The insight into contemporary resources and literature enables us to be acquainted with the terminology and ideas regarding libraries when we view them through the concept of commons. The terms most commonly used are (1) information commons; (2) learning commons; (3) learning spaces.

1   INFORMATION COMMONS

The first iterations of these goods appeared in academic libraries in the middle of the 1990s (Beagle 1999; Heitsch & Holley 2011; Sullivan 2010) owing to the advent of the World Wide Web and the development of information technology, which significantly influenced access to and exchange of information. Demas (2005) asserts that the advent and development of IT was believed to lead to digital media replacing print media, which would inevitably cause a closing of libraries. However, the emergence of this phenomenon initiated re-examining of the existing forms and upgrading the concept of libraries in the given circumstances, taking into account the challenges of a new age. Therefore, one approach refers to the definition of information commons pertaining to the intersection of the traditional services provided by physical space and IT, which used to be separate in the past (Bonnanda & Donahuea, 2016, Smith 2011; Somerville & Harlan 2008), while the other approach suggests that besides a physical space, a conceptual space of adjustment to a changeable digital environment and research methods is also important (Sullivan 2010).

Historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, in her article "Revolution in the Library" (1999), tackled the issue of how academic libraries adjust to electronic sources of knowledge within their traditional approach to providing services. The very advent of digital tools gave rise to the question of how to attract users to the libraries as a place not only to retrieve digital information but also to discuss learning experiences. Hence, in the early to mid-1990s, what would officially become known as Information Commons ("IC") helped to bridge the gap between

physical and virtual spaces. The academic libraries have since evolved as a places to experiment and gain confidence with technologies, obtain information and shape learning through an interactive process.

The Information Commons has received great attention as academic libraries have been forced to adapt to the rapidly changing technology while remaining relevant to users as places for information retrieval. The same way libraries provided users with reading rooms for accessing printed collections to carry out their work, nowadays they provide them with space for accessing digital collections to carry out their work. The Information Commons has contributed to the evolution and adaptation of the traditional library to new digital and virtual formats. The essential importance lies in bibliographical and research instructions and guidelines (Beagle, 2002), with the additional technical-technological support catering for various users' needs (Steiner & Holley, 2009).

2   LEARNING COMMOMS

At the beginning of the 2000s, the concept of learning commons started to gain momentum and became the subject of theoretical research. According to Shannon Mattern (2020), connecting libraries to the new media served the purpose of neglecting the creative potential of the less technological library resources or even of those libraries without any technological resources, reducing these institutions of learning to providers of technical services and information. In studies on the subject of libraries as commons, tensions between the two approaches were noticeable, between the library viewed as an ideal place and the virtual space of the library where the existence of a physical space is rendered superfluous (Spencer, 2006). Beagle (2002) reconciled these tensions by explaining information commons as a concept which integrates bibliographical instructions, writing aid, media assistance through networking guides and tutorials, simultaneously highlighting the importance of shaping a physical space as a place for receiving adequate assistance for using such resources. Taking into account the traditional role of libraries as service providers, it was right in

the mid - and late 2000s that the physical-virtual tension opened a space for a distinction between information commons and learning commons. In 2008, in their book "The New School Learning Commons Where Learners Win", David Loertscher, Carol Koechin and Sandi Zwaan defined learning commons as a common space, which could be both physical and virtual.

One of the key differences between information commons and learning commons is that learning commons views the user as someone who actively contributes with their knowledge and information, not just as a mere consumer of information (Turner et al. 2013). Hibert (2019), in his book "Digital Degrowth and Post-Digital Commons", highlights the importance of the transition from passive appropriation of information to active creation by direct contribution to common resources. By quoting Nancy Kranich (2017), the author emphasizes the responsibility and the role of libraries "to reclaim their intellectual assets and fulfill critical roles – the advancement of knowledge, innovation and creativity through democratic participation in free and open creation and exchange of ideas" (Kranich 2017, in: Hilbert, 2019, 88).

Bennet (2003) asserts that the concept of learning commons is an appropriate direction for the evolution of libraries because it implies a new type of education and learning, conducive to a culture of learning, instead of receiving information. This claim stems from the theory of social constructivism in learning (Matthews, Andrews & Adams, 2011), where social processes are the basis of knowledge. In that sense, knowledge is a product made by the social activity of people, and is inseparable from social action. Unlike information commons, learning commons expects the user to cooperate and participate in specific learning objectives and knowledge building (Wolfe, Naylor & Drueke, 2010). Additionally, cultural forms of a new public discourse are shaped, which simultaneously (1) identify governance models carried out by a community, (2) enable the creation of new communities based on the commons principles, and (3) represent a way people can prove their personal commitment to common resources thus showing social solidarity (Hibert, 2019).

