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THE POLITICAL LIBRARIAN

Mission

The Political Librarian is dedicated to expanding the discussion of, promoting research on, and helping to re-envision locally focused advocacy, policy, and funding issues for libraries.

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Johnna Percell has a background working in nonprofits serving the education and housing needs of individuals with community corrections involvement. This work lead her to pursue her Master of Library Science with a specialization in Information and Diverse Populations from UMD's College of Information Studies. During her studies she served as president of iDiversity, the first LIS student group that promotes awareness of diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility within the information professions. After completing her MLS, she was selected as the 2015 Google Policy Fellow for the American Library Association Washington Office. She returned to UMD last fall as the Communications Coordinator for the College of Information Studies. She can be contacted at jpercell.pol.lib@gmail.com.

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Based in Washington, DC, Lindsay is an advisor to and former board member of EveryLibrary. She is also the MLS Program Manager at the University of Maryland College Park, reviews Editor of The Library Quarterly, and a Research Fellow at the Information Policy and Access Center (iPAC). Her past research has focused on how politics and policy impact library funding. In 2014 she co-authored *Public Libraries, Public Policies, and Political Processes*. Recently she has been focused on the design and implementation of a new paradigm in library and information science education. She is particularly interested in how to incorporate value demonstration and library advocacy into LIS curriculum. Lindsay earned her BS in English and history at Eastern Michigan University and her MLS at the University of Maryland, College Park. She can be contacted at lindsay.sarin@everylibrary.org.

From the Editors

We'd like to begin our second issue of The Political Librarian by thanking Washington University Libraries who we are thrilled to have partnered with to host the journal on their Open Scholarship platform. We are especially grateful to Trevor Dawes, Associate University Librarian; Emily Stenberg, Digital Publishing and Preservation Librarian; and our bepress consultant Michelle Barron-Lutzross for all of their work and support throughout the entire process.

In this issue we stretch the concept of politics in libraries further. Beginning with John Chrastka's discussion of political attacks on libraries, and Patrick Sweeney's clarion call to foster radical library supporters and for the development of data sets that can be used to better understand the political climate and context during ballot initiatives and campaigns for library funding; we get a boots on the ground perspective of the battles being fought by libraries and their supporters. Author Dustin Fife manages to humanize politicians even in the midst of an extremely negative and partisan political climate and seemingly never-ending presidential election cycle. Ann Dutton Ewbank, J. Turner Masland, and Christian Zabriskie broaden our view by giving us a glimpse into the inner workings of national advocacy and the American Library Association's Committee on Legislation. Dr. Paul T. Jaeger and editor Lindsay C. Sarin challenge the nature of library education and the lack of real emphasis on the political processes that impact libraries and librarians. Dr. John Buschman ties the issue together with his discussion of library politics not in relationship to the concept of voting and funding but as an exploration of the political nature of library leadership. For the editors, this piece drove home just how much a journal dedicated to political issues in libraries was missing from the discourse. We are proud to publish such variety of valuable perspectives and range of topics. It is a true reflection of the range of issues libraries and librarians face in the political context.

-Your Editorial Team

Lindsay C. Sarin, Rachel Korman, and Johnna Percell.

Political Friction

John Chrastska

We should only be surprised at how long it took the *Americans for Prosperity* mega PAC to come out against libraries, not that it would ever happen. The proximal cause of their attacks were two concurrent ballot measures on the March 15, 2016 Illinois consolidated primary for the Plainfield Library District. The library board asked voters in their growing Chicago ex-burb to consider a new library building and an operating levy to run the library. The particulars of the project had already drawn out some local, vocal opposition by a small group of apparently concerned taxpayers. At EveryLibrary, we had already put our strategic and tactical support behind the local Vote Yes committee. But on the Thursday before Election Day, the political conversation changed dramatically when the Koch Brothers-funded AFP Illinois team deployed their direct mail and robocall Vote No campaign. In the face of the AFP attack, the merits of the library building plan were rendered irrelevant, as were the particular objections by the local neighborhood No folks. A robust local discussion about priorities for the community, as expressed through both Yes and No campaigns about a new library, evaporated in the face of a well-funded, agenda-driven ideological battle against taxes.

In that it has taken a long time for the Koch Brothers to show up against libraries is curious. Americans for Prosperity is abundantly clear and consistently active in attempting to realize a vision of American civic, economic, and social life that is governed by free market principles. On issues of tax policy, these free market principles guide AFP's attempts to block tax measures that affect individuals and corporations while working actively for new legislation that would roll-back taxes at all levels of government. Their fervent desires are driven by an ideological belief that regulation harms both individual liberty and dampens the entrepreneurial spirit. Their philosophy is that any tax is a bad tax. Taxes drag down economic prosperity by making the individual subject to the state.

As a library community, we may feel that because our libraries change lives and transform lives that we should be exempt from the anti-tax agenda. That we, libraries, are somehow 'good taxes' and we should therefore spared. We may even have hoped that libraries are too small a unit of government to be noticed by these anti-tax forces. Library advocates cut their teeth on the pie-chart showing that local taxes go shows schools, police and fire, and public works leaving libraries a few crumbs. Because the ire of anti-tax forces are focused on the biggest pieces of the pie, their omission has so far spared us their attention.

Plainfield isn't the only place where a free market economic philosophy or a Tea Party campaign has targeted libraries as shrinkable units of government. It may be the first Americans for Prosperity target, but the library leadership in Baldwin MI, Bollinger MO, Meridian ID, and Pomona CA, have all experienced organized anti-tax campaigns against them. For the last few years, Kentucky libraries were under direct attack by the Tea Party of Northern Kentucky via a court case that was driven by free market principles about taxes.

The AFP robocalls and direct mail against the Plainfield Library weren't about The Library any more than the Tea Party suit in Kentucky was. This spring in Kansas, the Americans for Prosperity chapter there sent a lobbyist to speak in favor of a bill that would dismantle library taxing districts in the state. The lobbyist in Kansas made a statement that was emblematic of our plight: "I feel like I should go on record to say, 'I do like libraries.'" And then he proceeded to testify to the state legislature how disassembling libraries as independent taxing districts is good for Kansas. The AFP / Tea Party message is always about The Taxes. In their Plainfield attacks, they never once questioned the merits of a having a new 21st century library. The work that librarians do in supporting individuals and communities grow and learn wasn't at issue in Kentucky, either. As a think tank, Americans for Prosperity didn't attempt to refute any study showing how a 21st century library improves educational outcomes in a community. They didn't even need to read them. AFP and the Tea Party can take their "any tax is a bad tax" message about a library to the electorate and win. The image of libraries, any library, is not strong enough to overcome any tax.

A strength of free market economic philosophy is that it sounds an awful lot like individual liberty. The right of an individual to self-determination free of unnecessary or unwarranted government regulations and interference is a tenant of this economic-faith. The antithesis of a free market is one where behavior is coerced or penalized through policy, with the logical end game being a planned economy and a highly regulated list of allowable behaviors.

In libraries, we believe that we are defenders of liberty too. One of our oldest, and most effective, library advocacy organizations is called the Freedom to Read Foundation. It defends the First Amendment in libraries. There is some nostalgia among library champions for the "Libraries: An American Value" campaign of the mid 1990s. We believe that we are at the forefront of ensuring an American democracy that is thriving because it is informed. The democratic electorate is informed because we provide access to information for all.

Then why are we under attack by free market individualists and the Tea Party? Shouldn't we be able to find natural allies among those individualists? We believe, we know, that we support the individual. Unfortunately, alliances and rapprochement is not possible because the core argument of a free market individualist and their Tea Party cousins is one of deregulation and minimal government. That spirit of deregulation includes a belief that the lowest level of tax burden is of the highest virtue. If the goal is to minimize government, libraries, while an arguably functional unit of government, are still government in need of minimization. Or elimination. We may hope to find examples of people across the free market spectrum who draw their line in the sand against new taxes instead of all taxes. But when we're asking for an increase to our operating levy or general fund allocation to better serve our public, we're a new tax, too.

The Americans for Prosperity and the Tea Party never need to come out against what libraries do or who librarians are to defeat library tax measures. They just mention The Tax and their job is done. Our librarian muscle-memory is strong for fights against censorship and in support of privacy. However, our ability to talk about taxes, how we spend public funds, and how we are public employees funded by taxes, is rather weak. As a profession, we have lost the narrative about what a progressive tax policy does to fund the common good. There is a systems-wide, generational hesitancy to name the fact that we run libraries and pay librarians with tax dollars. We have adopted a kind of professional-euphemistic shield when speaking about taxes. We use terms like "funding" or "revenue" or "support" in place of taxes. In doing so, we have decoupled library work and library outcomes from the taxes that fuel 90% or more of our institutions' balance sheets. When we shy away from talk about the taxes that create and sustain institutions that are fundamentally transformative, and the taxes that pay the salaries of people who are the change agents in their communities, we lose the argument before it starts.

Over the last generation or two, free market ideologues have made community-centric ideals like helping our neighbor and pooling our resources akin to the worst excesses of the Great Leap Forward. At best, tax support is allowed only if purified and validated by a Public Private Partnership that includes a high bar of philanthropy in place of public taxation. Librarians need to regain the high ground of ideas about what taxes do to fund the common good. We can use adjectives like 'smart' and 'effective' because that is the truth of how they are spent. We need to get comfortable on our boards and in our staff meetings saying the word 'taxes' again. We need the courage to take an even more fundamental step and ask ourselves and our colleagues about why we do library work, and why we serve on boards and commissions.

If we believe that for public institutions to be legitimate they must survive on private charity, we are in the wrong business or serve on the wrong boards. But if the reason you work in a library is to provide a hand-up to folks looking to better themselves, please talk about your commitment to them. If it is to create a nation of kids who are ready for Kindergarten and read at grade level, please talk about your work with those kids. Let us be visible as the enactors of the common good in our towns. Enactors who are funded by taxes we have long chosen to pay to build better communities.

About the Author

EveryLibrary's founder is John Chrastka, a long-time library trustee, supporter, and advocate. Mr. Chrastka is a former partner in AssociaDirect, a Chicago-based consultancy focused on supporting associations in membership recruitment, conference, and governance activities. He is a former president and member of the Board of Trustees for the Berwyn (IL) Public Library (2006 – 2015) and is a former president of the Reaching Across Illinois Libraries System (RAILS) multi-type library system. Prior to his work at AssociaDirect, he was Director for Membership Development at the American Library Association (ALA). He is a member of ALA as well as the Illinois Library Association (ILA), and the American Political Sciences Association (APSA). He as named a 2014 Mover & Shaker by Library Journal and tweets @mrchrastka.

Politicians are People First and Elected Officials Second

Dustin Fife

The most supportive politician I have ever worked with is going to jail. He is currently a county commissioner for San Juan County, Utah. I met him six years ago when I was the director of San Juan County Libraries. He was elected by a population that was frustrated with federal and state government, and he promised to fight for local control of land and resources. He was arrested for planning and executing an illegal public protest over the closure of disputed county roads on federally protected lands. He was tried and convicted by a jury of his peers and he will have to pay a hefty fine and legal fees for his actions, along with a ten-day stay in jail (Romboy, 2015).

I am not writing about this commissioner in order to argue the merits of his case. He made his decisions, some that I agree with and some that I do not, and it has impacted his life immensely. I am writing about him because he was an enthusiastic library supporter. Most people might assume that this particular region and commissioner would not be strong supporters of libraries. They would look at local voting history and demographic information and assume the worst. However, both San Juan County and this commissioner consistently supported libraries during my time in southern Utah.

What is the point of this story? First, be incredibly careful about your political assumptions. People and communities will surprise you and they deserve the benefit of the doubt. Second, during this current season of political discontent, we all need to remind ourselves that politicians are complex human beings. While reflecting on the resignation of Sarah Palin as the governor of Alaska for NPR, Scott Simon wrote, "Politicians are human. If you prick them, they will bleed. If you pet them, they'll lick your hand. They're filled with anxieties, contradictions and duplicities, but I wonder what groups, including journalists, salespeople, hammer dulcimer makers or Franciscan priests, are not" (Simon, 2009).

Things You Can Do

Elected officials are people first and politicians second. With that in mind, take an interest in your politicians as people, and hopefully they will take an interest in your libraries as politicians. You do not have to agree on everything, indeed you do not have to agree on anything, to be civil and engaged. Some politicians are more accessible than others, but almost all funding for libraries is decided at the local level. It is decided in cities, counties, and districts and those politicians are often the most approachable. I worked with elected officials in a small county, but learned many lessons from those interactions. I have turned them into seven suggestions that can easily be incorporated into any library's political plan. Some of these suggestions are most appropriate for directors and managers, but local officials are often eager to meet with any constituent.

1. When new officials are elected or you move to a new job, make appointments and meet your elected leaders individually as appropriate.
2. Take interest in their initiatives. Do not only talk about your vision for the library. To them the library is only one part of a community that they have been elected to serve. Ask them about initiatives that are important to them. Ask them how the library can help. When possible, openly align library goals with broader community goals.
3. Create services that serve their needs. Ask them if the library can do any research for the council or commission. Ask them what information resources the governing body needs. Break down the walls of the library by being visible in the community.
4. Take their votes and decisions at face value and give them the benefit of the doubt. If you want to know more, respectfully ask them why they have chosen to make certain decisions that impact the library. Always be respectful and use proper channels of communication.
5. Don't allow yourself to casually slip into disrespectful conversations about decision makers with library staff or community members.
6. Take responsibility for creating an ongoing relationship and never assume you do or do not have their support.
7. Always see them as people first. Just like anyone else, they have good and bad days.

