THIRD PLACES AND EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE:
PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Katja Thiele and Britta Klagge

Summary: Public libraries play an important role in supporting and safeguarding educational justice and societal participation. The so-called third place – with the home as the first place and the school or workplace as the second place – forms a central support structure beyond formal educational institutions. The corona crisis forced public libraries to close temporarily, adapt their services, and develop new formats. This article analyzes these latest developments in Germany and Europe, illustrating the challenges public libraries are facing as a result of the corona crisis. The main research focus is on public libraries' recent transformation – not only during the corona crisis – and its implications for safeguarding educational justice. This study will discuss the challenges posed by these developments based on the case of the German city of Bonn, thereby illustrating the importance of public libraries' geography in strengthening educational justice.

Zusammenfassung: Öffentliche Bibliotheken spielen eine wichtige Rolle für die Gewährleistung von Bildungsgerechtigkeit und gesellschaftlicher Teilhabe. Als so genannte dritte Orte – neben dem Zuhause als first place und Schule oder Arbeitsplatz als second place – bilden sie eine zentrale Unterstützungsstruktur jenseits formaler Bildungseinrichtungen. Die Corona-Krise zwang öffentliche Bibliotheken zur vorübergehenden Schließung, zur Anpassung ihrer Angebote und zur Entwicklung neuer Formate. Der Artikel analysiert diese jüngsten Entwicklungen in Deutschland und Europa und stellt die Herausforderungen dar, denen öffentliche Bibliotheken als Folge der Corona-Krise gegenüberstehen. Der Schwerpunkt der Analyse liegt auf dem jüngsten Wandel öffentlicher Bibliotheken - nicht nur während der Corona-Krise – und dessen Auswirkungen auf die Gewährleistung von Bildungsgerechtigkeit. Die daraus resultierenden Herausforderungen werden am Beispiel der deutschen Stadt Bonn diskutiert und verdeutlichen die Relevanz einer Geographie öffentlicher Bibliotheken für deren Beitrag zu mehr Bildungsgerechtigkeit.

Keywords: public libraries, third places, educational justice, digitization, COVID-19, corona crisis, Bonn, Germany

1　Introduction

As COVID-19 began spreading across Germany in March 2020, it quickly became clear that the virus would lead to far-reaching consequences in the operation of public institutions. For instance, kindergartens and schools were among the first facilities to be closed, as were public libraries. Serious restrictions on public life suddenly turned them into "deserted spaces" (Schuster 2020, own translation). Despite successive rounds of easing restrictions since May 2020, most libraries remained partially closed. Similar developments were observed in other European countries and have reignited the debate on digitization and the necessity of maintaining physical spaces for libraries, which has been partly driven by municipal budget cuts and austerity measures (Thiele 2020, 4f).

Contrary to the view that library services can be delivered online, modern library science considers public libraries as third places of nonformal educa-

tion (Aabø and Audunson 2012). Outside the home (first place) and the school or workplace (second place), they serve as spaces for meetings and discussions among people and provide a support structure for educational justice and societal participation (Huebener and Schmitz 2020, 5; Mills and Kraftl 2014). The closure of public libraries is a problem specifically for users whose own homes do not provide conditions conducive to successful participation in educational processes. Nevertheless, assessing COVID-19's societal impact on global development in the coming decades remains quite premature. With regard to public libraries, however, recent evidence suggests that the corona crisis might accelerate digitization and the dismantling of the physical library space, with potentially negative impacts on societal participation in public libraries.

This article's main focus is on the implications of public libraries' recent transformation - especially during the corona crisis - and the challenges posed by these developments specifically to the safe-

guarding of educational justice. We will begin with a discussion of recent changes and restructurings in European public libraries before and during the corona crisis (section 2). Afterward, we will examine what kind of role third places play in educational justice, how public libraries function as third places, and how the corona crisis has affected them (section 3). This study will adopt a qualitative methodology and present a case study of Bonn (section 4), whose library network will be used to illustrate the value of the geography of public libraries in understanding their contributions to educational justice, and analyze relevant changes during the corona crisis (section 5). Finally, the article will then summarize key insights and provide an outlook for future challenges involving public libraries (section 6).

2 Public libraries: restructuring and changes before and during the corona pandemic

Public libraries are important places for the information society and are significantly affected by the growing importance of digitization (Aabø and Audunson 2012; Rasmussen 2016). As a response, they have, over the last two decades, restructured their services, expanded their digital infrastructures, and introduced new channels to reach users. Besides digitization, a second main driver of change in public libraries has been the neoliberalization of cities since the 1990s, which is associated with the implementation of perpetually new budget consolidation programs (Heinz 2018). The negative effects on the provision of welfare services and social and other infrastructures are discussed as processes of "austerity urbanism" (Davies and Blanco 2017; Peck 2015). As voluntary services, public libraries have in many cases been severely affected by austerity programs and budget cuts (Fig. 1). Hence, they have been forced to work with greater efficiency and cost-mindfulness and have reduced on-site services and opening hours (Düren et al. 2017).

Furthermore, in light of digitization, the necessity of public libraries as physical spaces has become a perpetual topic of discussion (Michnik 2014; Thiele 2020). In response, public libraries reinforced their efforts to make their offerings more visible and heighten their image and role as third places (Aabø and Audunson 2012; Rasmussen 2016). Many of them have succeeded in developing new content and formats typically through investments in buildings and furnishing but also via modern technologies, media offerings, and diverse programs and courses to raise their profile (ibid.). Many municipalities have
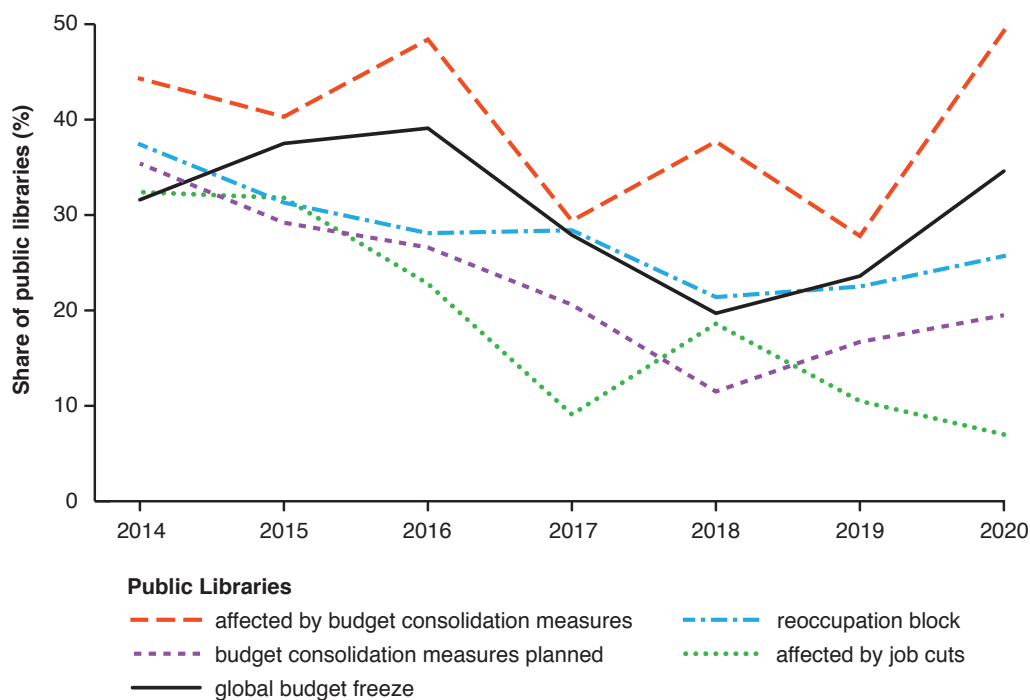

Fig. 1: Financial situation of public libraries in German cities with over 100,000 inhabitants (based on data from DBV E.V. 2015–2020)

positively acknowledged these efforts, and public libraries in Germany, after suffering from major cuts in the aftermath of the 2008/9 financial crisis, have seen their financial situation somewhat improve in the second half of the 2010s (Fig. 1). Still, in 2019 there was a high percentage of libraries acutely affected by budget consolidation measures or subjected to global budget freezes (27.8% and 23.6%, respectively). In 2020, when Germany's financial situation worsened again, public libraries were seriously disrupted in their activities and struggled to adapt to changing COVID-19 safety measures.

In early March 2020, official measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 throughout Europe included the closure of library buildings. The National Authorities on Public Libraries in Europe (NAPLE 2020a, 2020b), a European nongovernmental association, issued two reports in April and July 2020 to its 20 member countries, covering the developments during and directly after the first wave of the pandemic.[1] More detailed information are available for Great Britain from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP; Poole 2020) and Libraries Connected (2020a, 2020b) as well as studies by the Carnegie UK Trust (Pekacar and Peachey 2020; Peachey 2020a, 2020b, 2020c), which will be cited below.

