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Article · June 2018

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Assessment of Article publication on Public Library and Social Capital Generation: A Database Analysis.

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Abstract

Social capital is a concept that spans across various social landscape with growing necessity for social trust within the society, as well as potential negative effects arising from social inequality and exclusion, which has made social capital a topical issue in research in the past decade. This database analysis assesses the frequency of research output and identifies gaps in knowledge, and potential roles of the public library on social capital generation in the society.

This study is a descriptive study of research publication on public library and social capital that are indexed in Web of Science and EBSCOHost, the University of Malaya Library from 2007 to 2015. It enumerated the number of articles per year, source types, subjects' coverage, and languages of publication, geography, publishers and content providers.

The search resulted in 19 articles from WoS and 10 from EBSCOhost according to relevance from three distinct sources like academic journals, reviews, and conferences. The articles covered 21 subjects and in 3 languages from 11 geographical locations by 20 publishers and 5 content providers.

The result revealed a decline in research on public library and social capital generation. Further research into public libraries and social capital in more databases with related include keywords such as social inclusion, inequality and trust is advanced.

Keywords: Public Library, Social Capital, Inequalities, social inclusion, social trust.

Library of Congress Classification Number: Z716.2-718.85

1. INTRODUCTION

The public library is the type of library that is located within the reach of the general public, to serve their general interests through public support and funding by the local community, regional or national and non-organizations in some cases (Iwhiwhu, & Okorodudu, 2012). Among its many functions includes the provision of community information services, various information resources in subjects and

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discipline to serve the users which according to Folorunso, & Folorunso, (2010) has earned it the name "public goods or the people's universities". Provision of an enabling environment for information literacy, lifelong learning and skill acquisition activities for community members. These have increased to include "a meeting place and an institution with the potential to build community and citizenship" (Aabo, Audunson & Varheim, 2010; Audunson, 2005; Fisher, Saxton, Edwards & Mai, 2007). This becomes necessary as the society grow very complex due to increase in globalization, multiculturalism, digitization, and there arises a need for increased ability to enhance social inclusion, and insignificant level of shared qualities, standards and providing links to social capital that citizenship implied (Castells, 2000; Wood & Landry,2008). Putnam, (1995: 67) cited in (Varheim, 2007) reported that research on social capital and social organization related terms became noticed from early 1990's and grew rapidly between 1998 and 2005, 82.6% of the articles out of total 1,999 documents published with "social capital" in title, keywords, or abstract fields have been registered in the ISI Web of Science database (search. performed on January 3, 2006). But the relationship between public libraries and social capital was not fully considered in these documents, this justifies the assertion by Kranich, (2001) that public libraries were not considered among institutions creating social capital either historically or in topical society.

A literature search conducted in ISI Web of Science for "'social capital'AND library*" retrieved only seven documents, while another search in Library and Information Science Abstracts database (LISA) performed on March 17, 2006, produced nine additional articles in peer-reviewed journals, and a search in WorldCat performed on February 20, 2006 retrieved 19 books, of which only one chapter from a book is relevant (Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2003). Based on these results, Varheim, (2007) concluded that not much is known about whether and how libraries contribute to creating social capital. Also, the expected size of research highlighting the role of the public library in a social capital generation was small and could not commensurate with the promotion of public library's significance in a social capital generation by professional organizations (Audunson, 2005). This study became very necessary considering the esteem which public library was held earlier on social capital generation in the societies before, and the present threats of near-extinction due to the emergence of the Internet and economic recession (Johnson, 2010). Moreover, exploits of Internet and search engines have affected the impact of the library in previous years. Recently, some cities are confronted by outrageous income deficiencies bringing about the closedown or reduction of the library in the United States (American libraries online, 2008). social capital has become more relevant in current global situation to cushion the effects of drop in the level of trust and interaction among the people due to racism; ethnicity, religion, gender, political interest, government and institutional failure, corruption, rise in cost of living, economic pressure etc. The public library has becomes the convergent ground, a meeting place for the community which entrusts it with the ability to create social cohesion and trust in the community (Putnam & Feldstein, 2003). As a result, Griffis and Johnson, (2013) stated that "at a time when the number of accessible community places is shrinking, it seems that people still expect their local public libraries to fill this social role". Similarly, (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Brashears, 2006), opined that "in an era when people's social networks are dwindling, the role of the library as a contributor to the social capital of communities may be its most important role of all".