These practices allowed me to create strong relationships with politicians and helped me to better understand how difficult it is to be an elected official.

Conclusion

I have enjoyed each of the county commissioners with which I have worked, but I started this article by talking about one in particular. I had an especially strong connection with him. When I first got to know him, I asked him to help me better understand my service area. I was new to the area, and he was a lifelong resident. We began to have occasional breakfasts together, and he took an interest in my personal and professional life. I learned about his family and he learned about mine. I watched as he struggled through an incredibly difficult situation. His struggle emphasized his humanity for me. So often politicians are seen as an unsavory other, but they are people that are worthy of our kindness and empathy. Individuals run for public office for a multitude of reasons and they do not stop being humans on Election Day.

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About the Author

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The Growing Necessity of Radicalism in Library Advocacy and Political Outreach

Patrick Sweeney

Advocacy for causes and the current state of politics in America has been hijacked by a sadly necessary radicalism. For libraries to continue to exist as we know them we need to get on board with the rhetoric and identify and radicalize our supporters. If we don't learn to start talking about libraries in a severely emotionally meaningful way that engages and activates our most impassioned supporters, libraries will continue to be devastated by budget cuts. We can't allow this to happen because libraries are one of the few truly great institutions to come out of the American government.

This all began with my own blog, and why I essentially stopped blogging. The truth is that I was frustrated about what kinds of posts got the most hits. A few years ago I realized that the posts that "did the best" were ones that were inherently mean spirited or controversial. For example, I wrote a post about Second Life that was intentionally mean spirited and, to this day, it is my most read piece. The thing to realize about this post is that I never really said anything important. There was nothing in there that would move anything forward. Libraries were already dropping Second Life and by the time I wrote the piece the virtual landscape was already a ghost town. And yet, this post remains the most popular while a number of other posts that I think were more important were hardly read at all.

Of course, we could make the argument that the other posts aren't as well written or as timely, but really, the biggest difference is the level of emotional sensationalism. I really don't hate Second Life; I really don't care at all about Second Life, but I had the chance to write something radical and see the results. I was so disappointed in the broad and deep response that my number of blog posts written per week almost dropped off completely after that experiment. I went from writing one blog a week to one every month or two. That was 4 years ago.Once I realized that these were the kinds of articles and blog posts that got the highest ratings, I noticed that this mirrored the wider media sphere. Every day it seemed like there was more bad news, or emergencies, or a constant state of urgency in the world around us. There were constant streams of vicious and witty criticisms but very few appraisals of positive viewpoints or constructive ideas. I realized that this was because moderate or positive ideas simply don't attract reaction or generate the ratings, clicks, or views that are necessary to raise revenue or resources through encouraging actions or ads or donations. For example, the recent article in the *Telegraph* entitled "No Self-Respecting Adult Should Buy Comics or Watch Superhero Movies," criticized adults for reading comics. There was really no point in writing the article because it doesn't move any discussion forward; it's poorly written, and whether or not adults read comics or watch superhero movies has no real impact on the world. However, because it was a radical viewpoint and wild criticism of a popular and generally well-liked pastime, this article appeared multiple times on my social media feeds with varying levels of indignation.

Recently, I left full time library work to work for EveryLibrary, the first and only National Political Action Committee for Libraries. In the last three years we have helped libraries win local measures for library funding to the tune of more than 100 million dollars. Because EveryLibrary is about libraries, it's non-partisan, which is one of the things that I, as a moderate, really enjoy about it. But, because we are non-partisan, I've attended webinars, trainings, conferences, read books and professional literature, followed campaigns, etc for just about every political party and/or political perspective in the United States.

I say all this because my work with EveryLibrary combined with these trainings has reinforced my belief in the necessity of more radicalism in our advocacy efforts. At EveryLibrary, we noticed that some of our posts or emails get a much higher level of engagement than others. While we at EveryLibrary understood/understand? that library issues are highly complex and require complex solutions, we noticed that when we explained those issues in an educational and informational way that lays out the true scope of the issue, the professional and general public left them generally unread. The ones that have the highest level of emotion, the least amount of complexity, and least amount of real information or solutions are the ones that get the highest levels of donations, the most shares, the most likes, and are the most widely read.

We have many examples of this stark contrast between educational posts and emotionally radical posts. When

we posted articles about how important libraries are for businesses and startups and how those kinds of organizations can take advantage of the services of libraries, we got very few click-throughs, almost no shares, and even fewer donations. *But*, when we posted that libraries were being attacked by the Koch Brothers we raised thousands of dollars and had hundreds of people sign up to support libraries in a matter of hours. There was a guttural emotional reaction to the idea that wealthy billionaires were (and still are) working to strip services away from the American people. Yet there was no sense of urgency to learn about how businesses and startups can benefit from library services; services that can help build up the economy and be used to demonstrate library value to those in power.

We decided to test our messages to determine which engaged the highest amounts of people and returned the highest number of actions taken for libraries. We wrote emails that explained what positive things that libraries were doing and how they helped communities and got very little return. But,when we wrote something controversial or something that was more highly emotional and less deeply informational, we saw far more donations, sign-ups, shares, etc. This also held true when we attempted to activate people to sign a petition to fight or support legislation. Our calls to action that were informational went largely unheard, but our calls to action that were highly emotional generated thousands of signatures

Many people who work in the library industry have brought up the fact that they don't enjoy our radicalist posts, however, those posts are generally not for them. Librarians tend to be less motivated by reactionary posts because they better understand the complexity of the issue at hand. They tend to have a broader understanding of the complexities and context of the issues that surround library work. For example, librarians are the people who know the difference between things like para-professional staff and MLIS credentialed librarians while a broader audience and the general population think that anyone who works in a library, from a page to a director, is a librarian. Because of this, and despite the fact that I absolutely understand the less emotionally motivated readers' concerns (I have them too), I want them to recognize that we aren't writing for the people who are already engaged- we are writing to engage those who are not.

Radicalism Beyond Library Land

Examples of the effectiveness of radical messaging go well beyond librarianship. We see it in the political discourse around minimum wage, abortion, or the Second Amendment. You may have even participated in the discussions yourself, or at least have witnessed how the discourse for controversial issues often slides into a highly emotional argument of sound bites and meaningless rhetoric, often declining into a barrage of name-calling. Just like the issues in librarianship, the highly emotional and rhetoric-filled views of these issues like those surrounding the Second Amendment are not fully representative of the reality of the issue at hand. Many issues are highly complex and require a deep level of understanding if we are seriously looking for a cure. If we think deeply about discussions surrounding the Second Amendment (to continue the example) we quickly see that soundbites like "guns don't kill people, people kill people," are wildly dismissive of the deep-rooted social ills and that simply banning guns won't cure the underlying social ills either. To achieve meaningful solutions we require a fully immersive strategy that explores many possible solutions at each level, with the public being informed about all possible solutions. Soundbites and simplified emotional rhetoric are clearly not the solution.

So why is using such simplified and meaningless rhetoric to discuss highly complex issues so prolific? As described earlier, radical propaganda has the most radical return on investment (ROI). Using another example from outside of librarianship of a large ROI on a radical action comes from US Representative Joe Wilson who yelled "You Lie!" during the recent State of the Union Address from President Obama. His campaign for re-election raised millions of dollars from his supporters in the next week. Joe Wilson was then able to use those resources to go on to defeat his general election opponent, Rob Miller. Of course, this isn't just limited to candidate campaigns, we see a similar set of actions and outcomes play out repeatedly. This demonstrates that radical actions can be the necessary first step in allowing causes to have the money and identify the supporters and help them build the resources they need to take action for the actual solution.

Joe Wilson's donations didn't come from moderates. His donations didn't come from people who could see both sides of the issue. His donations came from people with

deep-seated,extreme anger and resentment towards President Obama. People who kind of like Obama weren't the ones who donated to Representative Wilson. It was the ones who hate and oppose Obama the most. What this proves is that radicals are the ones who take action. Not moderates. It's very important to understand that radicals with radical views who are using radical rhetoric are the ones who give money, volunteer, and otherwise provide resources to causes. You won't find someone who has only moderate views on an issue or is careless about an issue spending their hard earned money to fight for or against it.

What is also interesting is the very low percentage of individuals that give to campaigns. Bernie Sanders, for example, who has raised more money from individual donations for his campaign than any other candidate in history has received donations from 1.3 million Americans. While 1.3 million people sounds like a large number, when compared to the size of the general population, it is almost a meaningless statistic. There are over 330 million people in the United States and that means that Sanders has only raised money from less than one third of one percent of the population. The most successful individual donor candidate in the world has only been able to actively engage 0.33% of the public and convince to take action. This is also interesting considering that he polls at an approval rating of about 40% of Democrats. About 30% of Americans identify as Democrats, or about one hundred million people. Since you do not have to be a registered voter to donate to a campaign, there are around 50 million people who potentially support Bernie Sanders (far less are willing or able to vote) and could be tapped into giving donations to the Sanders Campaign. Why, then, do only 1/3 of one percent of Americans give? Because those are the individuals with the most radical faith and belief in a country governed by President Sanders. The truth is that it takes a very small percentage of radicalized Americans to drastically influence politics.

All of this is to say that if a cause wants to exist, it needs resources to fight, and therefore it is in the best interest of causes and political parties to generate more radicalized supporters in order to get more access to more of the resources that they need to maintain a sustainable fight.

Libraries are no different than political parties in their need to obtain and maintain resources. They continually fight for their existence and therefore need to find ways to identify and radicalize supporters of libraries so that they will take action and give those resources to library causes. Whereas Bernie Sanders is supported by 50 million people, libraries have far more supporters than all of the presidential candidates combined. Libraries have an approval rating of over 80% across the country and across a wide range of political beliefs, but we we have failed to engage the most radical believers in libraries. Librarians need to understand where and how these radical beliefs are generated and how they can be used. Libraries also must examine the messages that are being used against them, take the time to understand the root of those messages, and then develop effective and emotionally charged counter messages.

One of the biggest weaknesses that libraries and librarians have when conducting advocacy is that we know very little about the kinds of people who support libraries or why they support them. We know even less about the people who are against libraries and why. The well-resourced causes mentioned (gun control, etc…) earlier as well as political party platforms spend literally millions of dollars every year to research voter perceptions, motivations for voting or taking action on behalf of a cause, and identifying messaging that works effectively and the kinds of people that it works on. Every single year, they make use of the most current and up-to-date data to help them fight. For libraries, the only real study that has been done to look at the propensity of registered voters to support libraries at the ballot box was done in 2008 with 2007 data. This means that the data comes from a time that was pre-recession, pre-Tea Party, pre-"Any tax is a bad tax" organized groups. We know that people's support or opposition to libraries is not dependent on their use of the library, and we know that people are just as likely to vote for or against the library regardless of their political ideology, unless they are radical in their views on either side of the political spectrum. It should scare librarians and library supporters that we do not have enough data to create a model of voters for libraries, and that we don't have data to create a model of voters in opposition to libraries.

Because there is currently no funding for this type of research, we are starting to track trends using comments on our Facebook page with full awareness of the limits of this source for data. One of the biggest things we've noticed thus far is that the people that comment posi-

tively for libraries are not radical believers, but the people who comment in opposition to libraries are radical non-believers. They are generally deeply neo-liberal or deeply neo-conservative. When we clicked on the negative comments about libraries on our Facebook posts and looked at the walls of the these commenters we saw that the majority of their Facebook posts centered around radical political rhetoric even though they are typically individuals who do not work in a political sphere[1].

What this small set of data shows is just how strongly the kinds of individuals who oppose libraries are influenced by the political radicalism of neo-liberalism or neo-conservatism. This is especially alarming considering the wealth of other activities they could engage in online. Essentially they are focused on posting about a small sliver of the world in which they live and a very small sliver of the world in which they have almost zero influence. This behavior is a testament to the power and influence of political think tanks, the vast resources and far reaching power of political issues, and the kind of radicalism that is being tapped into in order to fund the fight for these various oppositional beliefs.

If They Can Radicalize, Shouldn't We?

Wouldn't it be nice if libraries could tap into this kind of radicalism? I would argue that it has become a necessity for librarians to be able to speak in ways that tap into these kinds of extreme belief systems. Why couldn't similar ideologies be built around a belief system that is supportive of libraries?

One of the reasons this hasn't happened (yet) in libraries is that we haven't had the need for it before. Previous to the Great Recession, libraries had the benefit of being so well supported by the general public that they have not had to campaign to win elections. Libraries could simply place ballot measures before the people and many of them would pass without the need for well-funded or well-trained and structured campaigns. That level of passing referendum is almost unheard of in almost any other cause and we can't expect to ever surpass these levels again without highly structured and well-funded modern campaigns. But, because libraries have never had the need to learn to be politically well-positioned in communities, libraries have not had a strong culture of politics or political action in our day-to-day work. This can no longer be the case.

Currently, fewer library campaigns are winning, and those that do are winning by smaller margins and are being even further eroded by legislation that require super majorities to win tax increases. In addition, there have been increased attacks on libraries, such as the recent attack by the Koch Brothers funded Super PAC that come out against libraries. Libraries don't have the benefit of years of data and research that can be used to fight back against these kinds of attacks. Organizations like EveryLibrary are only just beginning to build the data and research needed to ensure that libraries win on election day. We are only just beginning to build radicalism into our own rhetoric. Like it or not.