Between March and May 2020, the 20 NAPLE member countries observed some version of the following three developments: One of the first government strategies to prevent the spread of the virus included closing the majority of the physical premises of public libraries in Europe (NAPLE 2020a, 2f), followed by a shift toward expanding digital services (see below). Special challenges arose with a return to the model of the public library as a physical location that can accept in-person visitors. The potential for reopening depended heavily on local circumstances (capacity, personnel situation, etc.) and municipal safety concepts. Because many large cities feature a local library network with one central and several decentral libraries, these cities were more likely to identify specific library branches that could reopen relatively quickly and offer on-site services, which were severely weakened compared with

their prepandemic levels, often involving only loans and returns of analog media such as books and CDs. Many municipalities established new procedures for contactless returns and loans of physical library materials (ibid., 5f; Fig. 2). Some communities offered persons in at-risk groups the additional opportunity of a book delivery service. These new infrastructures involved unplanned costs for media and technology, staff, and digital security and further strained already scarce municipal budgets.

Second, the suspension of physical access to public libraries is a natural consequence of the continued expansion of digital services and intensified social media use in PR work (NAPLE 2020a, 7ff, 12). Because physical loans are currently only available with restrictions, the expansion, and development, of new online services is being emphasized more than ever. This includes online loans of electronic media (e.g., e-books, e-magazines) via in-house plat-

Fig. 2: Return and pickup station at the central library in Bonn, installed in May 2020 (photo: Britta Klagge, May 2020)

---

[1] NAPLE member countries are Belgium (Flanders), Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The reports summarized responses from the national authorities and library associations to NAPLE via spreadsheets and e-mails.

forms (see here and in the following box with examples, #1), the loosening of restrictions to digital content access (free use or minimal hurdles), and the expansion of license purchases. In addition, in-house streaming services (for films, series, and livestreams of events) have been developed, as have completely new multimedia content such as video tutorials (#2), podcasts (#3), online language courses, digital storytelling workshops, gaming offerings, and book recommendations on YouTube (#4). DEEG (2020) described a related shift by libraries toward greater service offers and customer (instead of collection) orientation: Libraries are themselves becoming developers of special offers and events instead of being mere lenders of media. Websites, mailing lists, and social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are being used as channels for keeping information about cultural and assistance offerings accessible to users and for engaging them in dialog – on the one hand, simply to reach them, and on the other, to increase the library's visibility as a public institution (#5). Furthermore, local governments are using the online presence of their public libraries to address the populace and disseminate information regarding key COVID-19 developments.

Third, the corona pandemic has massively changed the work routines of library employees (NAPLE 2020a, 4f). The majority of public library staff have suddenly been forced to work from home and develop innovative ideas from there. Little to no archival work or collection maintenance has taken place. Where possible, plans have been developed in accordance with applicable COVID-19 safety ordinances to allow some employees to resume work at the libraries and begin reopening in stages, with the goal of restoring on-site services. Such steps include shift-based staffing and experiments with new library models (#6). While Europe has to date seen few incidents of staff reductions, some countries (including France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and the UK) have reported reassigning library employees from their usual work to COVID-19-related activities (NAPLE 2020a, 5; POOLE 2020). In England, for example, library employees were redeployed to support the National Health Service (NHS) in isolating and caring for at-risk persons and staffing telephone services for communal administrations (POOLE 2020). Against this backdrop, some staff expressed concerns that not all of them would be allowed to resume their library duties once the corona crisis has been averted (NAPLE 2020a, 4). Such reservations are justified to the extent that these measures correspond with developments that have been observed before the crisis, when budgets for public libraries in many municipalities were tightened (DÜREN et al. 2017, 477f).

Between May and July 2020, most countries gradually reopened their library buildings and hence repeatedly adapted to local and especially national guidelines (NAPLE 2020b, 1). While from March to mid-May most libraries offered only limited service via pickup systems, from mid-May to early June many of them resumed public access to library buildings (including access to collections)

Box: Selected examples of the development of online services during the corona crisis

#1 In Spain, electronic loans offered by virtual platforms (such as eBiblio, eFilm, and Tumblebooks) led to a rapid rise in user numbers (NAPLE 2020, 9).

#2 A good example can be seen in YouTube videos published by the Stadtbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, in which Nao Robotor explains the new rules for the state-run library (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m24G8M3qnX4&t=3s).

#3 Recent years have seen several podc asts founded in the German library space: M (Münchner Stadtbibliothek), BibCast (Stadtbibliothek Chemnitz), and BücherRausch (Städtische Bibliotheken Dresden).

#4 Since the start of the corona crisis, the British organizations CILIP and Libraries Connected have been offering a shared "National Shelf Service" service (daily e-book recommendations by librarians) on their YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPUIqlJM0aieXdq-LxKDvWA/live).

#5 On Twitter, many hashtags are currently used to stir conversations on developments in Germany, both among library personnel and users: #BibchatDE, #BibliothekenSindDa, #twittothek, #LiteraturGesucht, #BibatHome, #LibraryTwitter, and #wirbibliotheken. The Twitter account @BIBChatDE is linked to a website (https://www.bibchat.de/) that offers single and bundled archives of weekly interactive chats, with the goal of presenting a view of daily life at a library and the relevant debate in Germany.

#6 In Herten, the state library has been testing a "bibliothek to go" model since April 2020. In this model, users who order media via phone or e-mail benefit from contactless retrieval from a special section of the library (YouTube video by cityInfo.tv: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDgXIv3_BbE).

albeit on limited capacity. From early June, many libraries began accepting visitors again, and from early July most public libraries resumed their usual activities (NAPLE 2020b). In many cases, however, adjustments to library spaces (furniture removal, plexiglass barrier installation, markings) remained necessary, and far-reaching hygiene protection concepts were implemented to meet corona safety ordinances, thereby inhibiting the use of public libraries as third places.

3   Third places, educational justice, and the roles of public libraries: background and concepts

The specific characteristics of third places suggest that they can play an important role in achieving broad societal participation and educational justice (3.1). This is especially the case for public libraries, whose decentralized geographies allow them to reach out to (potential) users in their neighborhoods. In library science, the concept of third place has been discussed for almost a decade (e.g., ELMBORG 2011; AUDUNSON et al. 2019) whereas in human geography the subject of public libraries as third places has only been discovered a few years ago (BOSMAN and DOLLEY 2019; HITCHEN 2019; PETERSON 2019). Moreover, little attention has been paid to the relation between public libraries as third places and their contributions to educational justice (3.2). Restrictions and strategies vis-à-vis the corona crisis have coalesced into a situation that could bring about further changes to public libraries. These include not only the opportunity to expand and improve digital services but also challenges for them as third places and their role in safeguarding educational justice (3.3).

3.1 Third places and educational justice

For some years library science has advocated the idea of the library as a third place, which dates back to urban sociologist Ray OLDENBURG (1989, 20ff), who defined third places as public spaces outside one's own home (first place) or the location of paid employment or school/training (second place). He characterized third places as meeting sites on "neutral ground" (ibid. 26) with low thresholds and easy access. Ideally, they are socially and culturally diverse and create a playful atmosphere with conversation as the main activity (ibid.; BOSMAN and DOLLEY 2019, 2). Public libraries are prototypical

examples of third places; they are open to everyone, allow or even promote encounters among strangers and a feeling of societal participation (ELMBORG 2011, 342ff) and, by providing various learning opportunities, contribute significantly to educational justice (BRUIJNZEELS 2012; PEKACAR and PEACHEY 2020; RFKB 2018).

The concept of educational justice is not clearly defined. Rather, it is part of a comprehensive understanding of social justice and has a normative connotation (HARVEY 1973, 100ff). It refers to societal aims and standards regarding good education, equitable educational opportunities, and the sociospatial distribution of resources (STOJANOV 2011, 27) and is thus context-specific. It is also based on the widely accepted notion that "education plays a vital role in the reproduction of cultural and economic capital" (HOLLOWAY et al. 2010, 585) and is one of the most important "vehicles for improving chances" on the labor market (KRAUS 2008, 8, own translation). Since sociospatial disparities and segregation play a substantial role in educational justice, a geographical perspective of education can immensely contribute to one's understanding of the relation between education, social inequality, and space (PINI et al. 2017, 13).

Education policy in Germany and most European countries refer to schools as mainly places of formal education (second place), therefore often ignoring other places of learning, particularly nonformal education settings (first and third places) (DUVENECK 2018, 201). However, the latter are particularly important for education as an ongoing process of lifelong learning, which has emerged as a widely accepted concept over the past decades (e.g., HOLLOWAY et al. 2010, 2012; MILLS and KRAFTL 2014). The four-pillar model of lifelong learning demonstrates the interaction between formal and nonformal learning and different types of spaces toward achieving societal and educational goals (Tab. 1).

At the local level, different formal and nonformal education places form so-called education landscapes, characterized by cross-institutional cooperation and network structures (FREYTAG and JAHNKE 2015, 83; MEUSBURGER 2006, 272, 282; MILLS and KRAFTL 2014). By offering various types of services with different entry thresholds, they together help reduce local educational inequalities (MILLS and KRAFTL 2014). In contrast with places of formal education with their compulsory character and path toward recognized educational qualifications, third places of nonformal education promote informal learning in everyday life contexts, "which is often unintentional, and happens [. . .] during leisure time.