The main aim of this study is to determine the growth of research publication on public library and social capital generation. It will be useful for public library management in the less developed countries where deep social, political and economic gap exists among the populace. Policies that will strengthen the public libraries can emerge as survey and interview of library communities, patrons and library management could further extend this study. Studies on social capital are immense, but the ones that touch on the role of public libraries are diminishing, this can arouse the desire by researchers to engage in the study of the public library community, patrons and management to ascertain how much of social capital is generated and how much is benefitted. The study can be conducted in more than one database, as this will give a clearer view of the scenario and enhance generalization of findings.

2. SOCIAL CAPITAL

According to World Bank (2011), it is the "institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions". Previous studies on social capital revealed that social attachment is basic for social orders to succeed monetarily and for advancement to be continuous. "The term is not quite recently the entirety of the foundations which support a general public – the paste holds them together". It further stated that social capital is measured by two distinct tools which include "Social Capital Assessment Tool (SOCAT) and the Social Capital Integrated Questionnaire (SC-IQ)". With Five key ambits such as "groups and networks, trust, collective action, social inclusion and information and communication"

 Social capital is a term that has been x-rayed from various perspectives by researchers, it is the value of social relations (Vårheim, 2014), the product of forming beneficial social relationships and explanation of the "social and economic benefits of community activity" (Johnson & Griffis, 2010; Siegler, 2014) which according to Siegler, (2014) "can occur either at an individual level, through family support or at a wider collective level through volunteering, also associated with values such as tolerance, solidarity or trust" that benefits the society and enhance cooperation among the people. It is the reflection of the well-being of the populace as communities or individual's educational, social development, health care delivery, vibrant democratic institutions, personal happiness, confidence and patience, economic growth, and political stability. And the absence of social vices as drug abuse, crime, juvenile delinquencies, terrorism, rape etc. Triggered by particularised and generalized trust and is nurtured within an effective and impartial institution like the public library in low places (Johnson & Griffis, 2013). Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, (2013a), categorised social capital into three broad headings: personalised relationships, social network support and trust and corporate norms. Accordingly, the first is "structure and nature of people's personal relationships", bordering on with who people know and what they do to establish and maintain their personal relationships. While the second refers to "the level of resources or support that a person can tap from their personal relationships", which includes what people do for other individuals on a personal basis. And Civic Engagement represents "the actions and behaviours that can be seen as contributing positively to the collective life of a community or society". Activities such as volunteering, political participation and other forms of community actions form this category of social trust. Similarly, Siegler, (2014) included Trust

and Cooperative Norms as the fourth category of social capital. Which this author referred to as the trust and cooperative norms or shared values that shape the way people behave towards each other as members of society. Trust and values that are beneficial for society as a whole, like solidarity and equity which to large extent reflects how much people in a society are willing to cooperate with one another. Delhey, Newton, and Welzel, (2011) explained that particularized trust strengthens group internal relationships, which in turn creates social capital bonding while generalized trust is the key indicator of the civic component of social capital and is generally used in comparing trust between nations. While Johnson, (2012) stresses that Social capital is often considered as the standards and systems that are set up amongst individuals and groups which offer ascent to more noteworthy levels of trust, and the capacity of individuals to cooperate to take care of issues (Woolcock, 2010:47).

3.   PUBLIC LIBRARY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

The public library as a social hub and civic centre, brings together people of all ages, the rich and the poor, mid-class, etc. to conduct social activities such as town-hall meetings, information literacy programmes, grass root politicking, public health information, dispensary, cooperatives etc. This convergence will create trust and unity in diversity among the citizens in the society leading to social capital improvement. This can be achieved through the provision of newspaper and other leisure reading section for the aged and the youth; information resources that covers all minority groups, in addition to games and recreation activities. The result will be networking, and creation of formal and informal associations which socializing effects on democratic, cooperative values and norms will engender social capital. A strategically planned public library function as a centre for advocacy for community development efforts or projects, Non-Governmental Organisational programmes and donor agencies as a way of giving back to the community.