Libraries need to spend time and resources on data building, on focus groups, supporter identification, and message development in order to to help build a database of radical supporters. If we can identify what messages work and encourage them to take action on behalf of libraries we can help ensure that libraries continue to be funded and continue supporting the communities they serve. To this end, EveryLibrary created a Knight News Foundation Grant Submission and are looking for other sources of funding so that we can continue our research in this area.

It's time for libraries to duplicate the efforts of national causes, political parties, and candidates and truly understand what makes Americans radically support a cause with money, time, and other resources. We need this level of radicalism on the side of libraries in order to ensure that libraries continue to exist at all and continue to serve the good of the American people.

About the Author

Patrick Sweeney is the Political Director for EveryLibrary. He is a tireless and innovative advocate for libraries. A 2007 graduate of the San Jose School of Library

1. I want to point out that there is nothing wrong with the beliefs of the individuals who comment on our Facebook Page. With their experiences and their understanding of the world around them, they have a right to believe what they believe. However, it our responsibility to understand them and their ideologies and be able to respond to them in a way that's meaningful to them.

and Information Sciences, Mr. Sweeney is the a former Administrative Librarian of the Sunnyvale (CA) Public Library and was Executive Director of EveryLibrary California, a statewide initiative to support library Propositions. He is active in the American Library Association where he is an at-large member of their governing Council and the California Library Association. His library blog is well respected, and he is a sought-after speaker and presenter. He tweets at @pcsweeney.

Library Issues at the Federal Level:
An Introduction to ALA's Washington Office and the Committee on Legislation

Ann Dutton Ewbank, J. Turner Masland, and Christian Zabriskie

Abstract

In this white paper, we outline the federal legislative agenda of the American Library Association, crafted by members and operationalized by the Washington-based ALA Office of Government Relations, which lobbies on behalf of the Association. We discuss how policy is made in ALA, including the work of the Committee on Legislation. We then explain the federal legislative issues that are advanced by ALA through the Washington Office[1]. These include: appropriations, privacy/surveillance, access to government information, copyright, school libraries, and telecommunications. We conclude with information on how to become an advocate for federal legislative issues critical to libraries, their patrons and the broader public interest.

Introduction

The American Library Association (ALA) is the largest professional library organization in the world with more than 58,000 members. You might think of the ALA as an avenue for professional development and networking with colleagues across the country. However, behind this large organization is a member-driven federal legislative agenda, operationalized by the Office of Government Relations (OGR), which employs multiple full-time lobbyists to carry out this agenda on Capitol Hill.

The OGR works in coalition with many partner organizations that share common values. Among these organizations are the American Civil Liberties Union, Center for Democracy and Technology, Committee for Education Funding, the, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Electronic Privacy Information Center, OpentheGovernment.org, Open Technology Institute, Public Knowledge, R Street Institute, and the RE:CREATE copyright coalition, among many others. Both individually, as well as together with these organizations, ALA is a powerful voice in Washington on legislative issues ranging from privacy and surveillance, to copyright, government information, school libraries and telecommunications.

You may wonder how federal legislative activity affects libraries at the local level. One striking example is ALA's lobbying efforts for the reauthorization of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). Established September 30, 1996, the LSTA provides block grant allocations to states based on population and funds important grant library? programs. LSTA monies are used to provide libraries with grants at the local level, to fund statewide databases, and to provide necessary state infrastructure so that libraries can operate smoothly. Through the efforts of ALA members and the ALA Office of Government Relations, over the last 20 years funding for this critical legislation has risen from $139 million level to $183 million in fiscal year 2016—more than 30% in 20 years (ALA, 2016a).

This is but one example of how ALA, its member leaders, and lobbying staff work for the benefit of all libraries and communities in the United States. In this white paper we will explain how an idea becomes ALA policy, discuss the current issues for which OGR advocates, and describe how you can get involved in advocacy on federal legislative library issues.

How is policy created in ALA?

How does an issue become ALA policy, which is then lobbied for on Capitol Hill by OGR? It begins at the grassroots level, initiated by ALA members, but can take many paths to becoming policy.

ALA Task Forces, Committees, Divisions, and Roundtables can bring a resolution to ALA Council, the governing body of the Association, through their representative Councilor, proposing that the Association lobby on a specific matter of federal policy or take a particular stance on a broad policy issue. Members can also propose a resolution during a membership meeting. An ALA member or a group of members can also bring an idea to a Councilor, who can then craft a resolution and propose it from the floor during a Council session. Resolutions involving such matters often are drafted by their initiators in collaboration with the Committee on Legislation, fellow Councilors, attendees at Council Forum, and members of Divisions or Roundtables.

1. The ALA Washington Office is comprised of the Office of Government Relations (OGR) and the Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP).

Resolutions which will have legislative impact which have not been through this process with COL are referred to the Committee on Legislation by Council[2].

The ALA Committee on Legislation (COL) is a committee of the ALA Council, which it advises on matters of national legislation and policy. These issues can be very complicated and involve many moving parts. It would be impossible for every member of the organization to be deeply engaged in all of these issues all of the time. Therefore, the members of the Committee are charged with vetting the issues facing libraries on matters of federal legislation. The charge of COL is as follows:

> To have full responsibility for the association's total legislative program.... To recommend legislative policy and programs for council approval and to take the necessary steps for implementation. To protest any legislative or executive policy adversely affecting libraries. To seek rulings and interpretations of laws and regulations affecting the welfare and development of libraries. To represent the ALA before the executive and legislative branches of government as required at all levels. To provide a forum within ALA to gather information about needed legislation and to keep all units of the association informed of the ALA legislative programs. To direct the activities of all units of the association in matters relating to legislation (ALA, 2016b).

The members of COL are not lobbyists, but ALA employs registered lobbyists who advocate for member-driven policy on Capitol Hill. COL acts as the membership's voice on these complex issues, and the people in the room approach the issues from librarians' and library users' perspectives. Members of COL do not have to be on Council to serve on the Committee and are appointed to two-year terms by the incoming ALA president.

Virtually every resolution that deals with federal legislative or policy issues is vetted by COL prior to its introduction on the Council floor. The Committee pores over the language of resolutions watching out for anything that might require legislative action or that could impact our nationally elected officials. For example, does the resolution call for a letter to go to Congress? In this case, the resolution is referred to COL because, if adopted, it will either enhance or inhibit the ALA Washington Office's abilities to do their lobbying work. Accordingly, the Committee exists to assist and advise Council to decide as an organization if the benefit of the resolution is worth impacting work on other potentially more pressing or long-term issues. Another example is a resolution that calls for an office to be created in the Library of Congress. This would need to be reviewed by COL because there are legislative issues that need to be addressed.

The members of COL and the lobbying professionals of OGR do not, however, act as "gatekeepers" or to control the dialogue of the organization on matters of federal legislation and policy. They are there to safeguard the best interests of the organization when dealing with complicated issues that are outside the typical work of librarianship. How do members of the Committee obtain this perspective? They attend myriad briefings, read updates from the ALA Washington Office, follow the political news closely, hold regular conference calls, and discuss issues with OGR lobbying professionals. This gives them a unique perspective on, and a deep understanding of, the issues facing libraries in the US and helps them to direct and support the lobbying efforts of ALA as a result.

Together, the ALA Council and the Committee on Legislation craft policy that directs OGR staff to advance the interests of libraries, librarians, their patrons, and the public interest on Capitol Hill. Critically, this complex process ensures that all ALA members have a real voice in forming ALA policy related to federal legislative and policy matters.

What are the issues that the Office of Government Relations lobbies for on Capitol Hill?

Appropriations

As mentioned above, LSTA grants provide funding for local libraries critical for training library staff, affording database access and helping to provide users access to information through library networks. While the majority of library funding comes from the local level, especially for public libraries (Chrastka, 2015), such funding largely covers administrative costs and collection development and maintenance. LSTA funding provides critical

2. The ALA Policy Manual, located at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual outlines the position statements ratified by ALA that direct OGR's lobbying activities.

additional resources to underwrite services to community members. For example, these grants have been used to purchase equipment, pay for subscriptions to electronic resources, and help pay for libraries to create in-house digital resources to meet users' needs (Oregon State Library, 2015). These grants come directly from the federal government through the appropriations bill which is negotiated by Congress (ALA, 2016b). In addition to LSTA grants, appropriation bills also help fund federal libraries (such as the Library of Congress, the National Agricultural Library, the National Library of Medicine), Native American Library Services, the National Leadership Grants for Libraries and K-12 school libraries (Maher, 2015).

Privacy/Surveillance

The American Library Association has long championed the fundamental right to inquiry and the rights of privacy that are prerequisites to genuine intellectual freedom (ALA, 2016d). ALA and OGR are heavily engaged in protecting the rights to privacy of library users and fighting unlawful or overbroad digital surveillance activities. Much of ALA's work in this area is done in close collaboration with like-minded non-profit organizations and, often, corporate trade associations. For example, together with dozens of other groups, ALA members and staff played a leading and very public part in Congress' passage in late 2015 of the USA FREEDOM Act, which – for the first time since September 11– made real, pro-privacy reforms in the USA PATRIOT Act to protect library patron and other "business records."

ALA is also a founding member of the Digital Due Process coalition, an organization that has been working for many years to amend the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (ECPA) to provide full Fourth Amendment protection to all electronic communications (such as email, texts, and materials of all kinds stored in the "cloud") as soon as they are created—protection they do not now have. First enacted in 1986, well before the Internet Age, ECPA has not been able to keep up with the technological advances over the last three decades, and thus the law is not providing adequate protection. At this writing, the odds are good that ECPA finally will be updated for the digital era this year.

Despite our best efforts, however, ALA is by no means always victorious. At the close of 2015, Congress adopted an Omnibus Spending Bill that included the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act (CISA) of 2015, language negotiated behind closed doors by the House leadership and Senate Intelligence Committees and inserted into that 2000+ page bill on the eve of its final approval. Passage of the Act, which is hostile to personal privacy in many fundamental ways, ends (at least for now) a fight waged by ALA and many coalition partners. While this is a setback, ALA and OGR continue to fight on behalf of libraries and the privacy rights of users in every community they serve.

Government Information

The public's open access to government information is an important element of an informed citizenry. Historically, ALA and OGR haves fought for the public's "right to know." From modernizing the Freedom of Information Act to expanding E-Government programs, ALA has been on the front lines of ensuring that the American citizenry has the ability to access information produced by the U.S. Government. One recent example of this effort has been the promotion and advocacy of the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR), which would require that all research supported by federal funding be published and archived openly. FASTR is based on the belief that research funded by public money should be easily accessed by the public and not hidden away behind publisher paywalls. Breakthroughs in technology, science and medicine are often supported by federal money, and making these breakthroughs widely available can only further such advancements.

One example of a citizen contributing to medical breakthroughs was the work of Jack Andraka who, as a high school student, invented a potential method for detecting early stages of pancreatic cancer. Access to free online scientific journals was essential to his research and critical in developing his method (BBC, 2012). While this is an unusually dramatic example, it highlights the importance of cutting edge research being accessible to the public (McGilvray, 2015).

Copyright

When it comes to content creation and dissemination, copyright is a very delicate (and often times confusing) balancing act. On one side of the scale are the financial incentives for writers, artists, inventors, scientists,

engineers, and others to create new work. By being able to profit from their new ideas, these creators are encouraged to share and market their ideas which often improve our society. On the other side of the scale is the legally protected ability of others to learn from and build upon these ideas. One intention of copyright law was to "promote the useful arts and sciences" (U.S. Copyright Office, 2016). If the scale becomes imbalanced, then this constitutionally articulated goal is thwarted. This balancing act is even more essential in the 21st century, when information sharing is so intrinsic to the health of the global economy and the pace of change and innovation is so rapid. If copyright law is so conservative that students, researchers, entrepreneurs and other new creators cannot legally use copyrighted material, innovation and all of the social and economic benefits that it provides can be hobbled. Conversely, copyright law cannot be so permissive that it is impossible to earn a living from creating and publishing new works.

Copyright law can have a major effect on our local libraries. As Jenny Backus, former Senior Policy Advisor and Head of Strategic Outreach & Engagement at Google, stated: "tomorrow's businesses are being built in today's libraries" (personal communication, October 1, 2015). Public, school, and academic libraries are creating spaces for all citizens to access new technologies and services such as digital production studios, 3D printing, mobile technology, and lessons in coding. Collectively, such facilities and resources are known as "makerspaces" and the importance of their current and future role in creating jobs and fostering innovation both by and for library users is potentially enormous. It is essential that libraries ensure that access to these technologies and the ability to build and create with them is not impeded. This is just one reason of many that ALA's work to help shape modern copyright law is so important.

School Libraries

ALA and OGR won a major victory in 2015, after a decade of work, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) passed. ESSA reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In so doing, it also expressly recognized "effective school libraries" as authorized to receive funds ultimately appropriated to implement the bill's objectives. Before the passage of ESSA, no federal legislation explicitly encouraged the use of federal funds for school library programs (Gravatt, 2015). Consequently, under the previous statute known as No Child Left Behind, school libraries suffered deep, widespread and sometimes crippling cuts to staff and programs by educational administrators under increasingly tight budgetary constraints. As a consequence of such cuts to school libraries, many teachers and educators became dependent upon their local public libraries to meet the needs left unfilled by the absence of their school librarians (Abrams, 2015). This put additional stress on public libraries, which often had to contend with their own funding shortfalls. Now that ESSA has passed, we hope to see some reversal of the damages caused by No Child Left Behind and an increase in federally supported effective school library programs across the country. Such programs are an essential resource for America's students, providing them with access to certified school librarians who can teach important lessons about information literacy, physical and digital collections maintained and curated to support their intellectual development, and to technology which will contribute to their success as global citizens.