3 LEARNING SPACES – *IT IS HARDER TO ACQUIRE NEW KNOWLEDGE WHEN THE MAIN PRINCIPLE IS "SHUSH!"* [1]

1 Mattern (2020) p. 29.

The role of physical space in responding to the needs of the users/community and in shaping knowledge, bearing in mind various learning styles and technological possibilities, inspired and sparked considerations on response to these challenges. Therefore, the key questions are:

〉 Do libraries promote collaborative learning and working and if so, how?

〉 Do they apply and combine a flexible space design and modern technology, and if so, to what extent?

〉 Do they offer services that users cannot get in other places?

Malcolm Brown and Philip Long (2006) claim it is necessary to shape a space so that it is human-centered, and flexible enough to cater to the changing needs of all users. At first sight, it sounds as something obvious but, for instance, the first incarnation of the information commons resembled static computer laboratories used to accommodate equipment and technical devices in space, and not to accommodate the needs of those using that space. However, the spaces shaped according to the users' needs are recognized as spaces where people want to spend their time, enhance, and share their knowledge.

Certain authors claim that space design affects learning behavior, and that by shaping diverse formal and informal spaces which facilitate learning, the learning itself is enhanced (Turner et al. 2013). The idea of fostering constructive learning and understanding through collaboration and interaction has initiated space shaping that is not stiff and rigid, but which enables proper conditions and promotes discussion and exchange of ideas. This is why spaces are mainly equipped as spaces for collaborative learning with high-tech features (Soderdahl, 2011), which implies:

〉 The evolution of libraries from "a book warehouse" to a multi-purpose learning resource;

〉 Inclusion of diverse support zones for supporting various learning styles;

〉 Flexibility, adaptability and diversity;

〉 Contribution to functional changes and technological progress in the future.

It is assumed that in such spaces the exchange of knowledge is based on collaborative learning, which includes many users and thus leads to increasing knowledge through human interaction with the help of available material.

As a result, the notion of learning spaces within the learning commons implies a wide range of elements for enhancing learning, through new and creative ways. We are not talking any more about a static or rigid space, but about flexible units within working spaces that are comfortable and foster interaction, use wireless communication and trigger off a sense of relaxation, curiosity and creativity. Introducing round, oval and organic shapes in decorating space – tables, sitting elements, stands and clusters – produces exactly such an effect.

If the furniture is moveable, an additional configuration of space is provided for groups of users and different size pieces are used for that purpose. In terms of spatial layout, ensuring that the central part is free has a stimulating effect, while the room boundaries are used for areas for group or individual work. Adaptability, flexibility and variety will enable adapting the space to the needs of its users with the aim of enhancing the quality of learning and the exchange of knowledge.

ADAPTABILITY	FLEXIBILITY	VARIETY
Basic structure is designed according to ergonomic principles	Enables users to change/shape the space themselves	Enables users to move through a space and change the atmosphere to enhance learning and exchange of knowledge
Using light moveable room dividers which can be used for sectioning off/ opening a space	Moveable panels, light acoustic partition screens, furniture on wheels…	Arranging the space as different zones equipped with different types of furniture
Enables changes during a specific period of time	Enables frequent changes of the ambience of a room (even on a daily basis)	Enables immediate and quick changes of the environment, which is adapted to learning activities and knowledge exchange

Designed as informal environments, libraries do not represent just a working space for some approved content and activities, but also an environment designed for people, one that fosters social learning activities (Brown & Long 2006). The availability of food and drinks, comfortable chairs and furniture, which stimulates various types of learning and activities, are key in shaping a space, because an individual is at the center of space design for learning, while libraries are unique places, laboratories for writing, research and group work.