Tab. 1: Four-pillar model of lifelong learning (own compilation based on ECKERT and TIPPELT 2017, 51)

Pillars	Educational space and location		Primary task/goal
Learning to be	Nonformal	Private sphere (first place)	Self-actualization, solidarity, aesthetics, social competencies
Learning to know	Formal	School (second place)	Formal learning
Learning to do	Nonformal	Workplace (second place)	Acquisition of higher qualifications and competencies
Learning to live together	Nonformal	Public sphere (third place)	Support of learning competencies, greater understanding of other persons and contexts, acquisition of social competencies, experience in societal participation, and democracy

Nonformal learning takes place in activities which are designed but not necessarily for the purposes of learning" (KILAKOSKI 2019, 33; see also MILLS and KRAFTL 2014). This is especially important for those who experience the insufficiency of places of formal learning (second place) or who have inadequate space and substandard learning conditions at home (first place). Therefore, NUGEL (2016, 16ff) and ECKERT and TIPPELT (2017, 52) see third places as crucial to the establishment of equal opportunities and thus educational justice.

Educational justice has become intertwined with what is debated as *digital and democratic divides* in the information society (NORRIS 2001; VAN DIJK 2006). Nowadays, participating in a digitized society and shaping one's own biography depends on their level of digital skills. However, such skills are distributed extremely unevenly (for Germany, see AUTORENGRUPPE BILDUNGSBERICHTERSTATTUNG 2020, 16ff) and GRAHAM (2002, 33–47) even found that the rapid development of ICT technology helps widen social and spatial disparities. Since the opportunity to participate in educational processes has been increasingly dependent on the use of ICT, a spatial concentration of the informationally disadvantaged may reinforce the negative effects of spatial segregation (LOBECK et al. 2009, 11). This is especially relevant in the corona crisis, which, according to recent studies in Germany, will exacerbate the existing digital divide in the education system; at the same time, educational achievement will continue to depend heavily on social background and private resources (HURRELMANN and DOHMEN 2020; HUEBENER and SCHMITZ 2020). The next chapter illustrates how public libraries in particular help strengthen cultural education in times of digitization.

3.2 Public libraries as third places

As spaces of knowledge and learning and as memory institutions, public libraries have represented the collective memory of societies for centuries (HOBOHM 2017; KNOCHE 2018, 47). They provide access to material (books and other media, computer and Internet infrastructure) and nonmaterial resources (knowledge, exchange). Furthermore, through public libraries, municipalities offer their inhabitants a publicly accessible, noncommercial space in which users can spend time, meet others, and engage in various activities (Fig. 3), which include low-threshold educational and cultural events. Most recently, libraries are developing into places of digital networking among users and supporting a culture of participation and self-sufficiency via the DIY/DIT movement (RASMUSSEN 2016; KURZEJA et al. 2020, 163ff).

Thus, public libraries nowadays are not just lending stations but have also developed into social meeting points and communication hubs – and, as such, third places for 'being in the community' and participating in public life (HITCHEN 2019; PETERSON 2019). This was confirmed by a recent multicountry study that found that public library encounters and interactions include (a) coincidental meetings with friends and neighbors; (b) joint visits with friends, family, or colleagues to work on a collaborative project; (c) participation in organized meetings and events in the library; (d) visit of a library café; (e) inquiries on information about local activities; and (f) conversations with strangers (AUDUNSON et al. 2019).

Through their offers, public libraries have become important places of (lifelong) learning for all age groups, providing users an infrastructure for

Fig. 3: Design of the Malmö central library as a third place (photos: Katja Thiele, September 2019)

self-empowered, voluntary, and informal learning processes (Bruijnzeels 2012; Di Marino and Lapintie 2015; Schüller-Zwierlein and Stang 2010). They actively engage their users in learning processes and also "teach the required media literacy" for the information society (dbv e.V. 2021, 5). They target their offerings to the entire population regardless of income, age, or background and especially vulnerable population groups including single parents and their children, who often face special challenges, and refugees and the homeless, who can access the local educational system via public libraries. Many public libraries offer various kinds of assistance, such as job searches or finding appropriate contacts in the city administration. Sometimes, municipalities officially transfer such services to libraries, which in turn become a first point of contact for persons with all kinds of inquiries. One example is language classes, which can play an important role in integrating migrants besides improving their literacy and language abilities (Audunson et al. 2011, 224).

In sum, public libraries function as third places for encounters – both with literature, technology, and 'new' media and with other persons (Aabø and Audunson 2012, 141; Elmborg 2011, 345f). They complement institutions that provide (formal) education to children, youths, and adults (Schüller-Zwierlein and Stang 2010, 521f) and can help foster inclusion and encourage civic engagement (Birdi et al. 2008, 580f). Their importance and widespread acceptance has been confirmed by a representative telephone survey of 14- to 75-year-olds in Germany in 2011 (dbv e.V. and IFLM 2012, 9). The results showed that more than a third of the respondents (37%) have visited a public library (including school and university libraries) in the previous 12 months, while 29% are regular users of municipal librar-

ies. In 2019, Germany recorded 125.6 million visits to public libraries but only 7.4 million active users (DBS 2020).

Just because public libraries can contribute to broad societal participation and educational justice does not mean that every individual benefits from what they offer. Like other places of education, public libraries (re)produce social exclusions as well. The abovementioned survey dbv e.V. and IFLM (2012) found that 61% of respondents have not visited a public library in the previous 12 months, of which almost half (28%) have never been to one. This survey as well as a more recent study (IFDA 2015, 3, 5) found that the use of public libraries differs considerably among sociodemographic groups, that is, in terms of gender, age, education level, and socioeconomic status. In both studies, a typical nonuser is male, older than 60 years, more interested in practical-everyday rather than education-related issues, lives in a household without children, and did not visit a library with their parents in their childhood (ibid., 5; dbv e.V. and IFLM 2012, 16). However, the positive finding of these surveys is that, overall, their users are fairly heterogeneous with a large number and proportion of young people and children, which has implications for the level of importance of public libraries' geography in contributing to educational justice.

In their studies on the geographies of education, Pini et al. (2017, 13) showed that sociospatial disparities play a substantial role in one's understanding of educational justice and highlighted the relation between education, social inequality, and space. For public libraries, this means that, notwithstanding the impact of sociodemographic characteristics on library use, accessibility in terms of distance and opening hours is also relevant. While the use of digital services usually only requires Internet access,

most other offerings are provided in the library's physical space. Hence, public libraries' geography is an important factor in enabling and inviting people, particularly children and others with limited financial and knowledge resources, to take advantage of their offers. This is why mostly larger municipalities have a library system with several decentralized locations where they reach people in their neighborhoods. Especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods, such decentralized libraries often collaborate with local schools and initiatives to attract people and adapt their services to the local population's needs. These strategies, as well as the public library as a third place, have become seriously constrained by the corona pandemic.

3.3 Libraries in the corona crisis: opportunities and challenges

A major focus of library development since March 2020 has been on expanding online services and offering digital content (see section 2). This was accompanied by a growing number of users of online library services and an upsurge of online content (NAPLE 2020b, 2; see also DBS 2020 for Germany). LIBRARIES CONNECTED (2020b, 18) even recorded up to a 32% increase in membership for the UK. However, "digital activities are not the same as face-to-face activities" (PEKACAR and PEACHEY 2020, 2), and "[i]ncreases in e-membership and usage do not replace physical membership and usage [. . .], [d]igital services reach a limited demographic [and] [s]ome library services have not been able to develop their own digital interactive offer" (ibid., 23).

The severe limitations of public libraries during the corona crisis were reflected in a survey of users in the UK, of whom more than two-thirds rated library reopenings as extremely (30%) or quite (38%) important (PEACHEY 2020b, 70). The authors explained that this was due to "[t]he loss of the library as a community hub," a "[l]ack of public PC access and assistance," and the "[i]nability to deliver partnerships that are building-based" (ibid., 2). PEKACAR and PEACHEY (2020, 2) also concluded that "[p]eople with hidden vulnerabilities [. . .] may have 'slipped through the net' of universal and targeted services." It is against this background that not only those responsible for library services but also social scientists highlight the importance of physical spaces where people can meet, congregate, and exchange ideas to reduce educational inequalities and encourage societal participation (ibid., HUEBENER and SCHMITZ 2020, 5).

While the corona crisis has provided the opportunity to develop, and experiment with, new digital concepts, on-site services that distinguish libraries as third places have receded into the background. The crisis has thus brought back and reshaped challenges associated with financing and public libraries' potential contributions to educational justice:

- The conversion to online offerings and the development of in-house offerings require financing to expand the digital infrastructure. However, recent years have seen cuts in public library funding, which prohibits major investments into additional infrastructures and new services (DBV E.V. 2020).
- Since social interactions among people can only partially shift to the digital realm, the majority of on-site offerings (personal help, afternoon book readings, language courses, etc.) cannot be replaced, thereby severely diminishing their potential for safeguarding societal participation and educational justice.
- With the elimination of the (physical) third place, the responsibility for nonformal education is delegated to the private sphere, that is, the first place (see Tab. 1). However, because of unequal conditions in terms of technical equipment and personal and family resources, the circumstances are not a level playing field for both children and adults, which exacerbates social and sociospatial disparities.

The discussion about the potential negative effects of containment measures on public libraries during the corona crisis are fueled further by the debate about the financial implications of the recession triggered by the crisis itself. Tax estimates by the Federal Ministry of Finance from May 2020 predict that the 2020 tax income will decline by 100 billion euros compared with 2019 (BUNDESREGIERUNG DEUTSCHLAND 2020). In addition, significant debt is expected to accrue at the federal, state, and communal levels, with borrowed money being spent to compensate for the impact of COVID-19. As such, municipalities will have even less financial scope in the coming years than before, which might negatively affect public infrastructure, especially voluntary services such as public libraries.