Telecommunications

In order to provide consistent access to information, libraries need to provide consistent access to the internet. ALA and OGR work hard to ensure that the internet remains open and unrestricted for libraries. In 1996, with the Reauthorization of the Telecommunications Act, Libraries and schools benefited from the "E-Rate," a program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide discounted telecommunications and internet access (Gilroy, 2003) to libraries and schools serving low-income populations. More recently, in 2015 ALA teamed up with the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) to file an amicus brief in support of the FCC's efforts to protect and preserve net neutrality, arguing that libraries need strong open internet rules to fulfill our missions and serve our millions of patrons (Clark, 2015).

ALA also has strongly supported the Digital Learning Equity Act of 2015, which seeks to close the digital divide for school-aged children and their parents. Sponsored by Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), the bill addresses the homework gap, and the fact that even as internet access

is becoming a requirement for all children, such access is a barrier for rural and low-income students who may not have reliable internet access at home. The bill would, if passed, support innovative digital learning models while also increasing digital learning resources for educators and schools to enhance student learning. Additionally, this bill would foster strategies to support those students who do not have access to the internet outside of school (Wood, 2015).

As you can see, the American Library Association actively advocates for many issues essential to the continued health of libraries of all kinds and the diverse communities that they serve. The ALA Washington Office, driven by policy initiated by ALA members, is committed to representing the best interests of libraries on Capitol Hill.

How can you get involved?

While we strongly encourage librarians and library advocates to join ALA, the several resources available on the ALA website are freely available for ALA to members and non-members alike.

District Dispatch is the Washington Office's comprehensive online blog devoted to federal library legislative and policy issues. It is located at http://www.districtdispatch.org/. Additionally, all library and library issue supporters are urged to sign up for legislative action alerts and a weekly digest both of which are pushed to the user's email. All are excellent ways to keep up to date on federal library legislative issues.

For those seeking a great and immersive experience, the ALA Washington Office also holds National Library Legislative Day in Washington, DC each year over two days during the first week of May. Attended by roughly 400 librarians (often from all 50 states), this event consists of a day of briefings followed by state delegation visits to Congressional offices the next day. The Washington Office provides briefing materials for each participant and a packet of information to give to elected officials and their staff. During the visits, library advocates discuss federal legislative issues and how these issues affect the constituents in their state. Visits are arranged by state legislative coordinators. If you would like to attend, you can contact your state legislative coordinator. Information is located at http://www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/nlld.

For those who cannot make the trip to Washington, Virtual Library Legislative Day is held in conjunction with the in-person event. Comprehensive information is online at http://www.ala.org/united/advocacy/virtuallegday.

Finally, the ALA Committee on Legislation is always happy to hear from library advocates about federal library legislative and policy issues. A membership list is located at http://www.ala.org/groups/committees/ala/ala-lg. Library advocates can best reach the current Chair through the staff liaison located at the bottom of that page.

Conclusion

We hope that this white paper has been helpful in shedding light on both the process by which ALA policy is crafted, as well as the issues that ALA advocates for on behalf of all libraries, library users and the public. We also hope that the information contained in this white paper is of use to library advocates who work on the local level. Federal, state, and local library issues are inherently intertwined. The federal library landscape informs what happens at the state and local level. ALA, the Committee on Legislation, and the Office of Government Relations are committed to working to provide the best possible outcomes for libraries and their users. We urge you to join ALA if you are not a member and, member or not, to add your voice to the ranks of the thousands who help ALA advocate in the public interest every day.

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All Librarianship is Politcal: Educate Accordingly

Paul T. Jaeger & Lindsay C. Sarin

Special thanks to Dr. John Bertot who was instrumental in creating and shepherding the Re-Envisioning the MLS initiative.

Abstract

After participating in a multi-year project considering the future directions for library and information science (LIS) education, the authors of this paper realized an essential aspect of the nature of libraries and librarianship was continually overlooked or sidestepped in the events and discussions. That is, libraries as institutions and many of the actions of library professionals are inherently political, yet LIS education has not traditionally prepared students for them. Confronting this aspect of LIS education and the profession in general and creating curriculum that emphasizes the politics of librarianship will better prepare students to serve their patrons, their communities, and their institutions. Such an educational approach would emphasize preparing future library professionals in areas such as leadership, education, activism and advocacy, community service and engagement, policy and law, rights and justice, and marketing and evaluation, resulting in the politically-savvy librarians ready to be activists for their institutions and communities. This paper explores the design of library education, criticism of library education, and the actual environment of contemporary librarians as the context for suggesting this significant change in the focus of library education. We live in a political world, and it's time we prepare our students for this world.

Library Education Matters to A Lot of People, Not Just Librarians

The College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland has spent the past few years working on the *Re-Envisioning the MLS* project. During 2014-2015 we brought together administrators, professionals, national leaders, scholars, and other stakeholders to help us identify priorities in LIS education. In identifying priorities we focused on real discussions and asked "tough" questions about the true nature of LIS and LIS education, even going so far as to ask "do we really need the MLS anymore?" While the events and publications helped us identify many new important educational goals and outcomes for library education to pursue (Bertot, Sarin, & Percell, 2015; Bertot, J. C., & Sarin, L. 2015; Bertot, J. C., Sarin, L. C., & Jaeger, P. T. 2016). This effort also demonstrated to us the long-standing issues that have been a challenge to library education since it was first formalized.

Members of the field have a long history of self-reflection and self-doubt about the education programs that prepare them for the profession. Formalized education programs for librarianship date back 130 years in the United States. The standardized Master of Library Science (MLS)/ Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) (and other variations) degree is now over 50 years old and two-year library degrees have been the norm for more than 30 years (Murray, 1978; Swigger, 2012). Yet, distress about library education has been a continuous concern throughout this time.

In 1985, a library school professor created "An Anthology of Abuse" documenting the different criticisms of library education up to that point. These ranged from the perceived limitations of the faculty to the perceived limitations of the curriculum to the perceived limitations of the students themselves (Rothstein, 1985). This list was expanded by another author a few years later (Bohannan, 1991). In looking at the discourse, it is hard not to conclude that the library profession tends to see the new as a crisis rather than an opportunity.

In 2005, Andrew Dillon and April Norris applied the term "crying wolf" to describe the seeming need for librarianship to continually question education in the field and suggested that the perception of crisis was a way for the profession to avoid substantively changing. This avoidance of evolution was cleverly labeled the "panda syndrome" in the 1990s, reflecting an animal that has notably failed to evolve to its own detriment (Sutton & Van House, 1998; Van House & Sutton, 1996). In short, instead of perceiving changes and challenges in society, changes in technology, and changes in the needs of the profession as opportunities to improve education and in turn the impacts made by programs graduates, many in the field react to each change or challenge as "an existential crisis that threatens the nature of the field" (Jaeger, 2010, p. 290). We have, for example, viewed newspapers, recorded music, and films at various points a threat to librarianship as a profession and libraries as an institution (McCrossen, 2006; Preer, 2006).

For all of this ongoing concern, libraries have never been as widely or heavily used as they are now, nor have they provided as impressive an array of services and programs for their communities. From the library community's adoption of service roles for immigrants, to digital literacy and inclusion, government services, job training, and access to food, libraries have demonstrated their role as institutions of education, public discourse, and equality (McCook, 2002; Thompson, Jaeger, Taylor, Subramaniam, & Bertot, 2014). In short, libraries inform, enable, equalize, and lead (Bertot, 2014). Such actions occur in many different contexts: education, inclusion, employment, social services, public spaces, digital literacy, and community development, as well as other community needs (Jaeger, Taylor, Gorham, Kettnich, Sarin, & Peterson, 2014).

Along with providing access to materials in various formats (as they have done since the mid-1800s), libraries now are a primary source by which communities gain access to computers, digital literacy, and digital inclusion; access to and help with a wide range of social and government services; help in responding to disasters; partnerships with other community institutions to create new and innovative services; and advocacy for human rights and the promotion of social justice in their communities (Gorham, Taylor, & Jaeger, 2016; Jaeger, Gorham, Bertot, & Sarin, 2014; Jaeger, Taylor, & Gorham, 2015; Thompson et al, 2014). The performance of these roles is like so many things, heavily shaped by the political environment around libraries in general and the environments of the specific communities they serve.

The ever-evolving and expanding contributions of libraries represent an opportunity to re-envision and recreate the MLS degree program to better prepare students for both the amazing roles that librarians now play and ready them to be innovators of new contributions to their communities. We must make sure future librarians are being prepared for the realities of the environments in which they are going to be working, to determine and evaluate the needs and expectations individuals and communities may have, AND to respond accordingly.

The need for training future librarians for the true nature of the profession emerged rapidly and consistently throughout the Re-Envisioning the MLS project[1] . During year-one we hosted numerous speaking events and engagement sessions, conducted regional visits across the state of Maryland, spoke with a range of leaders in the information professions, in addition to continual research and analysis of relevant literature and trends. Some of the key findings identified were (see the final report for a complete list):

The Shift in Focus to People and Communities. The shift de-emphasizes collections to focus more on individuals and the communities they serve. In particular to how institutions can facilitate community and individual change and transformation through learning, making, content creation, and other forms of active and interactive engagement.

Core Values Remain Essential. Participants articulated a core set of values that are fundamental to the MLS degree and information professionals that included ensuring access, equity, intellectual freedom, privacy, inclusion human rights, learning, social justice, preservation and heritage, open government, and civic engagement.

Competencies for Future Information Professionals. Information professionals need to have a set of core competencies that include the ability to: lead and manage projects and people; facilitate learning and education either through direct or indirect instruction; to work with, and train others to use, a variety of technologies. As well as marketing and advocacy skills; strong public speaking and written communication skills; a strong desire to work with the public; problem-solving and the ability to think and adapt instantaneously; knowledge of the principles and applications of fundraising, budgeting, and policymaking; and relationship building among staff, patrons, community partners, and funders.

Knowing and Leveraging the Community. There is a need for information professionals who can fully identify the different populations and needs of the communities that they serve. By understanding their challenges and underlying opportunities, they can adapt and respond effectively to their individual needs.

The common thread among these finds for the authors

1 Visit hackmls.umd.edu for full text of all documentation and to view the archive of recorded events.

is their political nature and the political savvy necessary to address them. In order for a librarian to fully respond to individual community needs, they must understand the types of users they are working for as well as those who aren't using their services. They must identify resources needed to serve these individuals or groups, create justifications for these resources using real data, and then make the case for why the resources are necessary to those in power, whether it be the provost in a university, a principal or superintendent in a school, or to the voters who must vote to approve a new tax or millage in order to pay for new services or facilities. To be effective in these librarians must understand this political process and tactics that can be used to get them to Vote Yes.

Challenges in Library Education

University-level library education has been ongoing for nearly 150 years, and the criticisms of its failings are the same age. Even the quickest look through library discourse reveals a mind-boggling range of perceived faults – many contradicting one another – and numerous pronouncements of the death of library education. Based on a fairly random collection of papers from the past thirty years, library education has been deemed a failure because:

- We have not demonstrated the authority of our profession to other fields (Dillon & Norris, 2005);
- There is no agreed upon core of library education, so we therefore do too many different things and we cannot adequately express our value (Haycock, 2005);
- There is not enough focus on technology in library education (Watkins, 1994);
- There is not enough focus on collaboration in library education (Marcum, 1990);
- Faculty should be practitioners rather than PhDs (Eshelman, 1983);
- The library school curriculum is too narrow (Budd, 1992);
- Library education perpetuates unhelpful myths about the importance of libraries (Martell, 1984);
- Library education lacks theory (Cossette, 2009);
- Library education pays too much attention to theory (Gorman, 2003);
- There is too much emphasis on research (Cox, 2010);
- Library schools are trying to be both professional education and a research discipline (Lynch, 2008);
- Library education is too user-focused (Markey, 2004);
- Library education is trying to be both idealistic and utilitarian (Dick, 1999).

So, our programs are too broad and too narrow, too library-focused and not sufficiently library-focused; too long and too short; too technology-focused and not sufficiently technology-focused; and too theory-focused and not sufficiently theory-focused.

These are conflicting and sometimes very confusing messages especially in the context of the Re-Envisioning findings – we're too user-focused? Seriously? But while the messages surrounding LIS education are confusing there is certainly evidence that there hasn't been enough evolution in LIS education over the past 50 years.

In 1950, library school curriculum across programs tended to focus on administration, collection development, reference, classification, and history (Leigh, 1950). Many of the MLS programs today are distressingly closer to 1950 in what they teach than they are in preparing their students to work in the world of today. Markey (2004) concluded that typical course offerings could be grouped into five broad categories: organization; reference; foundations; management; and research methodology of information technology. While these are important they do not reflect the primary roles of librarianship today.

Many of these criticisms have at least some level of validity. For example, as is raised in a number of the items listed above, many library courses in information schools are taught by people who have little to no experience or interest in libraries. This situation is a loss in terms of the practical, applied knowledge that the faculty member can provide, as well as career guidance and help in networking for jobs. On the other hand, it might balance out with the diversity of perspectives added from different fields of expertise and the broader knowledge of an area – such as, expertise in management rather than just library management.

Like the issue of the background of those teaching in library and information science programs, many of the other concerns raised with regards to library education have some merit. However, most of the issues noted are usually either very small or very large and are not necessarily practical. None ultimately challenge the underlying concepts that are central to library education, and most importantly few if any acknowledge the political nature of libraries and librarianship as a central part of library

education. But first, let's examine the ways that the field currently engages – or more often does not engage – the political world.

