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Exploring multi-local working: challenges and opportunities for contemporary cities

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Abstract

An increasing phenomenon in contemporary cities is to work in multiple places, such as home, offices, and coffee shops, while simultaneously using ICT devices and networks. However, little attention has been paid to the new socio-spatial demands facing city services. This phenomenon has been empirically studied through a comparative case study in the city centre of Helsinki, Finland, by conducting observations of one public library (Library 10) and one coffee shop (Café Köket), as well as semi-structured interviews with the multi-local workers and managers of the two places. This comparative case study shows that multi-local workers with different profiles (age, level of education, contract of employment) and varied socio-spatial working practices use the library and coffee shop for several working purposes, such as individual or collective informal offices, or as temporary workplaces of a larger city network with urban ambiance. Thus, discussion of this phenomenon has shifted to a re-conceptualizing of the third place as well as future visioning of the business model of coffee shops and service concepts of libraries. The results might be useful to managers, architects, planners and policy makers when developing the network of facilities within the cities as well as the multi-functionality of urban spaces.

Introduction

In recent decades, people have become more multi-local within urban regions and cities. Multi-locality can be interpreted as a way of life (Kaufmann 2005) in which one's daily experiences, including both work and leisure time, occur in diverse physical and virtual locations. However, it is difficult to determine the major motives of living and working multi-locally (e.g. job-related reasons, education, recreational forms, or family arrangements) (Schier et al. 2015; Weichart 2015). Multi-localists can be viewed as contemporaries who are mobile for economic or private reasons (Rolshoven 2008, 19). Multi-local people can benefit from both physical and virtual spaces including the time "in between" while commuting to living, working and recreational places (Hilti 2009).

In the current literature, multi-local working is characterised as using more than one place to work, such as one's home, office spaces, coffee shops, shops, or modes of transport using any available ICT device and network (Koroma, Hyrkkänen, and Vartiainen 2014; Vartiainen and Hyrkkänen 2010). Hitherto, these latest studies on multi-local working have mostly focused on understanding the types of hindrances that might occur in the multiple locations of work, the worker's productivity in the multiple places of work, as well as the ways in which working activities are performed (e.g. in solitude, face-to-face, online, or offline) (Koroma, Hyrkkänen, and Vartiainen 2014). Thus far, little attention has been paid to the socio-spatial structure of multi-local working, in particular, the flexibility and freedom of multi-local workers to choose a spatial location within a network of places not originally designed as spaces for work, as well as the new socio-spatial demands confronting city services.

The socio-spatial complexity of multi-local working presents several challenges not only for employees themselves (e.g. how to be creative, innovative and efficient, but at the same time competitive in the eyes of one's supervisor or employer; how to be connected; how to ensure work/life balance), but also employers (e.g. how to control work; how to create a working community for creativity, innovativeness and efficiency; how to organize the logistics and gatherings between different workplaces, and the physical and virtual presence of different workers) (Messenger and Gschwind 2016).

In this context, we argue that this socio-spatial complexity of multi-local working is also challenging for designers and planners. From the planning perspective, there is a need to reconsider the different socio-spatial working practices that may require a more flexible work environment in our regions and cities.

In addition to this, designers and planners should also reflect on the ways to design places that are not functionally determined, as well as the best approach to organising services that would meet multi-local workers' habits and needs. This calls for a new understanding of the effects of multi-local working within regional and urban planning. In fact, the traditional way of planning our cities and allocating urban functions is mainly based on the number of permanent residents rather than multi-local people. However, people are increasingly mobile for job related reasons and tend to consume a wider range of public services out of a formal place of domicile (Knudsen, 2018). In this context, multi-local workers can visit alternative places which are not originally designed for working purposes.

This study was part of a larger project which focused on flexible working in the metropolitan area of Helsinki, Finland. The research aimed to examine the way that new types of workplaces and spaces can support multi-local working. The research focused on the concept of third places (Oldenburg 1999) which are currently also suitable for work and not only free time, casual conversations and socialising. Therefore, the study investigated the way the network of alternative workplaces (e.g. public and university libraries, coffee shops, parks and squares) is spatially structured in everyday working practices. A total of 95 hours of observations and 150 semi-structured interviews were conducted with those who used those places for work.

This article compares a public library (Library 10) and a coffee shop (Café Köket) in Helsinki, Finland. The reasons for selecting the two places is to investigate the ways in which socio-spatial working practices are accommodated in the two places (one public and one semi-private), thereby exploring the ways that multi-local working might challenge the service concepts of libraries and coffee shops.