TRADITIONAL LIBRARY	LIBRARY AS COMMONS
retreiving information	creating content
individual work	collaborative work
individual learning support	integrated learning support
fixed workin space	flexible working space
no food or drinks	cybercafe
silence	conversation

SPATIAL ASPECTS – PRINCIPLES AND DIRECTIONS IN SHAPING SPACE

Bryan Sinclair (2007) adheres to the following five guiding principles pertinent to libraries as commons:

〉 **Open**

〉 **Flexible – free space arrangement**

〉 **Comfortable**

〉 **Inspiring**

〉 **Practical**

Open refers to the unconfined and cross-disciplinary nature of the space. It refers to both design of the space and the conceptual layout. In terms of design, he implies separating spaces if it is necessary to physically separate some areas, and that should be done by using transparent or semi-transparent screens, while in terms of conceptual sense he implies combining various disciplines in exchange of ideas.

Flexible refers to untethered organization of space, made possible by wireless networks, so that a working space is flexible and mobile, instead of being a fixed workstation. This type of information transfer gives users the freedom to explore and learn anywhere within that space, to group themselves as they see fit and not as decided for them.

The space must also be *comfortable* and designed for many types of users and learning styles, not just one. The furniture needs to be comfortable, light and mobile so that it could easily be moved and create an atmosphere conducive to group or individual work.

In addition to being comfortable, the space should be *inspiring*, which means that the furnishings, equipment, layout and design should pres-

ent a uniform and consistent vision of functionality, sophistication and creativity. Sinclair (2007) also stresses the importance of artwork (paintings, photographs, sculptures and other media) displayed in and around the space which could inspire users to tap into their own creative impulses.

Finally, *practical* refers to providing a place where real work can be done and real learning can take place. Its layout and design rely on principles that recognize the real needs of users and facilitate interaction, but also enable individual work and learning.

In addition to the abovementioned principles, Brown and Long (2006) also name three basic directions in library design:

1   Design whose basic objective is to foster collaborative and active learning;

2   Human-centered design focused on people's needs;

3   Owning and using various resources and technologies to enrich learning.

1   FOSTERING COLLABORATIVE AND ACTIVE LEARNING

The traditional layout of the library is very often characterized by uniformity and equal approach to all users, regardless of their individual unique needs and learning styles. However, the contemporary approaches to knowledge exchange rely on the trend of collaborative and active learning provided by space design, flexible layout, furniture arrangement, resources and technologies for receiving and exchanging knowledge.

Spaces that encourage user participation become increasingly important for active learning and mutual interaction and engagement. Numerous researches tackling different ways of learning and exchang-

ing knowledge confirm that spaces which are somewhat more informal become exactly the spaces with a significant role of catalysis in interactive and engaged learning. For example, interactions such as discussions, round tables, debates and teamwork enhance learning, and the design supporting these processes is the one that enables a working space to quickly and easily configure to user needs (Brown & Long, 2006).

2   HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN FOCUSED ON PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Demas (2005) sees libraries as intellectual and social commons, actively suggesting a strong role and contribution of a community in their development. Consequently, the shaping of library space as a commons depends on all the participants involved in the process, the staff, librarians, users and designers. All these groups jointly develop the spaces they are going to use, in accordance with their own various needs. Planning and designing the library space as a commons will also include joint efforts on the part of users, designers and staff to create an environment, which has a holistic approach to learning spaces and provides an ecosystem, which encourages productive interaction between those using that space. The role of a designer is to identify and implement what future users want within the space for collaborative and active learning and exchange. It is precisely in this way that an increased humanization of the space is achieved, whereas focus on real needs leads to a human-centered design.

However, it is necessary to emphasize the challenges that lie in this approach, which one should bear in mind. The first one presupposes conceiving of a way to map out all those needs, that is to say, to enable all the different actors to express their views and create a space that promotes this kind of participation in future design. A precondition for designing a common space is a common understanding and identifying programs, styles and ways of learning, working habits and activities that a space can provide. This kind of mapping will lead to a synthesis of materials and the definition of the project task, which

will incorporate all the wishes and needs. Defining future activities will be critical in making a distinction between a *successfully designed space for active learning and collaborative work,* on the one hand, and *a space where activities are just taking place,* on the other. Once the activities and wishes pertinent to the design are known and prioritized, it is possible to get down to designing a space. The other challenge is in forming a team that monitors, leads and actively responds to all segments of designing a space until the final outcome. In any kind of creation of a space, we must inevitably expect there will be potential problems, which occur when an idea becomes a reality. It is necessary to form a team then, which will be responsible for solving unexpected situations, composed of delegated representatives of various groups that have been involved in the process of defining a project task. This kind of involvement throughout the process evokes a feeling of "commoning" in an individual, a greater sense of responsibility and participation, which subsequently contributes to a greater level of engagement in library activities and programs.