4   Methodology and the Bonn case study

The following sections will discuss a qualitative case study of Bonn to explore how the corona crisis has affected municipal libraries and their services at

the local level in Germany. Our empirical analysis focuses on developments both before and during the corona crisis and how previous ones influence current opportunities and challenges. As geographers, we put special emphasis on the library system's geography and its relation with sociospatial disparities. Bonn provides a good example to study how the corona crisis has changed public libraries and their contributions to educational justice for three reasons: First, the city has a library network in different (types of) neighborhoods, which allows for an analysis specific to sociospatial disparities. Second, Bonn's library system has recently undergone major restructuring, mainly because of budget cuts but also with the aim to develop its central library into an attractive third place. Finally, physical access to Bonn's library system was completely suspended when the corona crisis began and then gradually reintroduced but in an uneven way in terms of locations and offered services. Before we present our empirical analysis (section 5), we will first explain our qualitative methodology in greater detail (4.1) and then provide some more background information on the city of Bonn (4.2).

4.1 Qualitative methodology

The article is part of a larger research project on the development of public libraries with Bonn as a case study. Focusing on the local level, the project seeks to understand how municipalities respond to the challenges posed by digitization and municipal austerity as well as their impacts on service provision and educational justice. To triangulate the processes (FLICK 2004, 12), this study applied a qualitative methodological mix drawing on three pillars: (1) a content analysis of relevant documents, local press articles, and statistical data from relevant oversight agencies; (2) participatory observation at library facilities and attendance of events (e.g., networking meetings; conferences; and webinars on library development, digitization, and/or education); and (3) expert interviews. From 2017 to 2021, 18 interviews were conducted with administrators engaged with libraries and/or education at the city, land, and national levels (A1–A4); library heads (L1–L2); city council members and cultural policy speakers of all represented parties (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, CDU, Die Linke, FDP, and SPD) (P1–P5), and representatives from two library sponsorship associations and an educational center in a disadvantaged neighborhood, all of them based in Bonn (R1–R4), of which

three respondents (A3, L2, P1) were interviewed a second time during the corona crisis in 2020–2021. In the following sections, these three interviews and two more conducted during this period (R3, R4) will be marked with an asterisk (A3*, L2*, P1*, R3*, R4*). Most of the interviews were recorded with the interviewees' consent, transcribed, and then analyzed. For three interviews that could not be recorded, a detailed protocol was written. The material was analyzed using qualitative content analysis, in which the transcribed texts and protocols were processed, reduced in a structured manner, and then coded using previously defined analysis categories in an open process (MAYRING and FENZL 2019).

4.2 Bonn: a prosperous city with stressed municipal finances

Bonn represents an exemplary model of many cities whose strained financial situation in recent years has led to the restructuring of and austerity measures for public libraries. With roughly 330,000 residents, Bonn is one of the growing large cities in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) (STATISTIKSTELLE BUNDESSTADT BONN 2020). The 1991 decision to move the federal capital to Berlin triggered an enormous structural change whose impact is still being felt today but which the city has handled remarkably well (WIEGANDT 2006, 53). For the past decade, unemployment numbers have been below NRW and federal averages (ibid., 54), and as a university city, Bonn has a high share of highly qualified jobs and academics (BUNDESSTADT BONN 2020). The disposable income of Bonn residents has climbed continuously in the past 10 years and is well above the general German average and slightly above the NRW average (IT.NRW 2019, 39).

However, during these structural changes, a broad gap in the city's economic and sociopolitical development has emerged. This is because "the past 20 years [. . .] have also seen a changing in the socioeconomic demographics of the population" (DIRKSMEIER et al. 2013, 39, own translation). While income, standard of living, housing quality, and opportunities to participate in social life remain high at the city center, the areas on the city's edges especially confront diverse integration-related challenges (CARITAS BONN and DIAKONIE BONN 2020, 34). This can be partly attributed to greater population densities as well as a higher proportion of single-parent households, unemployment, immigrants, and state aid recipients (SGB-II) (ibid. 32ff;

STATISTIKSTELLE BUNDESSTADT BONN 2020). The resulting spatial difference in participation opportunities has been collated by the charitable organizations CARITAS BONN and DIAKONIE BONN (2020, 19) into their so-called participation index (Fig. 4).[2] Figure 4 also identifies the locations of municipal libraries as well as their organizational structure and integration into the city's library network in 2020.

5 Restructuring the Bonn public library network and consequences of the corona crisis

As depicted in Fig. 4, the situation of the Bonn public library network is the result of a protracted restructuring process that has emphasized the central library (5.1) and reduced decentral offerings (5.2). The corona crisis has particularly exposed the latter, as affected city districts showed an increased need for precisely the type of advice and aid that public libraries have been unable to provide in the current situation (5.3).

5.1 Expansion of the central library into a third place

To reach potential users throughout the entire city, Bonn's public library network has for many years been composed of a central library and eight decentral libraries as well as a music library, which will not be included in the scope of this discussion (Fig. 4). As part of the daily social infrastructure, decentral libraries reach users within their direct residential environment, providing them with a basic collection of literature and other media, and serve as places in which they can meet and learn (A1, A2, L2, L2*, P1*, R3*, and R4*). While the central library also offers this social function for its direct environment in Bonn's inner city, it also houses a larger collection of media (L2, P1*). During the modernization of the Bonn city libraries in the sense of a third place, the central library underwent significant upgrades during 2015, which resulted in an inviting library with a representative courtyard, numerous technical improvements, and attractive gathering and communication rooms (INHOFFEN 2015; THIELE 2020).

"What the library also stands for is its space [. . .] Workplaces are in high demand, where you can work in peace, both individually and in groups. No matter what time you come, you will see that [. . .] the majority of them are occupied. [. . .] What many don't suspect is that you can read many daily newspapers and magazines here. [. . .] many really come exclusively because of the newspapers and magazines." (L2, own translation)

Before the corona crisis, the central library had established itself as a meeting point and an educational-informational event space with extended opening hours (BUNDESSTADT BONN 2018, 7f; A1, A3, L1–L2, L2*, P1–P5, P1*, and R2). Furthermore, also within the context of the library's modernization, its digital lending system was expanded, which allows users to reserve both physical and virtual media via a digital catalog and access virtual media anytime and from anywhere (THIELE 2020).

Parallel to its central library's modernization and expansion, Bonn has also seen an ongoing discussion since the beginning of the millennium regarding the extent to which the city can afford municipal services such as public libraries (A1, P2, and R3*). The reasons include the loss of special subsidies, as the (former) federal capital as of 2010 (BUNDESSTADT BONN 2013, 4) suffered from large debts that arose as a result of construction scandals and political mismanagement (INHOFFEN and WIEDLICH 2020). This has forced Bonn to participate in a form of budget receivership program operated by NRW; that is, the communal oversight board in Cologne must approve Bonn's communal budget (AKALIN et al. 2012). Like other elements of the cultural infrastructure, the library system and decentral libraries in particular were affected by the resulting funding cuts (A1–A3, L1–L2, and P1–P5).

5.2 Centralization of the library network and reduction of decentral offerings

Even before the completion of the central library's upgrades, discussions have begun on how to compensate for expansion costs. These conversations included potential cuts to staff, the introduction of a scale of charges, the need for new cooperations with private actors, external fundraising, the outsourcing or dissolution of (partial) collections, and the closing of decentral libraries (INHOFFEN 2014; A1, A3, L1, L2, P1, P1*, P5, and R2).
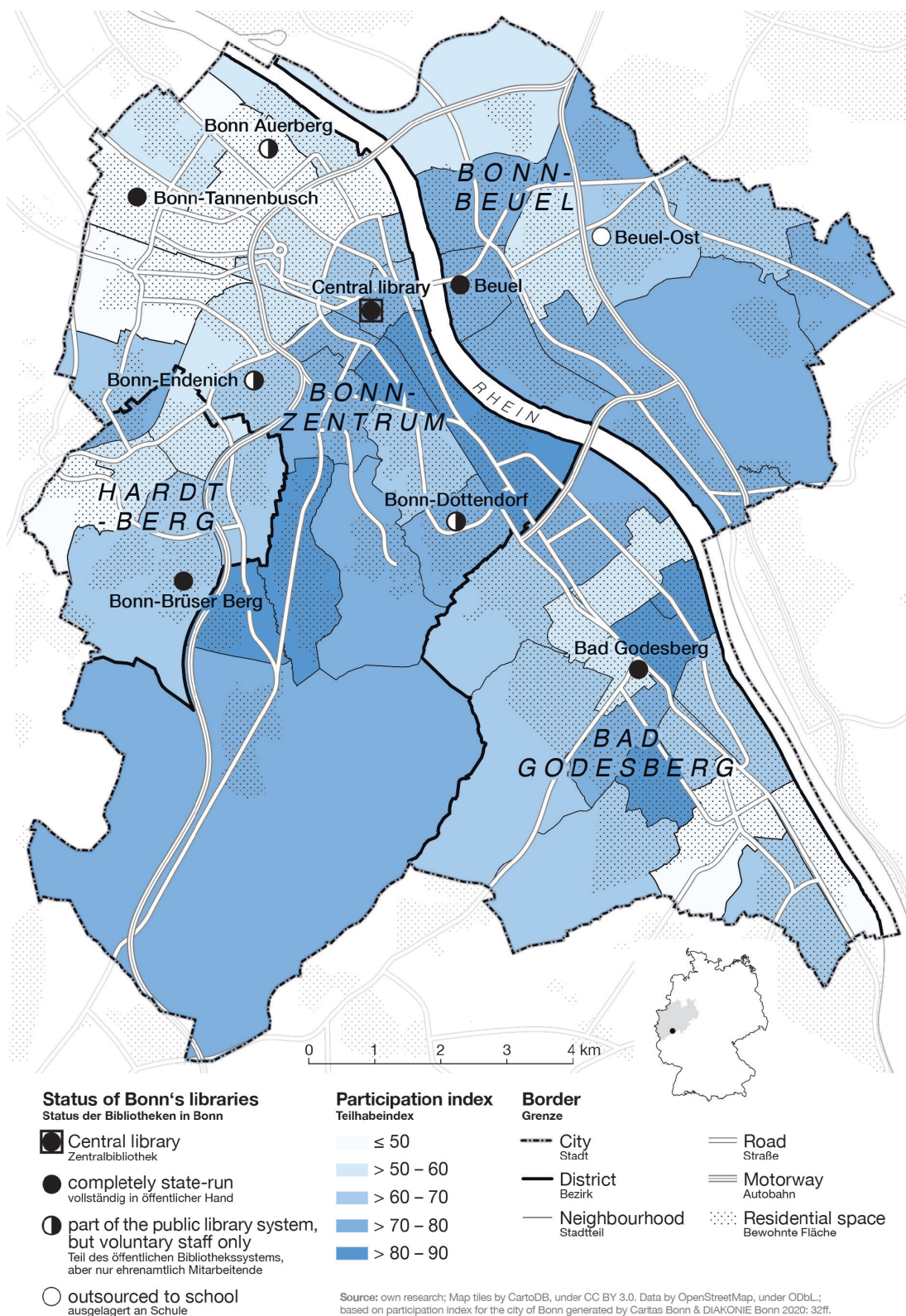
---