This paper attempts to answer the following research questions: RQ 1) How are the working practices accommodated in the two different places, one public and one semi-private, and the network of places around them? RQ2) What kinds of challenges and opportunities does the presence of multi-local workers present to the service concepts of libraries and coffee shops? In order to address the two research questions, the study presents a literature review first focusing on the theories and practices on multi-local working, and secondly, on the ways in which the increasing detachment of work from the traditional office space also affects the functions of third places. Furthermore, the paper presents the results from a comparative case study between Library 10 and Café Köket,

focusing on the ideal types or profiles of multi-local workers and their socio-spatial working practices within the two places, as well as the visions of the two managers of Library 10 and Café Köket about the services provided. Although it is not possible to generalise the multi-local workers' needs with this data, the comparative case study examines the features of the two places through the profiles of the multi-local workers. They are not only self-employed, free lancers and creative workers as traditionally described in literature, but there are also emerging categories of entrepreneurs and those employed by organisations in both the private and public sectors. This will help to understand the new socio-spatial demands and challenges confronting such places from these sectors. The discussion might be relevant in supporting the re-conceptualization of the third places and the visioning of service concepts in contemporary cities. As far as urban planning and design is concerned, this is an additional argument to question the functional determination of urban spaces and services. On one hand, the functionalist division of urban spaces into the basic functions of housing, work, leisure and mobility still dominates the planning approach, on the other hand, planners are still struggling to interpret the new forms of multi-functional spaces and places. This dynamic multi-functionality of places is closely related to the emerging phenomenon of multi-local working, since these places are offering formal and informal spaces for work. In this sense, the aim of the study is to contribute to a wider understanding of the socio-spatial transformations occurring in our cities when working in multiple places. The study also provides a clearer picture about the demand of new services and innovative places on which planners and policy makers should reflect.

Concepts of multi-local working

In socio-spatial terms, the transition from working in one place to mobile and multi-local working is related to the social and power relations in the workplace. The office (as well as the factory) is a spatially bounded environment, where control and presence overlap; employers have both the right and duty to control the activities within the space and time-frame of the workplace and the working hours. Therefore, although offices are often designed with a consideration of the optimal physical arrangements in order to support the efficiency of teamwork and employees' performance, individual well-being is often of less significance (Lindberg, Tran, and Banasiak 2016).

Absence from the workplace is only allowed for a valid reason. Thus, being present in the workplace is the norm, and absence the exception; outside the workplace and after working hours, there is leisure—a legitimate freedom to choose one's place and activities (Koshar 2002; Beaven 2005; Spalding 2007).

In multi-local working, the situation is reversed: the workers have legitimate freedom to choose the places they prefer, chosen from a pool of potential places reasonably accessible to them. On the other hand, by being present in one of these places, they are at the same time absent from their 'assigned' workplace, thus rendering them unable to develop social relationships or defend their position in the social hierarchy of the staff. Being absent from one place is not equivalent to being present in another, as Roy Bhaskar argued in his critique of 'ontological monovalence': "–Pierre's absence from the café doesn't *mean* the same as his presence at home (although the latter entails the former—which is equally entailed by his death) any more than it means the same as Jean's occupying his customary

place.” (Bhaskar 1993, 7). For the employer, the absence of the employee requires trust and a new means of control, which can include various online tools.

Thus, there are several ontological categories at play here: both positivity (physical presence) and negativity (perceived absence, or what Bhaskar calls ‘real negation’), which can partly be compensated by a virtual presence. On the other hand, flexibility and freedom of choice in spatial locations means that the employee or the freelancer has a modal relationship to the network of places that are within reach. Modality refers here to the different locations within the epistemic and deontic alternatives of the subjects: the places they know and are allowed to use, at least for a while (Ahmed, Moularet and Scheurs, 2013; Hintikka 1962; Lapintie 2007).

Multi-local working practices

Several definitions have been associated with the varied forms of multi-local work, such as nomadic workers, mobile workers, itinerants’ workers, digital immigrants and digital natives (Humphry 2014; Czarniawska 2014). The concept of nomadic workers initially referred to those who mainly work in transit, such as managers, salespersons and project leaders. Today, writers (graphic) designers, academics, programmers and public relations professionals are increasingly working in multiple places (Liegl 2014). However, there are several forms of flexible work which are not strictly nomadic, but allow people to work in different locations (Ciolfi and Pinatti de Carvalho 2014). Multi-locality is an active everyday life distributed in different places (Nadler, 2016).