Numerous authors see community engagement in the process of designing both physical and virtual space as crucial (Bickford & Wright, 2006). The traditional approach to space design implies that only experts can deal with certain areas of their expertise – teaching staff and librarians develop curricula, programs and plans; the IT sector is in charge of technological decisions, designers are responsible for shaping spaces, etc. However, according to Boyer and Mitgang (1996), it is quite common that academic and professional affiliation leads to fragmentation of knowledge and "territoriality". Even though such specialization of knowledge has given rise to innovations, the full power and potential of harmonizing knowledge and collaborative learning is undervalued (Boyer & Mitgang, 1996). Only by a comprehensive approach and application of different types of knowledge can a space be shaped to reflect various needs, thus refuting the idea that there exists a unique and universal solution that suits everyone.

Finally, such an approach provides far more freedom in creating one's own profile of the space based on user preferences, as well as on com-

munity users' articulated needs, interests and wishes. Libraries designed through this process form a social community in which the interaction is based on joint activities and recognition of the right to social and physical space.

3   OWNING AND USING RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES TO ENRICH LEARNING

The pace of technological changes affects the infrastructure that libraries can provide in due course, which is directly related to the type of services they offer to their users. It certainly includes users' personal portable devices such as laptops, tablets or other types of gadgets. However, adapting to needs also includes owning personal infrastructure for knowledge exchange support – from introducing special screens for content sharing to appropriate software available to users.

Nevertheless, besides technological innovations and trend adjustment, it is also necessary to think about other resources that foster learning. Some of the examples could be (1) examples of urban gardens for school students and other users, (2) an open calendar model to access resources and suggested activities, and/or (3) makerspace, - are just some of the suggestions that could make the library space more interactive and towards the space of communing .

Urban gardening is not just about cultivation of food and plants, but it represents an educational tool, which is a precondition for a sustainable urban environment, people's health and culture of living (Krasny et al., 2014). In developed countries, urban gardens are presented as part of a wider international movement aimed at raising awareness of social and environmental issues (Lyndon, 2012; Krasny et al., 2014). Besides their educational character, the aesthetic nature of urban gardens should be taken into account in terms of inspiring and relaxing green ambiences, which could be of a particular purpose for library space. They could be created on roofs, panels, in sacks, aquariums or pots. In Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam and other European cities ur-

ban gardening has grown into obligatory eco gardens near schools where students eat vegetables they have grown, while learning about nutrition and sustainable growth. Since such spaces could be decorated by all users, but also by the local community, they have a direct impact on enhancing the quality of living and collaborative action of the local community and various experts (Lyndon, 2012; Krasny et al., 2014). Thus numerous examples point to a multisectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation between different actors – the local community, activists, architects, urbanists, biologists, but also to specific types of support from the local self-management (Lyndon, 2012; Krasny et al., 2014).

Open calendar, that is to say, an open invitation to users to propose programs and take initiative in creating contents, is a tool that can be online or offline, within which it is possible to write down or enter a proposal for an activity, which would be taking place in the library. If it is online, there is a series of platforms, which enable this type of service; if it is offline, it is enough to designate a place within that space where users can leave their proposals. Activities and programs can range from public programs aimed at a wider public (lectures, film projections, book promotions) to programs aimed at a small group of users (reading sessions, discussion groups, etc.).

Each calendar entry presupposes the following information such as:

⟩   The name of the event;

⟩   Date and time;

⟩   Room or part of the room; in some cases, it could be
        an outdoor place;

⟩   Name and contact of the organizer/proposer of the activity;

⟩   Type of event;

⟩   Description of the event.

Recent studies on the evolution of academic and other libraries deal with the emergence of the makerspace, which is defined as "an environment for collaborative learning where people gather, exchange tools and materials and learn new skills. In these spaces the emphasis is not on the actual space or set of materials, but on cooperation and creation" (Turner et al., 2013). Namely, a makerspace is a workspace open to the whole community, and it is used as an open laboratory for those who have specific ways of learning or wish to realize their idea. In such spaces, there are technical materials, tools, workspaces, computers and expert assistance throughout the whole process – from the idea to its realization. Users of the space have open access to all the contents, ranging from the library to the equipment and are completely free to use all the available resources. They are open to children, artists, creatives, adults, entrepreneurs and offer a wide range of equipment – from 3D printers, CNC machines, scanners to simple tools.