To date, several studies in LIS have discussed the relationship between libraries and social capital, and explore the important role libraries play in building social capital (Johnson, 2010; Varheim, 2011). Considering the threat of total closure or conversion of library premises into other uses and cut in library budget in some developed countries, it becomes dicey as to how the library will fare in her role to create social capital. "Toronto's libraries are under threat. Tell city council to keep them open + public" (MargaretAtwood, 2011). This was a tweet by Margaret Atwood as a protest against the threat to close to close Toronto library by the city council.

In recent years, there has been much debate on the civic role of the public library (Kranich 2010), many studies have focused on the relationship between public libraries and social capital (Vårheim, 2010). Which according to Aabø, Audunson, and Vårheim (2010), largely identified with society winding up noticeably more intricate and divided because of the development of multiculturalism and digitization and the subsequent requirement for meeting places with the ability to advance (a) social inclusion, and (b) that insignificant level of common values, standards, and connecting social capital that citizenship implies. In a questionnaire survey, Haase Svendsen (2013) studied public libraries as Breeding Grounds for Bonding, Bridging and Institutional Social Capital: social capital creation at branch libraries in 62 rural municipalities in Denmark. The result showed that public libraries do more than serving as a breeding grounds for bonding and bridging, but also, for a highly valuable third type, the institutional

social capital. In a preliminary investigation, Johnson (2010) examined the connection between the public library and social capital, and to decide to what degree public library adds to group and people's social capital. Research questions were based on the library's contribution to community social capital and how the level of individual social capital affects the individual's use of public libraries. The result indicates that the level of social capital of library clients contrasts fundamentally from that of a probability sample of city dwellers and relationship exists "between public library use and social capital on several dimensions". However, this study was deficit in empirical evidence since it is improper to understand sentiments of trust from answers in a print survey according to the author. Using unstructured interviews with U.S. library directors on strategies for immigrant programs and the creation of the social trust, Vårheim (2011), investigated "Library programming strategies towards immigrants as tools in the creation of social capital". The outcome of the study showed variations in library activities, and policy instruments in the libraries studied. The author observed that minorities were a trait common to most of the library systems studied, and suggested that demography could be the driver of library activities and policies. Johnson and Griffis (2014) investigated the effect of public library use on the social capital of rural communities; the findings suggest that small town libraries cater mainly to middle-class residents who maintain their high level of social capital through participation in a variety of community activities and organizations.

The library serves as a vital source of group cohesiveness in urban neighbourhoods where different associations accessible to inhabitants may exist, and provide for them qualitative resources and support with utilizing those resources. Since these libraries are situated in poor neighbourhoods, rural dwellers have a solid relationship with the organization and a feeling of responsibility for, and in this way, there are a couple of traditional and social hindrances to utilizing the library. On the contrary according to the authors, the poorer members of the society used the public library less than the richer ones. They recommended that "library staff will need to make a greater effort to appeal to this segment of the population by providing library services that respond to their particular needs". In another study, Griffis and Johnson (2013) conducted a qualitative study on Social capital and inclusion in rural public libraries; the results suggest that while rural libraries have high potential to create social capital, the overlap of social networks in rural communities renders the library's influence redundant. They, however, cautioned that many of the mechanisms that help libraries increase a sense of social cohesion and inclusion among users can also result in exclusion, even if unintentionally.

Aabø, Audunson, and Vårheim (2010) studied public libraries' function as meeting places with 750 respondents from three urban areas in Oslo to investigate how and to what degree the public library is utilized for meetings in various levels of relationship, medium, reason, circle of life, or role (student, employee, parent, relative, or friend) in which they are held, and so on. Relationships between low income and education, and high utilization of the library as a meeting spot were found, which demonstrates that the library as a meeting place assumes a considerable part of an evening out the potential outcomes of being a dynamic resident within social and financial contr

asts. The study adds to the understanding of the part of the public library in a multicultural setting.