[2] The participation index for the city of Bonn is based on an extensive survey of relevant data from the Federal City of Bonn. For details, see CARITAS BONN and DIAKONIE Bonn (2020, 13ff).

Fig. 4: Participation index for Bonn and locations of Bonn public libraries in 2020 (own research, data sources indicated in map, visualization: Irene Johannsen)

Despite the difficult financial situation, political negotiations in Bonn did not ultimately result in the closure of decentral libraries. Instead, a concept was developed for the Bonn library network that called for a centralization of its physical structure, that is, a stronger central orientation, while pursuing savings on municipal funds and cuts to decentral libraries in individual city districts (Bundesstadt Bonn 2014; L2, P1, P1*, and P4–P5).

At present, only four of the eight decentral libraries are completely state run. The other four have been working with partners (sponsorship association, social enterprise, school) since 2015 on new models for the public library (see Fig. 4). In Bonn-Endenich and Bonn-Dottendorf, operations are organized by sponsorship associations and with volunteers in city-owned properties, while in Bonn-Auerberg, the entire library is currently managed by a social enterprise (Knopp 2015; L2 and R4*). Meanwhile, the decentral library in Beuel-Ost was closed as a public library and instead integrated into the Gesamtschule Beuel school library (Willcke 2015; A1 and L1). However, although the dismantling came with a certain activation of local engagement, ultimately the loss of communal funds and staffing resources could not be sufficiently compensated (A1, A3, R2, R3*, and R4*). As a result, volunteer-managed decentral libraries became increasingly dependent on financial support from their sponsorship associations to purchase additional media and offers (R2, R3*, and R4*). Overall, the Bonn case demonstrated the cumbersome and time-consuming process of transferring core tasks to the voluntary sector, during which conflicts arise between and within politics, administration, and civil society (A1, L1–L2, P1, P4, R2, R3*, and R4*).

"[T]hat was also the reason why I got involved [. . .] when various locations in different parts of Bonn were to be closed down, because I thought that was wrong [. . .]." (R2, own translation)

"There were supposed to be closings. That was what the administration had proposed. The sponsorship associations, of course, wanted it to be left open and, I say, that then became the compromise in the middle. The sponsorship associations would also have preferred it to continue to be organized with qualified permanent staff on site. Ultimately, it was said that if the sponsorship associations are willing to organize this, to make an

agreement with the city, then we can maintain it, then the personnel costs are saved by the city, so to speak, and with the support of 10 hours by volunteers we try that." (L2, own translation)

5.3 Statistical and other evidence on Bonn's library system and use as well as changes from 2014 to 2019

One of the underlying assumptions in the public debate on cutting funds for, and closing down, libraries is that digitization will reduce interest in books and visits to libraries. However, official German library statistics show the opposite (DBS 2015, 2020). Tab. 2 provides an overview of changes in Bonn's library system and its usage by comparing key data for 2014 (i.e., right before the restructuring) with those for 2019, which is the most recent available data. The restructuring was visible in changes in the library system's personnel. Despite the reduction in employed staff (−9% of full-time equivalents), the number of volunteers more than doubled during that period. It is highly likely that as a result of these changes, the number of events has decreased although they remain at a high level with an average of three events per (calendar) day in 2019.

Despite fewer events, the number of library visits, as well as the number of active users below age 12, has grown between 2014 and 2019, indicating an increasing relevance of public libraries among children as active users. However, overall the number of active users has decreased. This indicates – assuming that active users' visiting patterns remained the same – that a growing number of visitors come to libraries for purposes other than lending, that is, using it as a third place for reading and working on the premises, meeting other people, and participating in events. At the same time, virtual-media loans almost tripled, while print media loans also increased. The data in Tab. 2 thus suggest that public libraries in Bonn are both important places of (virtual and physical) media lending and (third) places that people prefer to visit for various purposes other than lending. These developments were confirmed by the interviewees (L1, L2, A1–A3, and R3).

No data is available for individual libraries except Bad Godesberg, where official statistics from Bonn's Department of Culture showed a significant growth in the number of annual visits until 2019 (Mühlens 2021). While the central library has expanded its offerings since 2015 and made state-of-the-art up-

Tab. 2: Key data on Bonn's library system and its usage, 2014 and 2019 (source: DBS 2015, 2020)

	2014	2019	Change
Library visits	556,545	612,708	+10%
Active users (lendees)	25,288	24,738	−2%
- below 12 years old	5,954	7,257	+22%
Number of lendings	1,402,514	1,565,714	+12%
- of print media	736,589	900,725	+22%
- of other physical media (e.g., CDs)	615,573	523,973	−15%
- of virtual media	50,352	141,016	+180%
Number of events	1,621	1,077	−34%
Employed personnel (FTE)	59.9	54.6	−9%
Voluntary personnel	50	110	+120%

grades, the decentral libraries offered special and innovative services only (more) rarely (A1, L1, P4, R2, and R3). As a result, decentral libraries have become increasingly prominent for their social functions, serving the local populace beyond just loans as public spaces and avenues for encounters and inspiration (P1*). Especially in diverse and disadvantaged neighborhoods such as Bonn-Tannenbusch or Bonn-Auerberg, people visit public libraries not only for book loans and reading but also for computer access, and children use the spaces for learning (A1–A3, R1, R3*, and R4*). Decentral libraries thus live off their on-site offerings and, as nonformal education spaces, make important contributions to educational justice in their respective city districts despite facing the threat of restructuring. Because of a lack of qualified on-site staff and reduced opening hours, it has become more difficult for them to act as anchors of social integration in their respective neighborhoods (A1, P5, R2, R3*, and R4*). This mainly affects children from households with limited mobility and income, who live on the outskirts of the city and cannot reach the central library as easily (L2*, R2, and R4*).

5.4 Rising need during the corona crisis meets substantially reduced offerings

During the corona crisis, the existing challenges faced by the Bonn library network were further reinforced. On March 13, 2020, physical access to all public libraries was suspended, while digital access was expanded. The library, as a place of gathering and point of contact for personal advice and help with everyday issues, was entirely absent at first. By May 2020, however, the central library was allowed to open, followed by the decentral libraries, the latter with significantly reduced operating hours. However, as Fig. 4 shows, incomes, quality of life and housing, and opportunities to participate in social life are high in the central areas of Bonn, where the central library is located (also see). In contrast, the suburban areas in the north (e.g., Bonn-Auerberg and Bonn-Tannenbusch), east (e.g., Beuel-Ost), and south experience diverse integration challenges such as high population densities, a high number of unemployed and SGB-II recipients, single-parent and multiperson households, and high proportions of immigrants and non-German native speakers (BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG 2020; CARITAS BONN and DIAKONIE BONN 2020, 32ff; STATISTIKSTELLE BUNDESSTADT BONN 2020).