Therefore, learning commons enable users (Rocky View Schools, 2020):

〉   To create their own learning spaces;

〉   A dynamic learning space with mutual interaction;

〉   Access to different resources:

— Human: Staff that facilitate access to knowledge

— Content: spatial, printed, digital and other resources

〉   Cooperation with others;

〉   To create content and activities;

〉   To network and share content and knowledge.

In the context of the key characteristics and the spatial aspect, the difference between the traditional library and the library as a commons is shown in the following table (Rocky View Schools, 2020):

TRADITIONAL LIBRARY

〉 **Defined physical space with fixed working hours**

〉 **Unique functioning model which recognizes a universal user**

〉 **Material on anchored shelves, the essence in the printed material**

〉 **Limited choice within research process and learning**

〉 **Librarians responsible for curriculum and program development**

〉 **Librarians manage learning resources**

〉 **Library is a quiet place for reading and learning**

〉 **Access to technology and physical resources is made on special request**

〉 **Spaces used for access to resources or borrowing them**

〉 **Computing spaces are clearly defined**

〉 **The internet and technology are not used in full capacity**

〉 **Presupposes both physical and virtual space**

〉 **Space in which the user community actively participates**

〉 **Collaborative learning is in focus**

〉 **Space design which implies different learning styles**

〉 **Flexibility in physical design of space – movable panels, furniture (chairs, shelves, tables) and new technology**

〉 **Different resources available**

〉 **Integrated collection of print, non-print and digital material**

〉 **Mutual interaction and knowledge exchange creating a new kind of knowledge**

〉 **Fostering a cooperative culture**

〉 **Flexibility in booking and accessing material and resources – an open door policy or an open calendar policy**

〉 **Application of online system of resource management, making access possible 24/7**

〉 **Encouraging interaction and discussion as mechanisms for active learning and engagement**

〉 **Application and use of additional resources aimed at knowledge development support**

〉 **Direct link to resources**

〉 **Team approach**

〉 **Spaces for collaborative learning in combination with spaces for individual learning**

〉 **Spaces that enable use of various learning materials – digital, textile, metal, wood, paper, plastic, etc.**

Learning commons are flexible spaces where experimentation, research and creation of content and activities are evident. These spaces enable users to interact and exchange knowledge, engage in critical thinking and active learning in an environment enriched with information, various resources and technological solutions. Given that, it is necessary to find ways:

1   to build a community that will enable creating space for collaborative and active learning (and conversely, how the design of space will impact community development);

2   to foster community development and information and knowledge exchange through technology;

3   to engage the community in designing curriculum and education programs and content.

COMMUNITY

In the discourse on commons, the community represents one of the three key elements – the community, a resource and institutions (norms and rules). There are different types of communities, from traditional to geographic ones, but the community can also be interpreted as a group of people who share the same values, norms and needs. Common need is exactly the reason that makes people unite and develop common norms for governing and using a resource they consider to be a commons (Tomašević et al, 2018). In learning commons, a community is a group of people concentrated around common values, purpose and agreement concerning some goals. The notion of community refers here to the social context of those using that space in its broadest sense. Peck (1993) defined a community as "a group of people whose members committed themselves to mutual communication at a deeper and more authentic level." A real community, however, exists only when its members interact in a meaningful way

that deepens their understanding, builds trust and achieves collaborative learning. The community within the framework of learning commons has the potential to shape various types of learning and knowledge exchange, thus creating an atmosphere that is inspiring and different in terms of quality. Namely, the qualitatively different learning implies, not the acquisition of skills and information, but the collective creation of knowledge through exchange, encouragement, mentorship and understanding of the different perspectives of an increasingly diverse membership (Bickford & Wright, 2006).

Furthermore, research on the learning theory, the ways the brain works, collaborative learning and student engagement; have shown that people learn best in a community (Bickford & Wright, 2006). Within learning commons, the community paradigm is the one that focuses on social interaction and knowledge enhancement through collaborative learning and exchange. On that account, it is necessary to examine the role of the virtual and physical space of the library as the key element of this paradigm. Bickford and Wright (2006) suggest three strategic levers for community building using library resources:

〉   Improving the learning spaces;

〉   Using information technology to enhance communication and collaboration;

〉   Involving community in shaping pedagogical and curricular environments.