The public library as a special kind and complex meeting place has critical consequences for future librarianship according to them. Meanwhile, measurement outcomes under knowledge economy policy frameworks, reveals that the economic value of public libraries has been measured in terms of contributions to the local economy (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2013; Shaffer & Associates, 2011). As the world economy continues to go downturn, its impact is more on the parents, especially the low-income earners and their children's education. The public library has played the role of providing free and easy access to education through resources. Ontario's information economy talk puts learning at the cutting edge of youngsters' future economic challenges, and many guardians hustle to enhance their kids' prospects in an unpredictable labour market by pushing them to obtain these skills early (Leigh, Pacholok, Snape, & Gautier, 2012). Some medium and low-wage guardians seek after advancement exercises (Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2014) through public libraries in light of the fact that "commercialised educational opportunities are not freely accessible". Johnson (2010) conducted a preliminary study to explore the connection between public libraries and predictors of social capital with a poll questionnaire in three branch libraries in a huge Midwestern American city. The result showed a solid connection between public libraries and social capital, the author, however, recommended a further research to incorporate users and staff for a better perspective of how social capital is generated. Miller (2014) Compared Public Libraries in Edinburgh and Copenhagen, to investigate the library as a place and the potential of the public library to create social capital. The result indicated the library building and space, library's staff and volunteers, and the links that the library has with the community as three main factors that affect the library's potential to create social capital. Recently, library as a place, a term that related to important feature of the library in current dispensation has been linked with social capital ((Hapel, 2012; Aabø, Audunson, & Vårheim, 2010; Audunson, Essmat, & Aabø, 2011; Danish Agency for Culture, 2013a).

Inclusiveness feature of libraries has also been cited as a potential factor in the creation of social capital. Birdi, Wilson, and Mansoor (2011) examined ethnic diversity and the public library in the UK, referring to social capital. The merits of both assimilation, where cultures are absorbed into mainstream culture, and multiculturalism, where distinct cultures co-exist, are discussed.

4.   METHOD

This study employed a bibliographic approach through publication review of articles on the relationship between the public library and the creation of social capital. It utilized the Web of Science and EBSCOhost both are databases in the University of Malaya library. Keyword, social capital* public library and "social capital AND public library*" was used for WoS and EBSCOhost respectively in a title and keyword search term according to relevance and extraction of all duplications. The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles ranging from 2007 to 2015; it further covers the article sources, types, subjects, languages of publication, locations, publishers as well as content providers. The databases have been selected for this review because they contain most of the quality peer-reviewed articles in the field of library and information science as well as many other kinds of literature across humanities, social sciences, and management sciences etc., which feature social capital in University of Malaya

Library interaktif portal. Data were subjected to descriptive analysis on graphs, tables of frequency counts and percentages. Inferences were arrived based on the result of the analysis.
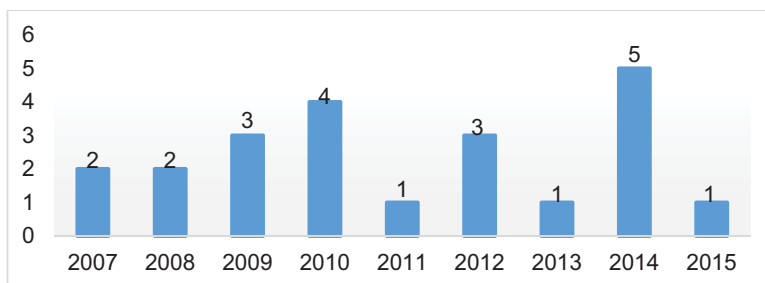
5.   RESULTS
5.1. Yearly article publication.

The search for article publication between the year 2007 – 2015 was performed on two folds, first, the keyword "social capital AND public library*" search on EBSCOhost, University of Malaya Library produced thirteen (13) results. It was further reduced to ten (10) when the search was narrowed down to peer-reviewed articles only. On the other hand, a keyword social capital* public library search on Web of Science, University of Malaya Library produced nineteen (19) results bringing it to a total of twenty-nine (29) articles between 2007 to 2015. Article title search term and extraction of duplicates was employed in both searches. Article-by-article investigation showed that seven (7) articles were indexed in the two databases thereby reducing the number to twenty-two (22) articles published on social capital and public library between 2007 and 2015. The distribution of the article publications according to years is displayed in table 1 below:

Table 1: Article publication 2007-2015

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
No of pubs.	2	2	3	4	1	3	1	5	1
%	9.1	9.1	13.64	18.12	4.55	13.64	4.55	22.73	4.55

The above table revealed articles published on social capital and public library from 2007 to 2015 and indexed in the EBSCOhost and Web of Science, University of Malaya Library The year 2014 had the highest number of publications with five (5) articles and is followed by 2010 with four (4), 2009 and 2012 produced two (2) articles each. Similarly, the search on 2007 and 2008 revealed two (2) articles each while 2011 and 2013 produced one (1) article each making a total of twenty-two (22) articles on social capital and public library within the time range. A further view of this on graph revealed the frequency of publication.