Because of the different effects of corona safety measures on schools and especially labor markets, existing social and sociospatial disparities are exacerbated, with negative effects especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods (P1*). However, the decentral libraries in these locations could provide only limited support to compensate for these disparities not only because of their reduced opening hours but also because of corona-related spatial restrictions. Despite the physical reopening of both central and decentral libraries, their usability has been severely constrained by social distancing markers, barricades preventing the use of chairs, and the closure of major parts of otherwise public spaces (L2*, P1*, and R4*; Fig. 5). Moreover, certain rules govern maximum
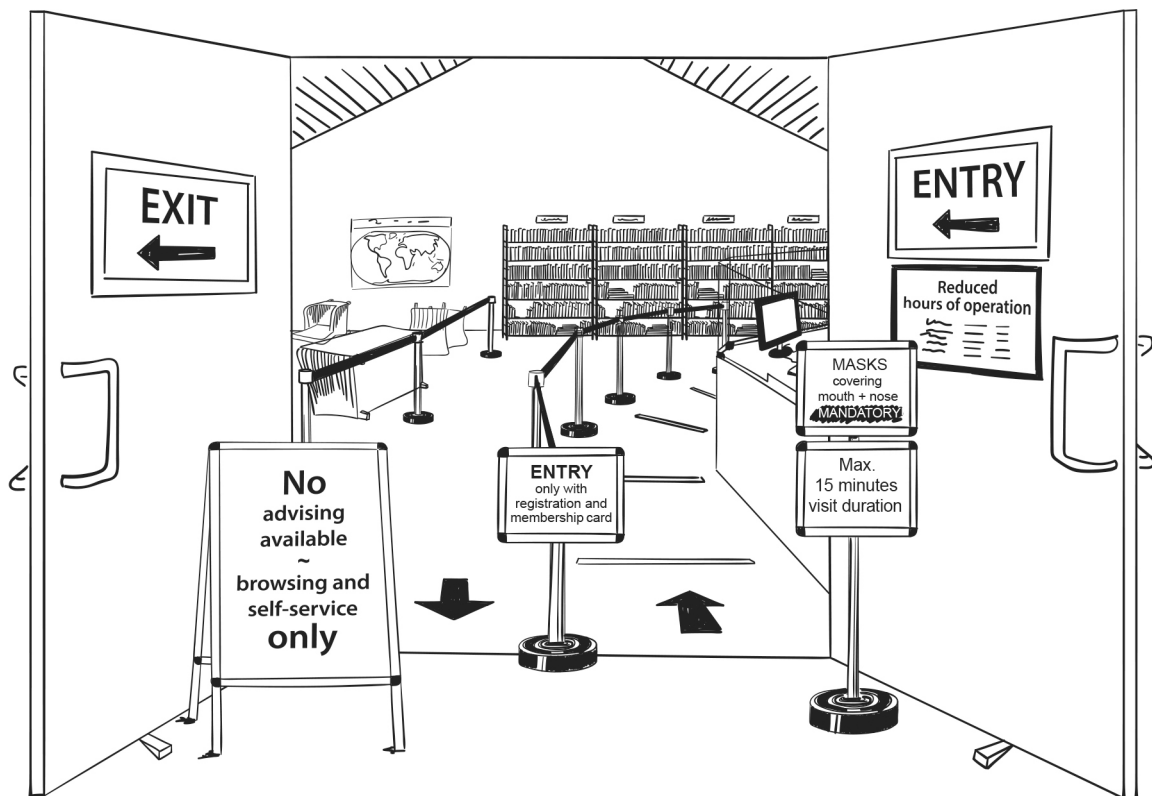
Fig. 5: Schematic picture of the decentral library situation in Bonn in July 2020 (based on photos by Nele Steffen; design: Irene Johannsen)

visit durations: 30 minutes for the central library and most communally operated decentral libraries and 15 minutes for most voluntarily operated decentral libraries. As such, public libraries cannot perform their function as places of encounter and third places even if the demand in disadvantaged districts such as Bonn-Auerberg and Bonn-Tannenbusch remains large during the corona crisis, as explained by the interviews in these neighborhoods (L2*, R3*, and R4*) and especially an interview with a social worker in Bonn-Tannenbusch:

> "The needs are more of an existential nature. [. . .] And again and again the question: When will you open again, when will you open again? There was the need to have the meeting space, which was missed. [. . .]" (R3*, own translation)

Furthermore, from May 2020, most events in public libraries (including vacation programs and open learning workshops) that might help alleviate the stress on families in the current situation have remained suspended, as are consulting and other social services offered by these libraries. This is de-

spite the greater need for processing official documents and for help with state corona assistance applications or with homeschooling. The loss of offerings at the public libraries has forced users to shift their search for resources (technical assistance, etc.) to their private environments, which in many cases have proven insufficient or unavailable because of strains associated with working from home or homeschooling, which social workers considered an additional burden (R3*). By the end of 2020, all libraries in Bonn were again closed to visitors as part of another "hard lockdown" and were only allowed for digital lending as well as "contactless" media pickup and return services in few locations during reduced opening hours. Moreover, public library staff were reassigned to other public offices to help implement corona policies (e.g., in the health administration; GA 2020).

Overall, recent developments show that the digitization of library services can only offset restrictions to library offerings to an extremely limited degree and that such constraints depend on users' specific sociospatial and socioeconomic living conditions. Hence, the question arises whether and in which ways the reduction of services and operat-

ing hours, as well as the reduced quality of in-person visits, represent a threat to educational justice in Bonn. While the long-term consequences of the corona crisis cannot be determined at the moment, it would be interesting to observe whether the city government and its officials would prioritize the re-opening of public libraries and whether they would provide enough resources for libraries to resume their function as third places.

6　Conclusion

Despite the larger role of digitization and digital offerings in public libraries, their social function as so-called third places and the required physical spaces remain critical for societal participation and educational justice. This is especially relevant for individuals whose private environments have inadequate digital and social infrastructures. Nonetheless, the corona-related closures are reigniting the long-running debate about the necessity of physical space and the ongoing digitization of public libraries.

Even before the corona crisis, libraries' focus on online offerings had threatened to undermine their social functions and development into attractive third places. In Bonn, this has at least been partially compensated through voluntary or private actors and their commitment to maintain and manage decentral libraries. During the current crisis, corona-related restrictions and reduced offers by decentral libraries exist in a situation in which there is an increasing need for help and advice. While public libraries have been able to accomplish portions of their educational mission through digital services, they have not been able to replace their physical locations for encounters. The case of Bonn shows that, particularly in disadvantaged districts, the third place and associated social services – and with them, the opportunities for participating in societal education and integration processes – are absent.

Bonn is not the only city where the corona crisis threatens to amplify ongoing transformation processes and the negative effects of austerity in public libraries, particularly with respect to educational justice. It remains to be seen to what extent current developments will help libraries both develop their online offerings further and become attractive third places again. Worsening budget constraints might prevent such a positive scenario although the corona crisis has highlighted how decentralized library systems' on-site offerings targeting people in

their neighborhoods have been an important societal achievement. Conceptually, our research contributes to a better understanding of public libraries' potential for safeguarding educational justice, which is based on their specific geography as both third places and decentralized infrastructures.

Acknowledgments

References

Aabø, S. and Audunson, R. (2012): Use of library space and the library as place. In: Library & Information Science Research 34, 138–149. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.06.002

Akalın, C.; Baumann, A.; Hartmann, B.; Inhoffen, L.; Kanthak, D.; Nickels, M. and Wiedlich, W. (2012): Schulden und Finanzen - Bonn muss sparen. In: General Anzeiger Bonn, 11.11.2012. https://ga.de/bonn/stadt-bonn/schulden-und-finanzen-bonn-muss-sparen_aid-41098769 (Date: 24.03.2021).

Audunson, R.; Aabø, S.; Blomgren, R.; Evjen, S.; Jochumsen, H.; Larsen, H.; Rasmussen, C.H.; Vårheim, A.; Johnston, J. and Koizumi, M. (2019): Public libraries as an infrastructure for a sustainable public sphere: a comprehensive review of research. In: Journal of Documentation 75(4): 773-790. https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-10-2018-0157

Audunson, R.; Essmat, S. and Aabø, S. (2011): Public libraries: a meeting place for immigrant women? In: Library & Information Science Research 33: 220-227. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.01.003

Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2020): Bildung in Deutschland 2020: Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Bildung in einer digitalisierten Welt. Studie gefördert mit Mitteln der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung. https://www.bildungsbericht.de/de/bildungsberichte-seit-2006/bildungsbericht-2020/pdf-dateien-2020/bildungsbericht-2020-barrierefrei.pdf (Date: 02.02.2021).

Bertelsmann Stiftung (2020): Sozialbericht: Ein Baustein des Wegweisers Kommune. https://www.wegweiser-kommune.de/kommunale-berichte/bonn (Date: 03.02.2021).

Birdi, B.; Wilson, K. and Cocker, J. (2008): The public library, exclusion and empathy: a literature review. In: Library Review 57, 576–592. https://doi.org/10.1108/00242530810899568

Bosman, C. and Dolley, J. (2019): Rethinking third places and community building. In: Bosman, C. and Dolley, J. (eds.): Rethinking third places. Informal public spaces and community building. Cheltenham, Northampton, 1–19.

Bruijnzeels, R. (2012): Bibliotheken als Lernorte der Erwachsenenbildung: Vom »passiven« zum »aktiven« Nutzer. In: DIE Zeitschrift für Erwachsenenbildung 2012, 34–37. https://doi.org/10.3278/DIE1203W034

Bundesregierung Deutschland (2020): Steuerschätzung: Die Corona-Krise ist finanziell zu bewältigen. https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/coronavirus/steuerschaetzung-1753004 (Date: 24.03.2021).

Bundesstadt Bonn (2020): Jahreswirtschaftsbericht 2020. Beschäftigtenentwicklung. https://www.bonn.de/themen-entdecken/wirtschaft-wissenschaft/jahreswirtschaftsbericht-2020/beschaeftigtenentwicklung.php (Date: 24.03.2021).