Ride the Waves and Don't Ask Where They Go

Our field has evidenced a long-standing desire to engage in communities, yet we are often hesitant to describe our impacts on these communities. In many cases, our institutions fail to get the credit, acknowledgement, or support that they deserve in their communities because we do not clearly articulate what these institutions do and what they need to succeed. Buschman, Rosenzweig, and Harger put it well, "We somehow seem to be a profession startled to find that we really do have deeply held convictions, that our words really do have meaning and consequence, and that when we act on our professional values someone actually notices" (1994, p. 576).

Much of hesitancy to engage policy and politics and advocate for the continued survival of the institutions – and to prepare future librarians to do so – is derived from the thorny idea of neutrality. In one sense, neutrality is used to indicate that a collection should include myriad viewpoints on any topic. In the other sense, neutrality is used to assert that the institutions themselves should not have viewpoints to avoid alienating any community members.

Wanting a collection to represent a range of views is a fine goal, but wanting the profession to be neutral on issues that impact our jobs, institutions, and the people we serve is cowardice. It is also unrealistic. People have perspectives, as do publications, collections, databases, search engines, and technologies. Not a single item or person in a library is neutral. There is no way the institution or the profession can be neutral.

Nor should they be. If you want to help the communities you serve, you will not do a very good job of it if you don't fight for their rights and needs. Your institution will not be able to do much good if you do not work for funding and policy decisions that support the institution and its goals. "If the librarians cannot be motivated to take a stand on pressing social issues out of a sense of moral duty, certainly the librarians should break his or her neutrality in the name of self-interest" (Good, 2007, p. 28).

The steadfastness of this neutrality stance, in combination with libraries' struggle to articulate their value in an environment increasingly hostile to the notion of public good, frequently places libraries in the position of having major political and policy decisions happen to them, with their voice basically unexpressed, unheard, or ignored (Jaeger & Bertot, 2011; Jaeger, Bertot, & Gorham, 2013; Jaeger, Gorham, Bertot, & Sarin, 2014). The gravity of this situation is highlighted when we consider how these very decisions shape funding, freedom of access to information, intellectual property, and library management, among many other core elements that determine the extent to which libraries can successfully serve their communities.

Some librarians present a neutral – that is, apolitical – posture as an act of service to patrons, while others see the commitment to a plurality of opinions in library collections as mitigating against political engagement (Byrne, 2003; McMenemy, 2007). Neutrality, however, is an unrealistic ideal that relies on the non-existent opinion-free librarian selecting non-existent bias-free materials (Alfino & Pierce, 2001; Budd, 2006; Burton, 2009; Samek, 2001; Wiegand, 2011). Critics of neutrality have noted a huge range of additional flaws in the position (Burton, 2009; Cornelius, 2004; Durrani & Smallwood, 2006; Floridi, 2002; Graham, 2003; Shavit, 1986). As a practical matter, proclamations of neutrality are not truly representative of the reality of the activities of the library profession.

Consider the context of teaching digital literacy as an example of myriad ways in which neutrality simply does not work:

- Materials of all types – including everything online – are not neutral and, as educators, librarians must make patrons aware of this reality (Alfino & Pierce, 2001; Budd, 2006; Burton, 2009);
- Teaching people to be able evaluate among the potential information sources online is impossible if the librarian maintains a stance of neutrality pretending that some sources are not more accurate or reliable than others (Graham, 2003; Jaeger, Bertot, Thompson, Katz, & DeCoster, 2012);
- Presenting all sides of an issue as having equal moral weight is engaging in moral relativism and misleading patrons, particularly when they are searching through the great many sources of varying quality and authority online (Good, 2007);

- •Patrons will have their own views and interests, which will be part of how they learn digital literacy (Cornelius, 2004; Floridi, 2002); and, most holistically,
- •Providing free access to information is an inherently political act (Knox, 2013).

These considerations can be made more tangible by thinking about teaching digital literacy to a middle school student doing research on civil rights protests. If the first result they get in a search is the site of a hate group and the second is a news parody site, a librarian who does not explain the true nature of these sites and how to try to identify similar untrustworthy sources of information may be maintaining neutrality but is certainly not fulfilling his or her role as an educator.

By simultaneously declaring themselves central to democracy and above the world of politics that all other public institutions inhabit, libraries (public libraries in particular) have "evolved into a paradox" (Shavit, 1986, p. 3). Political and policy decisions shape what libraries can do, but libraries commonly say they want nothing to do with politics and policy. The result is a self-imposed voicelessness on many important issues with dramatic impacts on libraries, including their ability to articulate and demonstrate their central roles in their communities (Ingraham, 2015; Jaeger & Bertot, 2011; Jaeger, Bertot, & Gorham, 2013; Jaeger, Gorham, Bertot, & Sarin, 2014; Nardini, 2001). In this case, the approach of riding the waves – trying to avoid controversy or responsibility – leaves our professionals and institutions hopelessly adrift in debates that shape the institution and the contributions it can make. If we want to break this cycle, a significant rethink of the point of library education is desperately needed.

The Political World Comes to Call

Ironically, as libraries have increasingly taken on essential roles to promote human rights and social justice communities, library support – both financial and political – has been slashed at the local, state, and federal levels. This overall denigration of the value of libraries among economic, political, and policy-making circles has accelerated since the Ronald Reagan administration in the 1980s, being driven by the widespread embrace of the principles of neoliberal economic and neoconservative political ideologies. These forces work in tandem to undermine the value accorded to public goods and public services in policy-making and political contexts by demanding that public institutions demonstrate the economic contributions of service to the public. And by trying to remain divorced from political concerns, libraries have greatly increased the damage that they have suffered as a result.

The neoliberal economic ideology is an approach to the economy that extends beyond economic policy, mandating that decisions of governance be based on what is best for markets, as free markets are seen as being dependent on all decisions reinforcing their freedom. Under this approach, economic, political, and social decisions are driven by market concerns and organized by the language and rationality of markets. The neoliberal ideology is designed to support the consolidation of wealth and influence through the "creative destruction" of institutions with egalitarian objectives (Harvey, 2007a, 2007b). As such, neoliberalism is the key force in moving support away from public entities to private ones, serving to undermine the ability of many public institutions – such as libraries and schools – to meet the same goals that they were once able to (Buschman, 2012). As president, Reagan liked to frequently repeat the joke that the nine scariest words in the English language were: "I'm from the government and I'm here to help."

In 1987, after being elected Prime Minister for a third consecutive term, Margaret Thatcher stated: "There is no such thing as society;" instead "the great driving engine, the driving force of life" is individuals and groups wanting to make money (Thatcher, 1987). This statement was a clear window into the thinking of adherents of neoliberalism. Without society, nothing can be the fault of society, alleviating government of the need to look after members of society who are in need of help. Without the need to support members of a society, institutions of the public good become utterly superfluous. Now, there are at least three different major arguments that society does not exist, all emanating from the neoliberal economic ideology and being united by a central premise that rejects any central structure binding people together beyond economics (Dean, 2013). The past several decades have provided numerous other examples of this approach, with many attempts to transform previously common functions of society into ones of self-care, using the language of consumerism to do so. A famous example of this was President George W. Bush's ultimately unsuccessful proposal to change Social Security to individual retirement accounts, under which citizens would

have been left to fend for themselves in the market.
The movement to require all government functions to justify themselves in economic terms may be the essence of the neoliberal economic ideology, with many public goods being assessed as cost calculations. Al Gore spent much of his eight years as Bill Clinton's Vice President spearheading efforts throughout government – known collectively as National Performance Review studies – to focus on efficiency, productivity, and profitability rather than good governance or the public good. A little remembered part of the early development of e-government was that Gore initially advocated for it as a revenue stream for government, which would have forced citizens to pay for searches, transactions, and interactions with government that they would only be able to do online. Ultimately, the notion that all government functions can and should have a clear economic value has led to dwindling investments in and support of education, physical infrastructure, benefits, workplace safety, environmental safety, and libraries, among many other government functions.

Neoliberalism has become the driver of "policy and economic discussions," but it also "has a strong and fluid cultural aspect" (Buschman, 2012, p. 9). Thus, as the neoliberal economic ideology has greatly decreased regulation of the corporation, the moralistic aspect of the neoconservative political ideology has increased the regulation of the citizen. The neoconservative political ideology is based on the idea that the state should exercise power as moral authority rather than through representative governance. A neoconservative state is strong and willing to use that strength to accomplish policy goals that may be driven entirely by moral evaluations, such as "wars of choice." Limitations on previously established rights, such as limiting women's access to the services of reproductive choice as a way to curtail the ability to seek an abortion, amount to moralistic regulations on citizens. The moral-basis of governance is embraced by the elected officials. President George W. Bush famously spoke of his decisions in terms of "political capital" that he had earned and could spend as he saw fit, rather than in terms of trying to represent the interests and perspectives of the governed.

Under the combination of the neoconservative and neoliberal ideologies, the rights of corporations prevail over the rights of both individuals and educational institutions. When failed Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney stated, "Corporations are people, too" in a 2012 campaign speech, it was no mistake. Corporations are also much more likely than individuals to garner political support and funding for the infrastructure on which they depend – roads, railways, shipping, and power and other utilities – and the government generally acts to ensure that those corporate infrastructure needs are met.

Since the combination of these ideologies swept into common usage under the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the United States and the United Kingdom, the result has been radical change through reductions in tax rates, spending cuts for public services, deregulation, and erosions of social support for the public good. In a public discourse in which every public good can be questioned and required to demonstrate a tangible value, economic terminology began to dominate public discourse. Yet, as with librarians and library collections, economics and economic analysts are not neutral. By treating political and moral questions as being interchangeable with economic ones, these ideologies have allowed for political discourse and policy-making processes to question anything to which it is hard to assign a tangible value or that does not comply with a strict moral vision of the government. Being a public good is no longer sufficient to warrant support.

The omnipresence of these ideologies at the federal level has resulted in their widespread adoption in lower levels of government as well. Unfortunately, the market and the government provide services in very different ways. Public goods can deliver many kinds of contributions, supporting democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility (Labaree, 1997). However, because many elements of the public good are not easy to monetize, decreasing government support to them will not easily be replaced by support from the market.

In the recent years of the prolonged global economic downturn, the emphasis on the devaluing of public services has been extended under the buzzword of "austerity." While clearly an intentionally ambiguous term, austerity provides a means to justify deeper cuts into public goods and services that cannot articulate an economically-quantified value and/or that are deemed morally objectionable under the neoconservative ideology. As the language of value is based on economic contributions rather than public good, the terms of austerity are clearly biased against educational and cultural institutions

like libraries. By targeting institutions such as libraries, austerity policies ironically serve to undermine one of few institutions that exist to provide the digital literacy skills and education necessary for many people to be able participate in the workforce.

The economic climate in the country has played a tremendous role in how the value of information is discussed, which in turn has affected how libraries operate. In the early 1980s, Sheldon Wolin (1981) described a shift from political rhetoric and belief informed by intellectual and philosophical groundings (e.g., English common law and the Enlightenment) to a political landscape that placed enormous emphasis on the economy and capitalism. The current situation, as it has evolved since the start of the Great Recession, serves as a microcosm for the interrelationship between public libraries, policy-making, and political processes.

Politicians often campaign on platforms that emphasize austerity (any tax is a bad tax) and cost-cutting, and aggressively cut budgets of libraries and other institutions for the public good. All the while, earlier policy decisions that weakened the economy have led to an increasing number of people turning to public libraries for help with finding a job, applying for social services, interacting with government agencies, and learning new digital skills through the technology access and assistance provided by the library, as well as availing themselves of entertainment options for which they can no longer afford to pay (Bertot, Jaeger, & Greene, 2013; Sigler et al, 2012; Taylor, Jaeger, McDermott, Kodama, & Bertot, 2012).

Notwithstanding a growth in demand for their services, libraries are increasingly appearing in political debates as a symbol of big government by politicians who seek to curtail spending and/or limit social mobility of underrepresented populations (Bertot, Jaeger, & Sarin, 2012). Additionally, many laws have been passed in the last two decades that bring political debates – filtering, copyright, national security, privacy – into the library, affecting both library functions and perceptions of libraries (Jaeger, Gorham, Bertot, & Sarin, 2014).

Even though the main economic arguments for austerity in America were based on poor assumptions with data, incorrect math, and data errors in spreadsheets that resulted in wildly incorrect results, these arguments continue to hold sway among conservative policy-makers (Herndon, Ash, & Pollin, 2013). The end result is that, despite libraries increasingly taking on essential roles to ensure access to information and create digitally inclusive communities, library support at local, state, and federal levels has dwindled. Libraries have often failed not only to directly engage these political issues, but also to even define their essential roles within these issues in a way that resonates with policy-makers concerned primarily with the economic contributions of public services. If we do not prepare information professionals for these realities, we will continue to be unable to engage in these arenas that are vital to the survival of our institutions.

A Library is Inherently Political

As the above discussion hopefully makes clear, libraries are significantly affected by politics in many ways that shape what the institutions can do, what they are required to do, the ways in which they are perceived, and the ways in which they are treated in public discourse and the media. Trying to avoid being politically engaged, even under the cover of "neutrality," actively hurts libraries, as we are silent about or unprepared to deal with many of the political issues that directly impact our institutions.