Article publication 2007-2015

Article publication frequency revealed an inconsistency in research output as the line appeared contour-like which indicate fluctuation on yearly research output on the topic of study. The publication rose slightly from two (2) in 2007 and 2008 to three (3) in 2009 and four (4) in the year 2010. Output nose-dived down to one, three and one between 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. It rose to the highest point in 2014 with five articles and dropped to one in 2015 signifying a downward trend in research on social capital and public library.

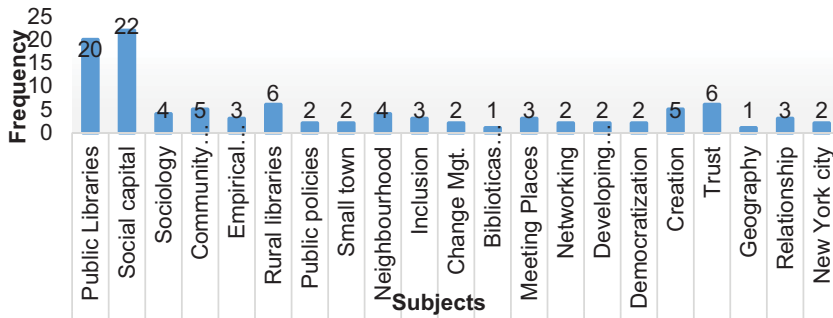### 5.2. Document types, Language and Database/content provider

This study went further to explore article types, languages of publication and content providers and the results are displayed in table 2 below. The search outcome on document types showed that academic journals led the pack with 20 articles leaving one review and one meeting. Regarding the language of article publication, the entire articles were originally published in twenty-two languages, English formed the largest with seventeen articles (17), while Korean had three (3) and Portuguese had two (2). Search for content provider showed that Web of Science™ core collection, ScienceDirect, KCI Korean journal database, Social science citation index have 14, 3, 2, 2 respectively while Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) citation Index contributed 1 service.

Table 2: Document types, Language and Database/content provider

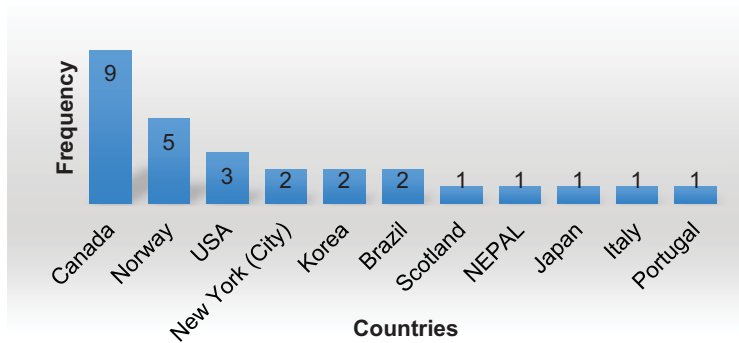|		
Article Types	Academic Journal Review Meeting/Proceeding	20 (90.90%) 1(4.55%) 1(4.55%)
Languages	English Korean Portuguese	17 (77.27%) 3 (13.64%) 2(9.09)
Content providers	Web of Science™ Core collection KCI Korean Jour. Database SciELO Citation Index ScienceDirect Soc. Sci. Citation Index	14 (63.64%) 2(9.09%) 1(4.55%) 3(13.63%) 2(9.09)