The meaning of places for multi-local people can really vary based on standard socio-economic variables, such as ages, incomes and education, but also on personal history, socialisation and cultural background (Nadler 2016). In addition, the immediate spatial environment in which people act is of utmost importance for their perceptions (Nadler 2016). Within this context, the wider spectrum of individual multi-local strategies and socio-spatial working practices, as well as the emerging perspectives from the managers of alternative workplaces (e.g. coffee shops, public libraries and co-working spaces) need to be considered.

Policymakers and city planners have not yet captured the phenomenon of multi-local working; accordingly, spatial planning has not embedded strategies and practices to address this issue. Nevertheless, there are several initiatives that one can see in contemporary cities all over the world.

Entrepreneurs and real estate developers are providing new urban and local infrastructures, such as temporary cubicles and conference rooms, especially for freelancers and travellers (Florida 2014). In addition, the literature shows that multi-local workers with a need for on-demand workplaces use co-working spaces (Kojo and Nenonen 2014).

Over the last decade, co-working spaces have proliferated as spaces for social interaction and collaborative work (Bilandzic and Foth 2017; Johns and Gratton 2013, Spinuzzi, 2012,). It is important to note that an increasing number of co-working spaces are provided as services. The majority of co-working spaces are still privately owned and

managed, while only a few of them are publicly supported (e.g. by cities or universities) (see the overview by Kojo and Nenonen 2014).

Two main criteria have been mostly used to locate these workplaces: distribution of knowledge workers within the urban regions and cities, as well as access to public transport. Temporary cubicles and conference rooms as well as co-working spaces are usually located in city centres, in new urban and regional districts, or in university campuses served by public transport.

However, the phenomenon of multi-local working remains difficult to track, considering the variety of working arrangements and practices, the mobility of workers during a single day, as well as the network of spaces that can be used for working purposes.

The increasing detachment of work from the traditional office space has also affected the functions of so-called third places by including flexible and informal work (Messenger and Gschwind 2016; Bilandzic and Foth 2013; Bilandzic et al. 2013; Spinuzzi 2012), as well as the concepts of services in both public and private sectors (Kojo and Nenonen 2014).

The impact of digital connectivity and mobility on collaboration and co-working spaces has affected several urban environments (Foth et al. 2016). There has been a new demand on promoting temporary work in public spaces focusing on collaborative and interdisciplinary teams (Foth et al. 2016; Townsend et al. 2011). The higher physical mobility of working is supported by portable technologies and allows people to break out and escape from the office (Forlano 2011). These forms of mobile work can also happen in public settings (e.g. parks and squares). However, noise, infrastructural challenges and a lack of spaces to sit can present some obstacles to multi-local workers (Forlano 2011).

Urban design, architecture and organisational studies might work together to discover an integration of creative knowledge work and public spaces (Townsend et al. 2011). Townsend and his co-authors (2011) experimented with ad hoc groups in dense urban settings of New York which were able to create a spontaneous and mobile workspace (equipped with mobile furniture, Wi-Fi and online platforms). They suggested renovating the street level of several buildings around the districts studied and providing a variety of temporary uses for collaborative work.

In this context, it is interesting to examine the concept of the third place. Third places were originally conceived as informal public gathering places where conversation was the predominant activity (Oldenburg 1999). As Campell (2015) stated, Oldenburg examined social interactions within the local community in relaxed and unpretentious places. One of the characteristics of a third place is the location and its walkable distance from home or office. Even if someone might prefer a particular coffee shop in the city centre, he will more often visit the one nearest to his office. By selecting the coffee shop down the street, there is a greater likelihood of meeting an acquaintance (Florida 2014). When people want to work in a coffee shop, they might also choose a place far from the office where they will not be seen or disturbed by colleagues.

Furthermore, a coffee shop is not only a place for social interactions, but it is also a place for solitude (Ind and Holm 2012). Currently, the presence of ICTs in such places is increasingly predominant as customers use their mobile devices to be connected online. This may occur even when two persons are sitting face-to-face in a coffee shop, but are more concentrated on their mobile phones and online discussions than each other (Memarovic et al. 2014). Over the last decade, several studies have been conducted on

coffee shops focusing on the new 'working lifestyle' of the customers (Sanusi and Palen 2008, Hampton and Gupta 2008), such as artists, web-designers and writers (Hartman 2009; Forlano 2008). In the first decade of this century, coffee shops used to provide only a connection to the Internet, whereas during this second decade, additional facilities can be found, such as meeting rooms equipped with projectors (Florida 2014). Therefore, individuals or groups of multi-local workers can perform several activities, including checking emails or meeting with colleagues 'face-to-face' or online.