The silence on political issues also means that the contributions of libraries they need to convey to their communities, policymakers, funders, and politicians are often unspoken outside the insular world of librarianship. When you do not convey your contributions to the public good, it allows those with competing interests to downplay such contributions, likely for political reasons. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and other major hurricanes along the Gulf Coast in the mid-2000s, libraries played enormously important roles in emergency response and recovery, helping reunite families that had been separated in evacuations, assisting in filling out insurance and FEMA forms, distributing aid and supplies, and much, much more (Bertot, Jaeger, Langa, & McClure, 2006a, 2006b). However, as libraries did not emphasize these contributions and successes to political figures, FEMA was able to take credit for much of the work of libraries – while repeatedly asserting that libraries were of no help – to cover for their own failings and incompetence in response and recovery (Jaeger, Langa, McClure, & Bertot, 2006; Jaeger, Shneiderman, Fleischmann, Preece, Qu, & Wu, 2007).

There is one further political dimension to libraries – their very nature. Creating an institution for the purpose of educating the community with resources and assistance that they can use without cost is an inherently political act. A library represents a political stance, an assertion of the value of spreading knowledge and the importance of equal opportunities. "But what is more important in a library than anything else – than everything else – is the fact that it exists" (MacLeish, 1972, p. 359). To deny the political nature of a library is to deny what makes the institution so unique and so successful.

The inherently political nature of libraries can also be seen in the ways in which they are attacked. From Forbes proclaiming that an MLS is the worst Master's degree, to campaigns for closing libraries to save money, to claims that Google has replaced libraries, attacks on libraries have a political root in either neoliberal economics or neoconservative politics. The library is frequently chosen as the target because of its success as an institution that challenges the status quo and the powerful. Libraries threaten the politically and economically powerful by trying to empower the most vulnerable and disenfranchised community members to promote equity of opportunity. Educated and empowered masses are much harder for the powerful to control.

Library Education for the Political World

If building and operating a library is an inherently political act and libraries are constantly interacting with the political world, then library education needs to prepare future librarians to successfully navigate a politicized profession. This approach would be a considerable change from the way in which the field has conceived of education thus far, but, as we have tried to detail above, it is a very necessary change for the vitality and sustainability of the field and its institutions. To be the activists that their communities need and effective advocates for their institutions from the day they graduate, LIS students must be well prepared for the political nature of their chosen careers.

Librarianship is a job based on hope. The hopes of teaching children to read, of promoting digital inclusion, of helping people find jobs, of teaching students how to use databases for research, of welcoming newcomers into the community, and so much else. These hopes are the reasons that most people chose to pursue an MLS/MLIS; these hopes are also what make libraries so uniquely valuable to their communities. Librarians and libraries exist solely to make things better. But being hopeful and wanting to help is not enough for libraries to be successful today. These hopes and the ability to contribute to communities rest on very practical issues of funding and support and policy.

Many educational components can go into preparing current students to be activist librarians ready to engage the political realities that surround the practice of librarianship. At a minimum, MLS/MLIS students need to be immersed in:

- Activism and advocacy – engaging policymakers, politicians, funders, local institutions, and community members about the needs and contributions of the library;
- Leadership – serving as innovators and organizers in their institutions and their communities;
- Public policy and the law – understanding the processes of law and policy and the ways in which they can impact the library, as well as the existing laws and policies that shape the activities of the library;
- Finance, grants, and funding – awareness of budgets and funds sufficient to articulately express the use of funds and the reasons for funding, as well as the skills to approach outside sources for additional funding;
- Marketing and evaluation – generating substantive qualitative and quantitative data about the library and creating effective narratives about library activities and impacts;
- Partnerships/collaboration – building partnerships with other local institutions allows libraries to expand their impact and recognition considerably, achieving much that would not be possible on their own;
- Education and literacy – teaching roles of librarianship, particularly with technology, are key parts of elements of the unique contributions of libraries;
- E-government and social services – the application for and the delivery of social services through libraries – particularly through library technology – is a key intersection of libraries and politics and policy;
- Community outreach and engagement – an important dimension of building and sustaining support in political contexts is building community support and mustering that support when it is needed; and

- Human rights and social justice – libraries play major human rights and social justice roles in their communities and describing library activities in these terms helps to build an easy-to-comprehend narrative of the contributions and necessity of the library in the community.

This list may not be complete, but it is what we have figured out thus far. At different LIS institutions, these components could be given different weights depending on the focus of the institution, the location of the institution, and the primary employers of their graduates.

The politically-prepared, activist librarian will be ready to demonstrate and communicate the value of the library to all of its stakeholders, policymakers, and funders. This approach does not mean preparing students to lobby for specific candidates, engage in politicking, and put political signs on the front lawn of the library; it means preparing students to fight for the library and the people who depend on it. Political and social changes of the past several decades have made it abundantly clear that we cannot rely on others to fight these fights for us. We must inspire our own new professionals to be activists and advocates.

A library "is an achievement in and of itself – one of the greatest of human achievements because it combines and justifies so many others" (MacLeish, 1972, p. 358). Since that sentence was written, the changes to the political, social, technological, and media environments around libraries have been titanic. The inherent truth of the sentence, however, has not changed. The evolution of libraries over the past four decades has been one of growth, expanding their contributions to their communities in myriad ways, inspired both by the capabilities of new technologies and the dwindling roles of the institutions of the public good.

Libraries serve more individuals and greater percentages of their communities than ever before, in traditional ways and in ways that could not have been imagined even twenty years ago. Since our institutions and their contributions have changed so greatly in recent years, we need to expand how future professionals are prepared for the field. Libraries as institutions and librarianship as a profession is inherently political; it is long past time that we educate students accordingly.

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On The Politcal Nature of Library Leadership

John Buschman

Abstract

This paper examines the political nature of library leadership and acknowledges consistent problems within the management and leadership literature. The political nature of leadership is offered as an insight versus the usual imitation of business management discourse. A critical theory of library leadership is offered. The paper proceeds by examining what we mean by "leadership" and "political" and how those concepts relate before analyzing what has changed to call forth a critical interpretation and framework for library leadership. It moves on to examine insights from political theory that are instructive within contemporary contexts.

Introduction

A recent editorial noted that "critically positioned research" and work "at the intersections of critical theory and library practice … employing philosophical … or historical inquiry" holds significant analytical value for the Library and Information Science (LIS) field (Elmborg & Walter, 2015, p.4). This article employs one such approach to better understand the changed political environment of library leadership and to a library's publics and organization. It is also an attempt to redefine an overly-constricted understanding of the political nature of leadership within the field, and in the process to acknowledge perennial problems within the management, administrative, and leadership literature[1]. Again, the political nature of leadership is offered as an insight into these problems versus the usual attempt to reflect those circumstances back into a theory that would inevitably be a simplified imitation of business management fads and fashions. "Replete with their careful styling and image intensity such initiatives are now widely characterized" as promotional fads within management literature itself (Clegg & Carter, 2007, p. 2715), and in turn it is widely asserted that somehow "libraries benefit from the same kind of leadership styles found in corporations" (Maloney in Jackson 2010, p. 85)[2]. In short, this is a *critical* theory of library leadership – critical in that it is "explanatory, practical, and normative" (Bohman, 1996, p.190). Prior to plunging into the circumstances of librarianship, some basic terminology needs to be established. Proceeding first by examining the meaning of "leadership" and "political" – and how those concepts relate – is necessary before analyzing what has changed to call forth a different, critical interpretation and framework for library leadership. The article then moves on to examine insights from political theory, which are instructive within contemporary contexts.

On "Leadership" and "Political"

What then do we mean by the terms "leadership" and "political?" This attempt to frame the concepts will not establish definitive benchmarks – both concepts have been the object of theoretical speculation for millennia. But they will be formulated to be practical – that is responsive to contemporary issues and to overcome some of the weaknesses of the management literature. The first step is acknowledging the distinction between managing and leading – an old and somewhat controversial one. Managing still largely tends to be based on "effectiveness and efficiency in reaching organizationally set goals" (Lowry, 1988, p. 23) and managers tend to focus on processes, rules, and conflict resolution to achieve them (Zaleznik, 1993, p. 174; Phillips, 2014, p.337). It is common to find institutions that are well managed but poorly led: the routines are performed well, but the question of whether they should be performed at all remains unasked (Bennis, 1993, p. 167). Leadership thus concerns broader frameworks: where one's institution fits, integration of constituencies, vision and values, non-rational factors like commitment and loyalty within the organization and the evolution of goals and/or purposes (Gardner, 1993, p.160; Meyer and Zucker, 1993, p. 286). Leadership generally – and perhaps especially in libraries – is concerned with organizational culture: the "pattern of basic assumptions that a given group [holds] in learning to cope with its problems … and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore are passed on to those who are new to the organization" (Schein, 1993, p. 46; Buschman, 2013). When the distinctive nature of leadership in non-profits generally – and libraries specifically – is factored in (Lowry 1988; Herman & Heimovics,

1. Hereinafter this will be referred to as the more common term "management literature"

2. On the influence of fads, fashion, imitation and cycles in the management literature see Hendry 2013, 79-81; on the derivative and imitative nature of the parallel library literature see Day 2002;1998.

1994; Mintzberg, 1996), it is little wonder that leadership is called a "liberal art" requiring not just knowledge, but self-knowledge (Drucker, 1993, p. 22). Leadership has been described as playing a "variety of roles in complex organizations…represent the [organization] to the outside world, liaise with external networks, monitor information about … performance, disseminate information throughout the organization, initiate change, handle disturbances and settle conflicts, allocate resources and carry on negotiations" (Rondinelli,, 2004, p. 951). Leadership is thus defined here as effectiveness in a variety of roles to produce positive organizational outcomes, *not* as so commonly cast a definable set of personal attributes, habits, qualities, or traits (detail-oriented, visionary, persuasive, charismatic, etc.). Interestingly, some prior definitions came close to these ideas before quickly lapsing into management skill sets, leadership traits, and behavior theories (Euster, 1984, p. 45) – a pattern repeated over and over in the management literature in librarianship (see Phillips, 2014; Lynch, 2004, p. 33).

The second definition is of the political – and it connects back directly to leadership. For purposes here, the political concerns what is shared or held in common (Wolin, 2004; Mara, 1997, p. 115). That is, in this case it is organizational: the good of the library and the good the library does for the institution and/or publics it serves. In other words, our definition of political is critical and normative (Warren, 1999b, p. 208-209): good leadership enfolds a broader good – of the library, and its role in the goods of its community; bad leadership is the converse. The political-ness of an issue arises when there is an investment in the consequences of decisions and/or a broader good (Dewey, 1927, p. 15-16). It is further constituted by a time element – past decisions affect the present, and present decisions will bring future consequences, creating political space: the "locus [of] tensional forces" during the period of discussion and resolution (Wolin, 2004, p. 8). It is in this sense that both political and nonprofit management theorists recognize that the work of the state and governance is conducted through and in organizations and institutions (like nonprofits, schools, universities, and libraries) as well as traditional political venues; those institutions in turn exhibit many of the hallmarks of politics (Perlmutter and Gummer, 1994, p. 236; Wolin, 2004, p. 374-375). The political is thus not reducible to the merely social (the result of human association), nor to a set of behaviors (debate or voting), or a game (e.g. rational choice theory), nor constituted by the mere presence or exercise of authority and/or power and/or conflict over "who gets what, when [and] how," and it is not the equivalent of collective action (Lasswell in Warren 1999b, p. 212).

The exercise of power in leadership is taken seriously here: the loss of a job is on par with a birth, a death, a marriage, a divorce, or a serious illness (https://benefits.stanford.edu/life-events-overview), and allocating or cutting services or resources can transform (for good or ill) a portion of one's community or a department at one's institution. This is clearly political in nature, but to stop there is too restrictive. The political nature of leadership now routinely extends to the definition and interpretation of issues and problems within the organization since "the definition of the alternatives is the supreme instrument of power," (Schattschneider in Lubienski 2001, p. 640). Further, a broad unwillingness "to accept without question … traditions, routines, habits, and customs" is a hallmark of our current era, and again normative issues are at stake (Warren, 1999b, p. 209). Thus the political nature of library leadership emerges with the "pressures for collectively binding resolutions" under conditions of "groundlessness [when] forms of shared knowledge fray and become contestable [and] interactions are no longer predictable," yet relationships and order and progress "must somehow be restored, adjusted, or established under pressure of needs for … decision and action" in the political space of decisional tension (Warren, 1996, p. 244-245, 247). There is strong a tendency in our field to simplify and equate this merely to policy, funding, or technology changes, but two perspectives illustrate a deeper level of complexity. Postman (1988, p. 40) noted some time ago that our concepts of intellectual freedom were technologically outdated: "there is … no such thing … in the sense that everyone and everything benefits by their increase," that is, our always-emerging new media "gives and takes away [aspects of intellectual freedom, but] not [always] in equal measure." For instance, the gains in information access via smartphones come with a significant degradation of privacy. Further, Latour (2004, p. 227) notes that critical approaches have been lately turned on their head: the efforts to "detect the real prejudices hidden behind the appearance of objective statements" has been co-opted by conservative anti-global warming forces as a tactic, and has led to a situation where we must "now … reveal the real objective and incontrovertible facts hidden

behind the *illusion* of prejudices." In other words, both authors argue that a simplistic approach to information provision, its relationship to truth and the advancement of democracy (Wiegand, 2015) is hopelessly naïve and will easily be outflanked in our complex and shifting environment. *Leadership* under these conditions is *political*. That is, decisions are made about the use of coercion, power, persuasion, compromise, deliberation, explanation, and so on, and what the solution will and should be for the common (library/institutional/community) good under highly unstable conditions.

What Has Changed?