– (2018): Stadtbibliothek: Jahresbericht 2017. https://www.bonn.de/medien-global/amt-41/stadtbibliothek/Jahresbericht_Stadtbibliothek_2017.pdf (Date: 11.08.2020).

– (2014): Beschlussvorlage Zukünftige Bibliotheksstruktur. Drucksache 1412893.

– (2013): Kulturkonzept für die Stadt Bonn 2012-2022. Bonn. https://www.bonn.de/medien-global/amt-41/Kulturkonzept_fuer_die_Stadt_Bonn_2012-2022_Kurzfassung.pdf (Date: 24.03.2021).

Caritas Bonn & DIAKONIE Bonn (Caritasverband für die Stadt Bonn e. V. & Diakonisches Werk Bonn und Region – gemeinnützige GmbH) (2020): Bonn – soziale Probleme auf den zweiten Blick – Sozialbericht zur Lage der Stadt Bonn 2020. https://www.soziales-bonn.de/wp-content/uploads/Sozialbericht_Bonn_Diakonie-und-Caritas_2020_fin.pdf (Date: 17.08.2020).

Davies, J. S. and Blanco, I. (2017): Austerity urbanism: patterns of neo-liberalisation and resistance in six cities of Spain and the UK. In: Environment and Planning A 49, 1517–1536. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X17701729

DBS (Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik) (2020): Gesamtauswertung 2019. https://service-wiki.hbz-nrw.de/download/attachments/99811333/dbs_gesamt_dt_2019.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1593516586645&api=v2 (Date: 08.02.2021).

– (2015): Gesamtauswertung 2014. https://service-wiki.hbz-nrw.de/download/attachments/99811333/dbs_gesamt_dt_2014.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1506497323795&api=v2 (Date: 09.02.2021).

DBV e.V. (Deutscher Bibliotheksverband e.V.) (2021): Report on the State of Libraries in Germany. Facts and Figures 2020/2021. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/publikationen/Report_of_the_State_2020__2021_web.pdf (Date: 13.01.2021).

– (2020): Finanzlage von Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Deutschland 2020. Eine Befragung des Deutscher Bibliotheksverbands e.V. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/publikationen/2020_Gesamtauswertung_ÖB_dbv-Finanzumfrage_2020.pdf (Date: 25.03.2021).

– (2019): Finanzlage von Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Deutschland 2019. Eine Befragung des Deutscher Bibliotheksverbands e.V. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/publikationen/Gesamtauswertung_ÖB_dbv-Finanzumfrage_2019.pdf (Date: 13.01.2021).

– (2018): Finanzlage von Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Deutschland 2018. Eine Befragung des Deutscher Bibliotheksverbands e.V. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/publikationen/Gesamtauswertung_ÖB_dbv-Finanzumfrage_2018_final.pdf (Date: 13.01.2021).

– (2017): Finanzlage von Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Deutschland 2017. Eine Befragung des Deutscher Bibliotheksverbands e.V. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/publikationen/Gesamtauswertung_ÖB_dbv-Finanzumfrage_2017.pdf (Date: 13.01.2021).

– (2016): Finanzlage von Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Deutschland 2016. Eine Befragung des Deutscher Bibliotheksverbands e.V. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/themen/Gesamtauswertung_ÖB_dbv-Finanzumfrage_2016.pdf (Date: 13.01.2021).

– (2015): Finanzlage von Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Deutschland 2015. Eine Befragung des Deutscher Bibliotheksverbands e.V. https://www.bibliotheksverband.de/fileadmin/user_upload/DBV/publikationen/Gesamtauswertung_ÖB_dbv-Finanzumfrage_2015.pdf (Date: 13.01.2021).

DBV e.V. and IfLM (Institut für Lese- und Medienforschung der Stiftung Lesen) (2012): Ursachen und Gründe für die Nichtnutzung von Bibliotheken | Repräsentative Befragung von 1.301 Personen im Alter von 14 bis 75 Jahren. Detaillierte Ergebnisse. https://www.stiftunglesen.de/download.php?type=documentpdf&id=634 (Date: 08.01.2021).

Deeg, C (2020): Die Gamified-Corona-Zukunftsbibliothek. Sind Bibliotheken der digitalen Herausforderung gewachsen? In: Magazin für Medien, Marketing & Kommunikation, Sonderheft Bibliotheken – Digital Publishing Report, 50–54. https://digital-publishing-report.

de/wp-content/uploads/dpr/ausgaben/dpr_SH_Bibliotheken_2020.pdf#dpr_SH_Bibliotheken_2020.indd%3A.29371%3A157 (Date: 14.07.2020).

Dirksmeier, P.; Guntermann, F. and Wiegandt, C.-C. (2013): Schleichende Polarisierung - Sozialräumliche Entwicklungen in Bonn-Bad Godesberg nach dem Regierungsumzug. In: disP - The Planning Review 49, 39–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2013.826538

Di Marino, M. and Lapintie, K. (2015): Libraries as transitory workspaces and spatial incubators. In: Library & Information Science Research 37, 118–129. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2015.01.001

Duveneck, A. (2018): (Kommunale) Bildung. In: Belina, B., Naumann, M. and Strüver, A. (eds..): Handbuch Kritische Stadtgeographie. Münster, 201–206.

Düren, P.; Landøy, A. and Saarti, J. (2017): New public management and libraries: a success story or just an excuse for cost reduction. In: Library Management 38, 477–487. https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-01-2017-0005

Eckert, T. and Tippelt, R. (2017): Learning Regions – Learning Cities – Learning Communities: Auf dem Weg zur Gestaltung regionaler Bildungsräume? In: Eckert, T. and Gniewosz, B. (eds.): Bildungsgerechtigkeit. Wiesbaden, 49–64.

Elmborg, J. K. (2011): Libraries as the spaces between us: recognizing and valuing the third space. In: Reference & User Services Quarterly 50, 338–350. https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.50n4.338

Flick, U. (2004): Triangulation. Eine Einführung. Wiesbaden.

Freytag, T. and Jahnke, H. (2015): Perspektiven für eine konzeptionelle Orientierung der Bildungsgeographie. In: Geographica Helvetica 70, 75–88. https://doi.org/10.5194/gh-70-75-2015

GA (General-Anzeiger Bonn) (2020): Mitarbeiter sollen im Gesundheitsamt helfen: Stadt Bonn schließt Bibliotheken bis voraussichtlich Ende Februar. In: General Anzeiger Bonn, 19.11.2020. https://ga.de/bonn/stadt-bonn/buecherei-in-bonn-stadt-schliesst-bibliotheken-wegen-corona-bis-ende-februar_aid-54719755 (Date: 13.02.2021).

Graham, S. (2002): Bridging urban digital divides? Urban polarisation and information and communications technologies (ICTs). In: Urban Studies 39, 33–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980220099050

Harvey, D. (1973): Social Justice and the City. London.

Heinz, W. (2018): Kommunen unter Druck. Transformation kommunaler Handlungs- und Gestaltungsspielräume im Kontext der neoliberalen Globalisierung. Publikation der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. Bonn. https://www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/stadt-und-gesellschaft/216893/transformation-kommunaler-handlungsspielraeume (Date: 14.07.2020).

Hitchen, E. J. U. (2019): The affective life of austerity: uncanny atmospheres and paranoid temporalities. In: Social & Cultural Geography. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2019.1574884

Hobohm, H.-C. (2017): Bibliothek und Diversität – eine theoretische Annäherung. Warum es eine zwingende Grundlegung für Bibliotheken ist, divers zu sein. In: arbido – Revue professionnelle pour archivistes, bibliothécaires et documentalistes 2017/1. https://arbido.ch/de/ausgaben-artikel/2017/das-potenzial-der-vielfalt/bibliothek-und-diversit%C3%A4t-eine-theoretische-ann%C3%A4herung (Date: 13.02.2021).

Holloway, S. L. and Jöns, H. (2012): Geographies of education and learning. In: Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 37(4): 482-488. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00542.x

Holloway, S. L.; Hubbard, P. J.; Jöns, H. and Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2010): Geographies of education and the importance of children, youth and families. In: Progress in Human Geography 34(5): 583-600. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510362601

Huebener, M. and Schmitz, L. (2020): Corona-Schulschließungen: Verlieren leistungsschwächere SchülerInnen den Anschluss? In: DIW aktuell 30, 06.04.2020. https://www.diw.de/de/diw_01.c.758261.de/publikationen/diw_aktuell/2020_0030/coronaschulschliessungen__verlieren_leistungsschwaechere_schuelerinnen_den_anschluss.html (Date: 14.07.2020).

Hurrelmann, K. and Dohmen, D. (2020): Corona-Krise verstärkt Bildungsungleichheit. Bericht auf dem Deutschen Schulportal, Projekt der Robert-Bosch-Stiftung und der Deutschen Schulakademie gGmbh, 15.04.2020. https://deutsches-schulportal.de/stimmen/das-deutsche-schulbarometer-hurrelmann-dohmen-corona-krise-verstaerkt-bildungsungleichheit/ (Date: 14.07.2020).

Inhoffen, L. (2015): 26,4 Millionen Euro-Projekt eingeweiht. Das Haus der Bildung ist eröffnet, General Anzeiger Bonn, 21.08.2015. https://www.general-anzeiger-bonn.de/bonn/stadt-bonn/das-haus-der-bildung-ist-eroeffnet_aid-42481933 (Date: 11.08.2020).