The authors point out that learning commons nurture and encourage networking rather than compartmentalization, and that in learning commons a community includes librarians and users (of different age groups, interests and affiliations), experts, researchers, students, architects, technologists and other stakeholders willing to participate in the process of dialogue and library design (Bickford & Wright, 2006). Such a definition of the community stems from the view that it is impossible to design spaces for efficient learning and collabo-

rative work unless the value of each actor's essential input is recognized. Additionally, such an approach will be conducive to a better understanding of different perspectives and experiences, which will promote a different kind of learning, team learning that is shared among the team members, thus contributing to far-reaching changes in education (Bickford & Wright, 2006).

Shannon Mattern (2020), in her book "Library as Infrastructure", emphasizes the role of the library as social infrastructure in the development of knowledge and a community. The author stresses the spatial factor in the age of rapid digital advancement, the importance of space, which shows openness and can be shaped in such a manner to provide a community with an opportunity to reflect its own character. The examples that she draws on are mainly from the United States where libraries have an essential role in the life of community [2]. Jesse Hicks and Julie Dressner (2014) point out those libraries in New York evolved into social centers, offering a wide range of services and programs, so that in the last decade the circulation of books has surged up 46 percent, annual visits by 59 percent, and program visits even by 88 percent. Within the Gould Library in the USA, poetry readings frequently take place, as well as author events, debates, concerts or discussion groups organized by the librarians in cooperation with students, faculty and community members (Sullivan, 2010). Demas (2005) compares this wide range of activities that libraries can offer with the role of the Mouseion at Alexandria – the home of music, poetry, exhibition activities and a library.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The initial steps in community engagement and empowerment can be taken through research, giving users the opportunity to participate in the contents and activities themselves. Namely, within the study/ questionnaire, which could be both online and offline, the key needs (previously defined) of different target, groups can be mapped out.

It is necessary to discover which types of institutional and non-institutional activities the users see as part of a library, for what age groups, whether it relates just to cultural content or there is interest in organizing events dealing with local issues, for example. Focus groups could be organized as consultations with the users, but also for gathering information on their needs. The intention is to work with different target groups: youth, middle-aged people, parents, the elderly, marginalized groups, also artists and cultural workers, i.e. those target groups that could potentially contribute to the future activities and contents of libraries. The aim of these consultations is to determine:

〉 Which needs should libraries meet?

〉 Which contents are necessary/desirable?

〉 In what way is it possible to involve people?

〉 What is the potential of the library space in terms of enhancing the quality of life in the local community?

〉 How do the users see the contents of libraries, their organization and governance?

〉 In what way and to what extent are they prepared and willing to get involved?

If such initial steps are taken, it will be easier to direct further possibilities and activities for community empowerment and engagement, to give the intersection of needs, also having in mind the degree of user interest in being more actively involved. Several world libraries have implemented continued engagement processes into design. Through its cooperation with the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library, the University of Michigan has taken the opportunity to use the founding of the gallery for community building. In their cooperation with the campus and the local community, the library today sets up student exhibitions,

organizes lectures and contents based on the proposals put forward during consultations and cooperation with other actors (Stuart 2009). Similarly, the Saltire Centre Library in Glasgow has opened up the possibility to propose programs for its users (Howden, 2008). Beagle argues that such approaches promote social inclusion and create a community sentiment in the community, which is simultaneously learning actively (2006), because learning commons themselves have the potential to create and contribute to a social dimension of learning.

It is important to emphasize that encouraging people to participate in collaborative decision-making or program and space shaping could be very exhausting, especially in the initial stages, but later on it contributes to a sense of collective and shared responsibility. As Margaret Wheatley (1992) pointed out, one cannot expect people to respond to individual matters and assume responsibility, if they were not involved in creating ideas from the very beginning and did not see the process of shaping as something they are committed to. Achieving participation and fostering mutual cooperation is vital for prompting people to action to their fullest capacity, which consequently leads to change.