In asserting a changed environment, we must first acknowledge the continuities in the field: "The technical and managerial skills required to run a library in 1876, the year that the American Library Association was founded, remained relatively unchanged for almost a century [and] the nature and rate of technological change … had little impact on library operations" for a hundred years, give or take (Castiglione, 2006, p. 289). And while it is universally acknowledged that technology is changing libraries, "there is much that libraries do that they used not to do, but surprisingly little that they used to do that they don't do now" (O'Donnell, 2011). In other words the new requirements of leadership are layered on to the old. In turn, "librarians have listed, debated, revised, and negotiated lists of [leadership] competencies … since the beginnings of formal education for librarianship," that is, for almost 130 years (Jordan, 2012, p. 38). So what is really new? To begin, there is a new dimension of political conflict within library leadership. A recent article noted that several high profile academic library leadership resignations, dismissals, and retirements have come about for a variety of seemingly local reasons (funding, space planning, digital initiatives and the resulting conflict with liberal arts faculty over the future of book collections, decision-making processes, and upper administration initiatives), but the commonality is the negotiation of change in an environment where "libraries are trying to figure out what they are and what their future is and what their role is," (Straumsheim, 2014b; 2014a)[3]. The changes to be made, how those changes are decided – and by whom – and how they are communicated have become major political issues with significant career and institutional consequences, and the public nature of a conflict adds to the new dimension. It is not that this never happened in the past, but figuring out a future and a role now takes place within an environment that is highly unstable (groundless), and thus politically different. Libraries are "often told to run their organizations 'like a business' [but] when a library [leader] takes a risk and fails [like a business], the entire program can be seen as wasteful. Can the director of a library afford to don the black mock turtleneck of a visionary entrepreneur like Steve Jobs and still stay employed," (Kander & Potter, 2015)? Probably not, but in turn, "much of the responsibility for adapting to a changing information environment seems to fall to library directors who forge ahead at their own risk" (Ward, 2015).

Many variables are now simply beyond the specific control of individual library leaders, and have been for some time: the parent government/school and its outside influences, the internal accounting system and structure, the demands of the variety of users, technological changes introduced by vendors and user technology expectations, interdependence among libraries and the vendors who sell to libraries in turn face many of the same issues, increasing complexity still further (Hayes & Brown, 1994). The description of the variety of roles within leadership captures this. A recent update of an academic library strategic plan illustrated this well: the "…29 remaining [action items] un-done…were deemed largely un-doable – many are related to the effects of [construction on campus], others…on continually delayed construction funding from [the state university system], and yet others appear to be impossible to attain in our current environment" (http://potsdam.libguides.com/strategicplanning2014), There are again strong parallels in public libraries (Hu, 2015). To add to this political complexity, there is now also the demand that library leaders operate democratically and in support of democratic society: "an institution cannot foster democracy without practicing it" (Buschman, 2007, p. 1493; 2012; 2003; Byrne, 2004; Ford, 2012; Jaeger, Bertot, & Gorham, 2013). This is partially an outgrowth of management changes in response to changing environments: restructured library workplaces that emphasize decentralization, work autonomy, and highly skilled and more interesting knowledge work more than implies a politically efficacious say in the direction

3. In turn, these incidents generated a considerable amount of discussion among academic library directors. Such situations are in no way limited to academic libraries: see Berman, 2015; Rosenwald, 2015; Peet, 2015; Wade, 2013; Riley, 1997.

of the workplace (Day, 1997). The second demand is in response to common platitudes about the role of libraries and education in democracies (Wiegand, 2015; Buschman, 2007)[4].

The Deeper Structures of Change

As compelling and interesting as these issues might be to current library leaders and those in LIS, they are essentially epiphenomena. Empirical descriptions indicating the deeper changes abound:

- My sense is that administrators look at libraries as something that is easy to cut or easy to subsume under an IT department, because it feels as though when library materials become electronic, they are best managed by, say, an IT department instead of being managed by the library (Tully in Straumsheim, 2014b).
- The shifting rhetoric has seen library funding receive serious cuts worldwide as the confluence of digital technologies, capitalism, and democracy creates a perceived sense that "traditional" libraries are hoary substitutes for the Internet (Ingraham, 2015, p. 153).
- The effort to modernize … libraries has prompted one fiscal expert to question whether officials should also be looking at whether they could, or should, downsize … given the move toward a digital age (Hu, 2015).

These quotes come in an era and in the face of *increased* usage of, need for, and engagement with libraries by their campuses and communities (Fiels, 2011; Hu, 2015; Wiegand, 2015). So what exactly is going on? Hall (1994, p. 27) reviews the broad history of American nonprofits and notes a set of sea-changes:

> Reagan … who proclaimed himself a friend of private initiative, set about increasing the responsibilities of private sector initiatives by proposing cutbacks in federal spending and encouraging localities and voluntary groups to "take up the slack"…[T]hese efforts… were framed by a belief that the nation's nonprofits were primarily supported by individual and corporate giving and by the labor of volunteers, [which] utterly failed to grasp…that by 1980, government itself was the largest single source of nonprofit revenues…Even organizations that had resembled traditional charities before the Reagan era were compelled by a combination of federal budget cuts, weakened tax incentives for giving, and economic uncertainties, to move away from dependence on donations and toward a variety of [entrepreneurial] strategies.

As a result of broader economic changes (the decline in the manufacturing sector and the shift to a service economy, global off-shoring, the rise of the financial sector), nonprofit governance also changed in character, "tend[ing] to alter the standards by which nonprofits were managed and their degree of commitment to communities and their traditions … [and] at the same time, the financial pressures on states and municipalities produced a decreasing willingness to accept nonprofit's claims of devotion to public service at face value," (Hall, 1994, p. 29-30). In short, nonprofits were steered into the neoliberal era with its concomitant assumptions – a series of assertions about human nature and the best social, political, and economic arrangements for that nature: that people are rationally motivated by self-interest, that the market is the best mechanism to channel those interests, that the state's hierarchical and bureaucratic restraints thwart the market and/or privilege certain groups or activities, that state action in the name of the public good is therefore ineffective or does harm, that the state should therefore be weak in the name market choice and ideally itself subject to market discipline in its budgets, and that at

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4. The focus on leadership here is not a step back from democratic commitments in social or workplace terms. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall thinking theoretically about politics now means an acceptance of democratic principles (Mara 2008, 1). Leadership is itself not automatically un-democratic. Some in fact argue it is a necessary component to a functioning democracy – both as a political system and organizationally (Sartori 1962, 118-120). This perspective is captured in a blog comment:

> [A]s much as I'm all for democratic decision-making, I've rarely seen it work at my library. … [O]ur director wants … buy-in [and] pushes committee decision-making reflect[ing] the diversity of the library … (i.e. … assign[ing] persons from multiple departments rather than just those with hands-on knowledge). This means that a committee [on] redesign of the library website might include persons who have no knowledge of web design or the principles of site architecture. Those who have a better grasp of design principles often end up locking horns with those who think it's as simple as formatting a Word document [and] decision-making … drags on…. I would prefer that a very small group of people (2-3 people) with hands-on knowledge of the issue come up with recommendations that can be pitched to a larger group rather than making decisions within a larger group/committee (in Ford 2012)

the same time the state must exercise its power to bring about these economic and social policies (Dunleavy, 1992, p. 3-4; Apple, 2005, p. 271-293; Halsey et al., 1997, p. 254-262, 356-362; Clarke, et al., 2007). Library leaders have formulated responses that frequently mimic and reinforce these broad patterns and assumptions by simply imitating business management practices and fads: adopting accountability/social capital/return-on-investment analyses of the institution, outsourcing core functions like collections and management, renovating spaces to mimic retail environments, and investing in faddish technology and eroding core functions (Buschman, 2012; 2003). As a result, many libraries now bear the classic hallmarks of transformational changes in their legitimacy: in (seemingly) their sector (formerly clearly nonprofit), in the nature of its professionalism, in technology, in mission, in structure, in funding, and in societal values (Perlmutter and Gummer, 1994, p. 232-234.). It is this environment that poses those new political challenges and dangers to library leadership: navigating (or not) between extremely diverse visions – each with its own vocal public – of how libraries should operate, and for what purpose[5].

The Shortcomings of the Management Literature and the Narrow Definition of "Political"

Thirty years ago Bennis (in Lowry, 1988, p. 1) wrote that "Decades of academic analysis have given us more than 350 definitions of leadership … but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and … what distinguishes *effective* leaders from *ineffective* leaders…. Never have so many labored so long to say so little." This basic perspective has been expressed time and again in reviews of the literature: ten years prior to Bennis (Stogdill in Euster 1984, p. 46), a decade ago (Mullins & Linehan, 2006, p. 239-240), and in a very recent ten-year review of the literature within librarianship (Phillips, 2014, p. 337). Current estimates state that there are 140,000 books on the topic for sale on the web, and 400 million websites offering advice (Burkhart, 2015, 14). The theories have long described a "narrow, stylized process that … has … little connection with what effective [leaders] actually do" according to Mintzberg (1996, p. 78). In assessing the management literature and its application to librarianship, authors in LIS find "no significant correlation … between specific traits and effective leadership," (Lowry, 1988, p. 7) and the "contentious, fragmented nature of contemporary … knowledge [and] conflicting research paradigms for the study of organizations and management [which] presents serious difficulties … to use them to improve the practice of library administration," (Day, 2002, p. 231; Fagan, 2012). A little context sums up and illustrates these points: an annual management literature review within librarianship for three years running covered an average selection of over 250 management and leadership articles in or relevant to the field per year, one of which included an article about animal leadership metaphors – as in the "lion [who] dominates without a great deal of effort, eating others when it needs to, but relaxed for the rest of the time" – and two of which included glosses on business literature reviews that themselves concluded that there was substantial "weakness in the literature" and it "fail[s] to provide a method to translate theory into action" (Ward, 2000; 2001; 2002)[6].

There *are* sensible and interpretively flexible volumes within librarianship that demonstrate a more mature approach to the subject. They are not purely imitative of business management trends and acknowledge approaches with long theoretical histories, current variations, and blending: a "contingency theory" of leadership to basically "beg and borrow from [various theories] that seem most relevant to a given situation," and in the end, to "realize that the true test of [one's] efforts … will be in your people, your performance, and the results … regardless of what – if any – theory underlies your actions" (Gordon, 2005, p. 263, 285; Hussey 2013a; 2013b). They acknowledge the fundamental problems in the literature on leadership ranging from the recognition that theories fade and resurge and that new ones arise all the time but do not always acknowledge their debt to classic approaches (Gordon, p. 2005; Velasquez, 2013; Lowry, 1988). In addressing these difficulties, many sources in the business, non-profit, and library management litera-

5. Libraries are not particularly alone in this. The former president of Cornell University notes that "With college replacing high school as the required ticket for a career, what used to be a quiet corner is now a favorite target of policymakers and pundits [and] there is a cottage industry build around such [analyses]. … [M]ost public discussion of higher ed today pretends that students simply receive their education … the way a person walks out of Best Buy with a television (Rawlings 2015).

6. It must also be noted that this literature is wearisomely repetitive.

ture acknowledge its political facet, a "neglected aspect of organizational functioning" (Tushman, 1977, p. 207)[7]. The first two of these literatures tend to focus on allocation, the exercise of or struggles over power, resolution of conflicts, and negotiating compromise. The literature in LIS does acknowledge politics, but in the reduced perspective of emphasizing the complexity of the policy environment. Further, there is an explicit reference in all of these literatures to concepts that are deeply political in character[8]. However, they tend to deploy them in naïve and/or instrumental manners: "Every time your library promotes something, it is making a withdrawal [from its social capital]. If your withdrawals exceed your deposits, your library effectively becomes a community leech" (Solomon, 2013, p. 36). The simple fact of change in technological or fiscal terms or in professional practices and skills is reductively cast as the extent of library leadership's political challenges (Phillips, 2014, p. 341; Weiner. 2003, p. 6). This is the organizing principle of an entire annual review volume on "librarianship in times of crisis" (Woodsworth, 2011, p. xi-xvii), itself illustrating the crisis culture in library leadership: "a fundamentally shallow analysis of the nature of events buffeting the profession, and the continual naming of and responding to crisis," essentially "inventing ideologies to justify acting ideologies out" (Buschman, 2003, 1 p. 12).

Given the interrelated definitions put forward near the beginning of this article and the nature of the complexity of roles within circumstances of groundlessness, I am suggesting that library leadership must become more politically mature, less politically naïve. And furthermore, that maturity can be rooted in some of the longstanding insights of political theory. The logic in almost inexorable: if the management literature itself – spanning a number of fields – consistently acknowledges its own faddishness, lack of rigor, lack of replicability, repetition, internal inconsistencies, and shallowness, then a fresh look at the insights of a differing intellectual perspective on the subject is called for. This analysis will not slip back into the heroic or trait characterization of leaders or leadership, merely deploying a political stage setting. Nor is this a call to read pop titles that categorize political leaders as types of animals or analyze the "management style" of political leaders in history. Rather, this attempt at a critical theory is practical: to "compose a coherent network of concepts and abstractions in order to analyze what is going on" around one (Wolin, 2004, p. 504).