5.3. Research Areas/Subjects

Further, the subject coverage of the articles was another item this study investigated. In figure 2 below, the graph displayed some of the most frequent and common subjects that were treated in the articles. Social capital and public libraries, being the major themes of the articles ranked highest with 22 and 20 respectively. Other subjects related to social capital term include sociology, community building, rural libraries, Neighbourhood, trust inclusion, change management, public policies, etc
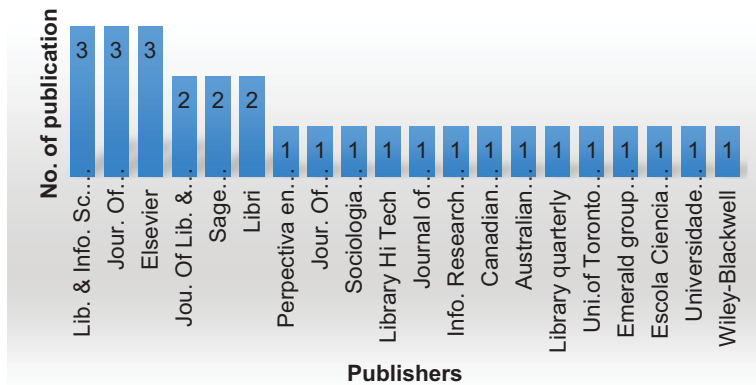
5.4. Geographical coverage

Origen of research is an important factor on social capital and public libraries; the reason is that public libraries from less developed countries are expected to fill the social capital gap created by less buoyant economy various socio-cultural diversities. A closer observation of the graph of geography revealed that the higher number of articles came from Norway, Canada and the United States of America, arguably, the most economically developed countries on the list of the origin of the research articles. Others include Korea, Brazil, Scotland, Nepal, Japan and Portugal.

5.5. Publishers

Twenty (20) journal titles were among publishers of the article on social capital and public libraries between 2007 and 2015 (figure 4). According to distribution, library and information science research, Journal of Korean library and information society and Elsevier showed their dominance of articles indexed in the two databases studies with three (3) on the frequency. Followed closely were Journal of Library and Information Science, Sage publications limited and the Libri with two articles. Other publishers like Perspevtiva enCiencia de Info. Journal of Economic and Social Geography, Sociologia Ruralis, Library Hi Tech, Journal of Documentation etc. had one appearance each on the chart.

6.   Discussion

This study traces the sequential growth in the literature on the roles the public library plays in a social capital generation or the interaction between the two through a search on the number of articles indexed in Web of Science and EBSCOhost, among the prominent databases in University of Malaya Library. Research publications work in two dimensions, first, to announce a milestone achieved and secondly set the stage for further research because of desire for further development in a particular field or neglect. Similarly, the reality of plans and the expectations, vis-a-vis the ability of the public libraries to create social capital can only be justified by documented evidence, mostly in peer-reviewed articles. A closer look at the article publication frequency in figure 1 reveals an improvement from 16 by the previous study (Varheim, 2007:417) to 22 though the time frame for the study was not mentioned. One issue of worry is the fluctuations in yearly output, 2014 recorded the highest but suddenly dropped to one article in 2015. Conclusions on public library performance on social capital generation in 2015 cannot be reached quickly as some of the research studies may still be in-press. However, if the assumption is not substantiated, it could mean that public library is being overwhelmed by challenges and therefore is gradually declining in its role to generate social capital. And subsequently justifies President of the American Library Association (ALA) finding that "public libraries had not been considered among the institutions creating social capital, historically or in contemporary society" (Kranich, 2001). Reacting to the outcome, Varheim (2007) remark that even this discovery did not inspire corresponding research on social capital and the public library, revealing that "this low research output reveals an under-researched area". The roles public libraries had played in a social capital generation, and its potentials need to be highlighted in research on a regular basis, this will among others project its importance in present socio-economic and political dispensation, improve funding and influence policy on and about public libraries. Academic journal article dominated the publication type with 20(90.90%) leaving a review and proceeding with 1(4.55%) article apiece. While in the language of publication category, English language is the predominant language with 17 of the article (77.27%) followed by Korean, 3 (13.64%), and Portuguese having 2 (9.09%). Geography or publication origin

proved that the less developed countries with cases of socioeconomic inequalities, large sale poverty, where trust and social capital for sustainable development are most needed are not justifiably represented on the graph. The emphasis in research on public libraries and social capital generation should be more in the less developed regions and countries, unlike the developed countries where alternative meeting place such as the internet and social media have almost replaced the activities of the public library.

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