– (2014): Schließung von Stadtteilbibliotheken. Pro Stadtbezirk nur noch eine Bibliothek?, General Anzeiger Bonn, 16.10.2014. https://ga.de/bonn/stadt-bonn/pro-stadtbezirk-nur-noch-eine-bibliothek_aid-42092273 (Date: 11.08.2020).

Inhoffen, L. and Wiedlich W. (2020): Die Suche nach der Wahrheit. In: General Anzeiger Bonn, 12./13.09.2020.

IfDA (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach) (2015): Die Zukunft der Bibliotheken in Deutschland. Eine Repräsentativbefragung der Bevölkerung ab 16 Jahre. https://www.ifd-allensbach.de/fileadmin/studien/11048_Bericht_ekz_Bibliotheken.pdf (Date: 25.03.2021).

IT.NRW (Information und Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen, Statistisches Landesamt) (2019): Kommunalprofil Bonn, krfr. Stadt. https://www.it.nrw/sites/default/files/kommunalprofile/l05314.pdf (Date: 20.08.2020).

Kilakoski, T. (2019): Youth work and non-formal learning in Europe's education landscape and the call for a shift in education. In: European Commission (ed.): Youth work and non-formal learning in Europe's education landscape. A quarter of a century of EU cooperation for youth policy and practice: 26-39. Luxembourg. http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/youth-work-nonformal-learning_en.pdf (Date: 25.03.2021).

Knoche, M. (2018): Die Idee der Bibliothek und ihre Zukunft. Göttingen.

Knopp, S. (2015): Fortbestand ist garantiert. Vertrag zwischen Stadt und Stadtteilbibliotheken in Endenich, Dottendorf und Auerberg ist unterzeichnet. In: General Anzeiger Bonn, 21.12.2015.

Kraus, J. (2008): Bildungsgerechtigkeit. In: APuZ – Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 49/2008, 8–13.

Kurzeja, M.; Thiele, K. and Klagge, B. (2020): Makerspaces - dritte Orte für eine zukunftsfähige (Postwachstums-) Gesellschaft. In: Lange, B.; Hülz, M.; Schulz, C. and Schmid, B. (eds.): Postwachstumsgeographien. Raumbezüge diverser und alternativer Ökonomien. Bielefeld, 159–176.

Libraries Connected (2020a): Libraries in the pandemic: Evolving services to meet local need. https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/sites/default/files/Libraries%20in%20the%20pandemic%20-%20final.pdf (Date: 08.01.2021).

– (2020b): Libraries in lockdown: Connecting communities in crisis. https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/sites/default/files/Libraries%20in%20Lockdown%20-%20final%20report_0.docx (Date: 08.01.2021).

Lobeck, M.; Müller, W. and Wiegandt, C.-C. (2009): Die neuen Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien Veränderungen im Alltagsleben. In: Standort – Zeitschrift für Angewandte Geographie 33, 6–12. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00548-009-0103-7

Mayring, P. and Fenzl, T. (2019): Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. In: Baur, N.; Blasius, J. (Hrsg.): Handbuch Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung. Wiesbaden, 633–648.

Meusburger, P. (2006): Wissen und Raum – ein subtiles Beziehungsgeflecht. In: Kempter, K. and Meusburger, P. (eds.): Bildung und Wissensgesellschaft. Berlin, Heidelberg, 269–308.

Michnik, K. (2014): What threatens public libraries? The viewpoints of library directors in Sweden. In: New Library World 115, 426–437. https://doi.org/10.1108/NLW-04-2014-0033

Mills, S. and Kraftl, P. (2014): Introduction: Geographies, Histories and Practices of Informal Education.

In: Mills, S. and Kraftl, P. (eds.): Informal Education, Childhood and Youth. London, 1–18.

Mühlens, M. (2021): Mehr Besuche in der Bibliothek. Vor der Pandemie hat die Ausleihe innerhalb von drei Jahren eine positive Entwicklung genommen. In: General Anzeiger Bonn, 28.01.2021.

NAPLE (National Authorities on Public Libraries in Europe) (2020a): Public Libraries in Europe and COVID-19: Findings from NAPLE Members, 30. April 2020. https://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:fce29ea1-1b83-479b-b674-a592b255f7e4/naple-narrative-report--european-library-services-during-covid19.pdf (Date: 14.07.2020).

– (2020b): Public Libraries in Europe and COVID-19: Re-opening Strategies. Findings from NAPLE Members May-July 2020. https://naple.eu/?mdocs-file=42 (Date: 08.01.2021).

Norris, P. (2001): Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty, and the internet worldwide. (Cambridge University Press) Cambridge.

Nugel, M. (2016): Stichwort: Bildungsräume – Bildung und Raum. In: Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft 19, 9–29. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11618-015-0662-2

Oldenburg, R. (1989): The great good place. Cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart community. New York.

Peachey, J. (2020a): Making a difference: libraries, lockdown and looking ahead. https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2020/10/13090335/Overarching-report-Making-a-Difference-1.pdf (Date: 08.01.2021).

– (2020b): Making a difference: libraries, lockdown and looking ahead. Public Poll Background Report. https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2020/10/13090411/Public-Omnibus-Making-a-Difference-1.pdf (Date: 08.01.2021).

– (2020c): Making a difference: libraries, lockdown and looking ahead. Staff Survey Background Report. https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2020/10/12163303/Library-Staff-Survey-Making-a-Difference.pdf (Date: 08.01.2021).

Pekacar, K. and Peachey, J. (2020): Making a difference: libraries, lockdown and looking ahead. Heads of Service, Interviews Background Report. Study of the Carnegie UK Trust. https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2020/10/12163456/Library-Heads-of-Service-Making-a-Difference.pdf (Date: 08.01.2021).

Peck, J. (2015): Austerity urbanism. The neoliberal crisis of American Cities. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. https://www.rosalux.de/fileadmin/rls_uploads/pdfs/engl/peck_austerity_urbanism_eng.pdf (Date: 24.03.2021).

Peterson, M. (2019): Meeting spaces: everyday spaces of multicultural encounter. PhD thesis. Glasgow. http://

theses.gla.ac.uk/41179/7/2019PetersonPhD.pdf (Date: 12.01.2021).

Pini, B.; Gulson, K.N.; Kraftl, P. and Dufty-Jones, R. (2017): Critical geographies of education: an introduction. In: Geographical Research 55, 13–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12226

Poole, N. (2020). A new future for public libraries. Beitrag auf Medium, 29.04.2020. https://medium.com/@nick.poole/a-new-future-for-public-libraries-eca-d45a78918 (Date: 25.05.2020).

Rasmussen, C. H. (2016): The participatory public library. The Nordic experience. In: New Library World 117, 546–556. https://doi.org/10.1108/NLW-04-2016-0031

RfKB (Rat für Kulturelle Bildung e.V.) (2018): Bibliotheken/Digitalisierung/Kulturelle Bildung. Horizont 2018. Studie der Prognose AG im Auftrag des Rates für Kulturelle Bildung und in Kooperation mit dem Deutschen Bibliotheksverband e. V. (DBV). Essen.

Schüller-Zwierlein, A. and Stang, R. (2010): Bibliotheken als Supportstrukturen für Lebenslanges Lernen. In: Tippelt, R.; von Hippel, A. (ed.): Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung. Wiesbaden, 515–526.

Schuster, K. (2020): #wirbibliotheken: Es gibt viel zu tun! Beitrag zur Vernetzungsaktion #wirbibliotheken von Katrin Schuster (Direktion Münchner Stadtbibliothek) auf dem Blog der Münchener Stadtbibliothek. https://blog.muenchner-stadtbibliothek.de/wirbibliotheken-es-gibt-viel-zu-tun/ (Date: 12.05.2020).

Statistikstelle Bundesstadt Bonn (2020): Bevölkerung in der Bundesstadt Bonn zum Stichtag 31.12.2019. https://www2.bonn.de/statistik/dl/ews/Bevoelkerungsstatistik2019.pdf (Date: 19.08.2020).

Stojanov, K. (2011): Bildungsgerechtigkeit. Rekonstruktionen eines umkämpften Begriffs. Wiesbaden.

Thiele, K. (2020): Daseinsvorsorge in Gefahr. Öffentliche Bibliotheken zwischen Digitalisierung und Austerität. In: Geographica Helvetica 75, 107–122. https://doi.org/10.5194/gh-75-107-2020

van Dijk, J. (2006): Digital Divide Research, Achievements and Shortcomings. In: Poetics 34, 221–235. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2006.05.004

Wiegandt, C.-C. (2006): Bonn boomt - von der Bundesstadt zur internationalen Stadt. In: Geographische Rundschau 58, 52–61.

Willcke, H. (2015): Beide Bibliotheken sollen geöffnet bleiben. Büchereien: Beuel schickt ein starkes Signal nach Bonn. In: General Anzeiger Bonn, 19.03.2015. https://ga.de/bonn/beuel/buechereien-beuel-schickt-ein-starkes-signal-nach-bonn_aid-42277509 (Date: 24.03.2021).

Authors

Katja Thiele, M.A.
Prof. Dr. Britta Klagge
Department of Geography
University of Bonn
Meckenheimer Allee 166
53115 Bonn
Germany
kthiele@uni-bonn.de
klagge@uni-bonn.de