(Lightly) Deploying the Insights of Political Theory

We are clearly in a more complex environment than is captured by the epiphenomena of mere policy changes, budget conundrums or the introduction of new technologies. Leading a library is now clearly more complex than the imposition of order, organization, and rewards on the interactions of a group of autonomous individuals each rationally pursuing their own preferences and maximizing rewards (classic business management and rational choice assumptions). A system of rational rewards and punishments can't really be constructed in such a way to effectively lead an organization of actual people, and in fact conceptually flattens them and their institutions because people operate on many normative, altruistic, and communal levels and bases (Sen, 1977; Olsen, 2008; Schwartz, 2015). We also know that organizations (like libraries) are now some of the most important contemporary sites where political issues such as fairness, cooperation, trust-building, and community are worked out in society (Wolin, 2004, p. 603-604; Buschman, 2012; Pawley, 2009; Paulsen, 2003; Eliasoph, 2002). Knowing all of this and facing conditions of groundlessness, it is little wonder that the more sensible among library leadership and management consultants advise that their skills are as "detectives, not fortune tellers," and that good leaders are "luck makers, not risk-takers," progress being best made through "small bets" (Kander & Potter, 2015). In other words, library leadership is now operating in multiple roles, in political and unstable circumstances that present challenges that the fault lines of the various leadership and management literatures are inadequate to address. It is time to deploy other resources.

The claim here is not that political theory has discovered or invented wholly new categories of leadership analysis – the same topics have been debated over time and in other fields that tend to borrow or "discover" their relevance at some point. Rather, the point is that political theory tends to emphasize some topics more, and deploys a perspec-

7. See also Friedland and Palmer 1984 in the business field; Herman and Heimovics 1994; Perlmutter and Gummer 1994 – both in the non-profit field; Budd 2007; Jordan 2012; Jaeger, Bertot, and Gorham 2013 – in LIS.

8. For instance, concepts such as community, justice, and social capital. See for example Davenport and Snyder 2006; Mintzberg 2009; Clegg and Carter 2007.

tive that looks at situations and organizations differently than the management literature in LIS and beyond. This analysis deploys some of the insights and critical themes from another disciplinary perspective for a different view of the new circumstances of library leadership. Toward that end, three persistent themes from political theory will be briefly reviewed, followed by a conclusion that attempts to draw these strands together.

1) *Community*

Put plainly, community has been in decline for some time. Putnam's (1995a; 1995b) extensive data on the decline of sociability and people's rootedness in their communities is an example. Politically and socially the fallout ranges from diminished trust and cooperation to a lack of shared values as the basis of debate and communication, and ultimately, to failing political and economic arrangements (Mara, 2008, p.93-95; Putnam, 1995a; 1995b). As alluded to previously, political theory tells us that institutions can be the carriers of a meaningful form of community (Bellah, 1998; Paulsen, 2003; Cohen, 1986) – "sites at which individuals actually encounter the structures of the wider society" (Pawley, 2009, p. 81) and places of "social and legal relationships which will best promote a mature and responsible neighborliness appropriate to an urban, bureaucratized, and rational (rather than local and patriarchal) social order" (Baltzell 1968, p. 11). That is all well and good, but what have we really lost and what is the point of relevance to libraries? Thinking through a description of a (very) much older workplace helps us to capture some of the answers. Though it was still clearly a place of work and of business, people who inhabited those workplaces encountered them as a community or a quasi-family with a clear sociology – a demarcation of who-works-where-on-what and how they relate to other clearly defined areas. There were hierarchical divisions, and they were sometimes unfair, even exploitative, but they were experienced as stable, knowable, and durable. Work relationships were personal, and personal relationships often encompassed work: "in a [place] organized like this, everyone belongs, everyone has his [or her] circle of affection, every relationship can be seen as a … relationship" in fact; people who work "very close together and for a very long time … generate … emotional power" in the form of attachments or dislikes; the workplace was of human scale, negotiable, quite tactile, familiar, and the sexes and different ages of people freely mixed together in "balanced" and "healthy" interdependent social units (Laslett, 1962, p. 86-90)[9].

While this represents a stylized and somewhat idealized account, a moment's reflection on the history, culture and sociology of libraries reveals a not-entirely-dissimilar form of community that users and library workers would naturally want to retain. Work groups of about two dozen to one hundred people are, by today's standards, quite intimate and knowable. The institution is still satisfyingly tactile. The stability and know-ability of encountering a library as a user and/or the library workplace *is* a pleasant thing. Libraries are mixed and often balanced social units – both as workplaces and as users experience them. It is not wrong for people to want – even expect – a modest amount of predictability in their daily existence and a library with familiar personal connections and artifacts is not one they are likely to give up happily for good reason. As the breakup of these kind social and economic arrangements proceeds (that is, as we lose community), the ability to draw on familiar sources of assistance, stable routines, relationships, resources and tools "seem[s] a distinctly hard bargain" for a very uncertain set of outcomes (Hobsbawm, 1962, p. 191). People value the communal aspects of a library for reasons that are not irrational, and political theory tells us that these kinds of social interdependencies and solidities can help to bridge competing purposes and centrifugal force on and within institutions (Wolin, 2004, p. 258). Again, a moment's reflection on the examples of leadership changes (and conflicts previously discussed and documented) suggests that particular visions of space and collections were being pursued without shared and common purposes. Particular administrative knowledge about or perspective on the library "cannot be at one and the same time accessible to the few and yet serve as the vital bond holding [a] community together," the "satisfaction of fresh demands" seemingly are being met "at the expense of less-favored groups" (Wolin, 2004, p. 60-61). Political problems simply converted into administrative ones seemingly unmask the nature of power wielded by and through institutions "in an organizational age which longs for community" (Wolin, 2004, p. 153, p. 282, p. 319). These situations have

9. The author was not overly-sentimental: this "was no paradise, no golden age of equality, tolerance, and loving-kindness" and the exploitation could be every bit as brutal as the unregulated capitalism of 19th century.

consequent and distinct forms of political fallout. Hence we see the volatility in transforming the institution or its services or collections when publics push back or when library leaders resist higher administration visions and initiatives. Those longing for community in a situation of groundlessness are not going to be easily convinced by arguments for a library's transformation that rely on leadership styles or organizational theories that are cast as "timeless logic [and] 'technical question[s]', irrespective of the purpose[s] of the enterprise, the personnel composing it, or any[thing] underlying its creation" (Wolin, 2004, p. 343).

2) *Trust*

We have lived in a neoliberal age for some time. Much of our public discourse has been centered around those principles and a related skewed "concept of liberty … [with] ideas ready-to-hand about the danger[s] posed to personal freedom … and the value that lies in autonomy and self-creation" (Allen, 2014, p. 22). This directly tends to undercut trust, which is important for the functioning of democracy and the everyday work of institutions in a democratic society (Buschman, 2012; Warren, 1999b). But the situation in library leadership demonstrates a more fundamental issue articulated by political theory: "the need for trust is generated not simply by discrepancies in power positions but by the controversies over the good" (Mara, 2008, p. 108) – that is, differing visions of what a library is for and whom it serves in one's community. Again, political theory teaches us that sites like libraries are highly appropriate spaces for discursive exchange, buy-in, and participatory practices that lead to trust in the institution and social capital for effective working/cooperative relationships. Ignoring those factors (lack of discursive exchange, treating stakeholders instrumentally) is highly destructive of political trust in the institution: "the practical need to engage questions about the good helps to explain why individuals are willing to place themselves under the power of others if the resulting collective action will help contribute to [a] greater [good]. Political trust is thus an ongoing condition accompanying deliberative practices" (Mara, 2001, p. 840-841; Newton, 1997, p. 577, 579, 583). This is an insight far from an eye-rolling leadership response to calls for consultation, explanation, discussion, and revision of library plans. Political theory explains their value. In the face of competing demands that themselves are inherently political, serious pressure and influence on the library makes the exercise of decisional power under those circumstances seem opaque, the library merely acting as an aggregation and channel of power (Wolin 2004, p. 208, 600, 153, 376). In the process the basis of trust within one's community – that is, one's political capital to act in concert and effectively as a leader – is obviated. As noted previously, the classic hallmarks of transformational change in legitimacy, sector, professionalism, technology, mission, structure, funding, and values are indicative of new political challenges for library leadership. It is politically possible to establish a truth and change a library's practices and circumstances linguistically (Wolin 2004, p. 224), but political theory tells us that discursive exchange, as a basis of political trust is a key to those processes.

3) *Virtue*

Though a seemingly an old-fashioned word with an aura of moral restriction, virtue has a long, varied and vigorous history within political theory. As initially used by the Greeks, the concept developed within small and nearly-closed social and political systems where the character of citizens was a vital concern; as this concept developed, it became clear that it could "be sustained only under the supervision of essentializing metaphysics and coercive authority," – that is, within ancient or medieval societies and their politics were concerned with the cultivation of souls and/or firm ideas about forms human excellence (Mara, 2008, p. 239; Sunstein, 1997, p. 156). At the other end of the spectrum was the modern argument to completely abandon this project: government should take people as they are and "self-interest, not virtue, is understood to be the usual motivating force of political behavior. Politics is typically … an effort to aggregate private interests" (Sunstein, 1997, p. 156). Toggling between these was a theory of self-sufficiency and self-discipline often pursued through (increasingly public forms of) education in recognition of the need for civic/republican virtue for democratic institutions to operate effectively (Pangle & Pangle, 2000, p. 24-33; Wood, 1991, p. 190-192). But there is another vein of thought concerning virtue, which contributes to an understanding of leadership. It can be constructed thus: 1) bureaucrats who guide organizations are often deeply aware of and willing to address the political issues inherent in an organization's interactions with its public in productive and humane ways (Eliasoph, 2002, p. 2) "virtues are developed in the

context of practices" (Mara, 1989, p. 30) – and the crafting of a good library organization is done through the crafting of virtuous organizational practices and characteristics modeled by leadership (Mara, 1993, p. 180; Buschman, 2013, p. 3) this is best captured through an "ethics of practice," that is, situations faced by an library organization "may be infinitely variable, but the range of preferred" and ethical responses is not (Mara, 1989, p. 28, 41, 4) which culminates in a call for political judgment in situations "without a permanent basis for action, without the comforting presence of some underlying norm of reality …from which [to] draw firm rules of conduct" and avoiding being misguided by one's own prejudices and beliefs or the illusions or well-pitched plans/beliefs of others (Wolin, 2004, p. 190-191; Mara, 1989), guided positively through an ethics of practice.

Conclusion

This analysis by no means covers political theory as a field. It is a slice of it – one that takes a critical and normative perspective and attempts to make it of use to our field. It is also worth noting that the literature deployed here contains notes of deep skepticism. For instance, it is an age-old question whether the virtues can be defined and taught, and if they can be they may well be too constricting of individual character – even for those who wish to be leaders (Mara, 2001, p. 835-842; Mara, 1989; Connelly, 1990). As another example, that an organization or its political context can be productively described in political language is not the same as real politics. Politics consists of the contest over and discursive shaping of arrangements to foster the good life in the good society (Wolin, 2004, p. 73) and organizations like libraries after all often have defined ends that are far more limited. To the extent that the more general questions like "citizenship, obligation, general authority [are] denied to the political order [and] assimilated to the organizational order," that undermines the meaning of democratic politics; no matter how "statesman-like" an executive or leader is, nor how important to community interests the organization they lead is, they do not constitute the commonwealth or the basis of a common life, and often undermine it by displacing it in reductive and privatized terms (Wolin, 2004, p. 374-375, p. 316-317). We must not confuse the analytical tool and its larger implications with this adaptation for our purposes here.

Nevertheless it is productive to think through the current context of library leadership and its challenges utilizing and adapting this tool. It is not difficult to limn leadership and see the definition given earlier emerge through these themes within political theory. Essentially: in a situation of flux (groundlessness), library leadership must simultaneously politically master situations by "getting on 'top' of events by…creating reliable instruments of action … [and] by a sensitive and discriminating intelligence… imaginatively projecting possible consequences" of various decisions, actions, and inactions because "wisdom [is] a knowledge not of facts but of the consequences of facts"; to "rediscover…[one's] identity in the role cast… by the changing times," and finding and articulating a vision of action and common/communal good for one's organization through discourse (Wolin, 2004, p. 190, 194, 226, 201, 224). Critically informed by political theory, modern *methods* – human resources, communication channels, management styles, and so on – look far *less* like leadership than the deployment of common tools. It is how they are deployed and for what ends – and with what level of political skill and judgment – that is the key. A very recent article explicitly acknowledged this trend in the hires of university leaders (Woodhouse, 2015). Whether the particular hires noted in the article are good ones or not is beside the point: this perspective gives us the tools to *judge* based on an articulation of what is good for the institution and why, how leaders help (or not) a broader set of purposes. Virtue and leadership *may* not be able to be taught or fully defined, but political theory can help us recognize and/or judge them as they occur (or not). In the end, this slice of political theory just gathers key political ideas that have been part of a long debate and examines them not as mere historical artifacts, but as a way to analytically approach current situations. If it expands and makes more supple our ideas, if it makes more realistic our context, and if it gives us tools to judge means and ends, then it is well worth our intelligent consideration. That is what a *critical* theory is about.

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About the Author

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Proposal Deadline: August 1, 2016

We seek submissions from both researchers and practitioners, that fall into one of three submission categories:

- •Opinions/First Drafts – Editorial in nature; the first draft of an idea or argument.
- •White Papers – Longer form discussions that may include research.
- •Peer Reviewed – Long form articles that include original research and arguments, and are submitted for review by our Editorial Board and/or external reviewers.

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Who Can Write for The Political Librarian?

We want to bring in a variety of perspectives to the journal and do not limit our contributors to just those working in the field of library and information science. We seek submissions from researchers, practitioners, community members, or others dedicated to furthering the discussion, promoting research, and helping to re-envision tax policy and public policy on the extremely local level.

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•Use the Oxford comma.

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