Nonetheless, cultural differences among community members should not be disregarded, especially when followed by different positions of power and hierarchy. In that case, these positions may significantly affect the dynamics of engagement, the participation in decision-making or expressing personal opinions. In such situations, it often occurs that individuals either exclude or restrict themselves, or the powers that be do not appreciate other people's opinions and ignore them. Only when community develops mechanisms to allow its members space for equal participation and exchange of even opposing views and positions and raises awareness of certain issues, will it reach its full potential.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The notion of libraries as commons, besides the change of the above-mentioned patterns, will also affect the change of the organizational structure of the institution, which will consequently lead to a change in governance and programming. The most prevalent types of libraries are either (1) private initiatives/non-institutionalized – through the private sector or organizations and associations from the field of culture, whose programs are financed from private sources or public funds; or (2) public institutions/institutionalized – established, funded and governed by the local management unit or by the state. However, the commons narrative imposes forms of restoring the collective in governing the infrastructure and resources. In her work, Ostrom (1990) proved that is possible to govern different resources successfully by self-organization of citizens, and that it represents "the third approach" in the state-market dichotomy regarding management, and in the private-public dichotomy regarding ownership.

Governance, i.e. institutions, are the third and most complex element of the commons, which should be understood as (Tomašević et al., 2018, 48):

> "Recurring social practices by users related to some resource governed as commons. Institutions are at the same time "rules" that constrain users' behaviour and "organisations", entities that users establish for some collective goals. Institutions are designed and implemented by communities in order to use the resource in a way that optimally benefits all users and prevents overusing, underusing and abusing."

It is important to emphasize that commons, in terms of governance, should not be understood as something that functions *outside* the state or the market, since that is simply not possible. All contemporary examples of commons are on the territories controlled by the state, and at the same time within capitalist states, so it is impossible to avoid the influence of state institutions and market conditions. Yet, the

very regime of governing over resources is different from the one set up by the state or the market (Ostrom, 1990; Tomašević et al., 2018).

The commons discourse represents a basis for democratic innovations, so it is possible to consider hybrid models, which include, but also bypass the state and the market, which implies innovations limited by the legal or institutional framework. One of the examples is a civil-public partnership – a collaborative action aimed at a more efficient and enhanced public resource management. By sharing responsibility in governance, a new structure model of resource use is established. Various examples show that this model may be established at the initiative of both sectors, while responsibilities are defined by clearly set rules, tasks and legislative frameworks. Also, numerous authors (Petrović, 2012; Mišković et al., 2015; SEEDS, 2015) suggest that the development of civil-public partnership and co-governance is influenced by a set of legal, planned, political, economic and notional instruments which should be brought to our attention: (1) laws, rules, decisions; (2) development plans and strategies; (3) material support and sources of funds; (4) information access; (5) meeting and cooperation opportunities between the civil and the public sector – public discussions, workshops, various events; and (6) further education of both sectors regarding possible cooperation models and modes. It should be stressed that in different local contexts there appear certain challenges in a political and professional sense, as well as a series of obstacles through institutions (Carmin, 2010), but also challenges in the community reflected in the citizens' lack of trust in such arrangements, the very institutions and their willingness to engage in this kind od democratic innovation (Petrović, 2012).

One of the first examples of a hybrid institution in the region is the establishment of Pogon – Zagreb Center for Independent Culture and Youth, where the associations gathered around the Alliance Operation City in cooperation with the City of Zagreb, founded the institution based on civil-public partnership [3]. The role of the City is to ensure (1) appropriate spaces, (2) the basic resources for the operational activities of Pogon and implementation of programs, as well as (3) public

monitoring of the use of funds and operations of the center as a public institution. The role of the Alliance is based on several elements: (1) connecting two subsectors of civil society — independent culture and youth, which is ensured through program management and participation of organizations in the Alliance, and is defined by Memorandum of Association, (2) ensuring programs which will be taking place in Pogon providing financial means from domestic and foreign funds, and (3) on defining Pogon as an institution that manages several locations — a polilocation characteristic, which succeeds in meeting various needs of youth and stakeholders from the field of independent culture (Višnjić, 2013). Pogon represents one of the key examples in Croatia and the region, which opened space for a reconsideration of institutional arrangements and democratic innovations in management.

As in the case of Pogon, civil-public partnership models imply clearly defined roles, rules and responsibilities between the involved partners. In addition, they do not necessarily refer to only one possible model, but a set of relations between the involved partners (Mišković et al., 2015, 63):

〉 **Hybridization model** – public-civil partnership in cofounding and comanaging a new joint institution, which takes on the role of public resource management.

〉 **Joint management model** – founding a collaborative institution for public resources management with an equal number of public and civil sector representatives.

〉 **Collaborative governance model** – partnership between a public institution and a certain number of civil society organizations with the aim of collaborative governance.

⟩ **Extended cooperation model** – public-civil cooperation is established exclusively on the level of providing the civil sector with public resources to manage and use for a definite period of time, free of charge, on condition that the public sector covers part of material expenses of using the infrastructure, while the civil sector ensures that the spatial resource has a public purpose (cultural and social).

⟩ **The new public culture model** – transformation of the existing centralized model of governance of public cultural institutions into establishing a democratized governance structure. Including representatives of civil society organizations in membership of management boards would ensure the participation of various actors in the governance structure.

These models do not provide rigid and exact directions for developing collaborative governance, but serve to inspire and empower stakeholders. Hence, when we refer to co-governance, we have in mind the organizational governance system, which will enable a greater level of community participation, enabling it to make decisions about the resources used. It concerns very complex processes and challenging ventures that require a series of resources, among them human resources, as well as a high level of motivation to engage in this process. It also implies regulating the issue of power and accountability, the manner of decision-making, the needs and specific nature of the local context and social conditions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FURTHER RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Libraries as commons are a relatively new phenomenon, not just in Croatia but also in the whole region, and the final part of the research focuses on some issues with the aim of referring to further directions for research development and addressing this topic. In spite of the fact, that the constituent elements of commons are resource, community and governance, which are inseparable, they could also be viewed simultaneously as independent, because they may be influenced by external and other factors, or changes that affect them – (1) change of the user community that occurs with age, while the resource and governance institutions still remain the same, (2) change of institutional arrangements, while the community and resource do not change, or (3) change of resource, while the community and manner of governance still remain the same. In that context, the said questions should not be viewed as rigid directions and simultaneous categories, but as a collective exercise, or a framework, inspiration and a starting point for consideration.

RESOURCE

Space

〉 Which functions of space are most important and should be supported?

〉 Which new functions could a space have?

〉 Is there a possibility of a different design of space within the library?

〉 How is the typology of space defined (common, open, closed, individual, multifunctional)?

〉 What are the rules for using the space?

Kolekcija

〉 How is your collection organized?

〉 Does it include both print and digital resources?

〉 In what manner?

〉 Is the community involved in designing the collection?

〉 Is the collection available to everyone?

Technology

〉 In what way does the space support the developing technology?

〉 Which devices and software do you have in your space?

〉 What needs to be technologically improved?

Other resources

〉 What other resources do you own?

〉 Are you prepared to introduce new resources and which?

COMMUNITY

〉 Who comprises the community?

〉 How do we promote its engagement?

〉 In which spheres of work and organizational structure?

〉 Is there any possibility of proposing programs and activities?

〉　　　If so, what are the criteria?

〉　　　In what way are programs and contents defined?

GOVERNANCE

〉　　　Who are the actors involved?

〉　　　What is the distribution of responsibility between the actors?

〉　　　How are decisions made?

〉　　　Who makes the decisions?

〉　　　How are communication flows between the actors defined?

〉　　　How are manners of working defined?

This study has developed as part of the online symposium "Libraries as Commons", under the initiative of Goethe-Institut Kroatien, in co-operation with the collective Ministry of Space from Belgrade, held in November 2020.

The aim of this symposium was to promote discussion on the concept of commons in the context of libraries and open space for exchange of ideas and examples of good practice of enhancing the work process, production and life in community. The aim of the conference was to present to the participants and familiarize them with models of libraries as commons and the aspects that such conceptualization implies (physical, educational, organizational, governmental, digital), as well as initiate debate on establishing these models in the local context, on their enhancement and support to these models.

PROGRAM, 3 NOVEMBER 2020

9.00 – 9.30
Welcome and program presentation,
Snježana Božin, Goethe Institut Kroatien

09.30 – 10.00
Libraries as Commons – Introduction and Contextualization,
Iva Čukić, Ministry of Space

10.00 – 10.45
Commons and Democratic Innovations,
Vedran Horvat, Institute for Political Ecology

11.15 – 12.00
Common Sets of Tactical Connections,
Mario Hibert, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo

13.00 – 13.45
*Digital Public Library: A Cultural-Technological
Transformation Which Never Occurred?,*
Tomislav Medak, Multimedia Institute (MI2)

13.45 – 14.30
*Accessible to Everyone? A Few Theses on a Universal
Approach to Knowledge and Space,*
Dubravka Sekulić, Royal College of Art London

15.00 – 16.00
Libraries as Commons – Presenting the Research,
Iva Čukić, Ministry of Space

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