In addition to the coffee shops and pubs, public libraries are presently also seen as third places. People still use the library as a place to satisfy their needs for information, but they are increasingly also used as places to socialise (Lin, Pang, and Luyt 2015). As Harris (2007) stated, library managers provide services that enable people to spend more time in the library as comfortable and convenient places not only meant for reading and learning, but also for socialising. Certain public and university libraries have also integrated coffee shops and bookshops. However, most of these spaces are separated from the library itself and placed near the entrance to the library or on the lower floor. The facilities within the public libraries still remain accessible for free, such as project work areas, Wi-Fi, music studios, meeting rooms, and working stations (Aabø and Audunson 2012).

These new strategies influence the design of new library buildings, the renovation of existing libraries, as well as service provision (May and Black 2010). In this context, several studies on public libraries have focused on the social interaction between users including the physical features (Aabø and Audunson 2012). Indeed, scholars have analysed the ways in which furniture, design, lighting, size, arrangement, greenery and

refreshments can heighten the sociability of libraries for users (Fisher, Saxton, and Edwards 2007). In large scale projects such as the Urban Mediaspace Aarhus (Denmark), a more concrete partnership between architects, library managers and staff, and library users has been developed (Dalsgaard and Eriksson 2013). The library employees were involved in co-designing their workplaces during the construction phase of the library, as well as new digital services, roles, spaces and activities (Dalsgaard and Eriksson 2013).

In addition to this, the concept of informal and formal co-working spaces has recently permeated the model of certain public libraries (Bilandzic and Foth 2013). The library is still a place accessible to everyone, such as students, teachers, researchers and writers who seek a place to concentrate and facilitate inspiration, collaboration and creativity (Bilandzic, et al. 2013), or a place for informal learning outside school (Caldwell et al., 2012).

Thus, coffee shops, co-working spaces and public libraries have been used as alternative workspaces (Bilandzic and Foth 2017; Nadler 2016). It is in these milieu that social and collaborative learning as well as encounters can occur between people from different backgrounds. Co-working spaces have been provided in several public spaces. This is the case of Sydney, Australia, for instance (Bilandzic and Foth 2017). The aim is to provide a local forum for co-creators, co-designers and co-owners of these spaces, in which social, spatial and technological practices can be facilitated and flexible. However, it is important to consider that there are several multi-local workers that use coffee shops and libraries individually searching for concentration and privacy (Di Marino and Lapintie 2017)

Nonetheless, it is important to realize that public and university libraries face several challenges all over the world, such as the economic vitality of their services and spaces that are often underused due to the digital age and the identity of the services themselves (Widdersheim and Koizumi 2017; Montgomery and Miller 2011). While politicians have reduced library space and the number of local libraries, library directors have begun providing new public services in order to maintain the utilisation of such places and create more attractive spaces for socialising and informal working. However, mixing these functions is not always easy for several reasons. The existing libraries present several design constraints, such as limited spaces and an acoustic environment which is often difficult to change (Cannel 2013). On the other hand, coffee shops have aimed to be more competitive in the private market, for instance, by offering new facilities for working purposes. However, their business model does not always suit any working function that requires several hours of table space.

Furthermore, studies conducted in coffee shops (Sanusi and Palen 2008) revealed that the ability to concentrate on solitary work without social distractions is one of the reasons for multi-local workers choosing coffee shops as a workplace. It is typical for people using technology to avoid interaction with other customers, even though they may be sitting in close physical proximity to one another. This can also happen in public spaces (e.g. squares and parks) where people do not physically interact with others, but are mainly involved in online activities by phone or laptop (such as sending e-mails and using social networks) that can contribute to a larger participation in the public realm (Hampton et al. 2010).

In addition, the lack of social distractions in coffee shops and other public spaces may be understood through the social boundaries typical in urban settings, where there may be

several unknown people around you, but none of them will breach your personal space or create obligations for interaction (Simmel 2004; Madanipour 2003). Unlike in trains and buses (Evans and Wener 2007), someone may even stake claim to a whole table to serve as an informal office in such settings. Despite this, multi-local workers seem to enjoy the space and people around them, while still retaining their privacy and lack of distractions.

Methods

Research materials and methods

The comparative case study focuses on a public library, Library 10, and a coffee shop, Café Köket, in Helsinki, Finland. The reasons for selecting the two places is to analyse the ways in which working practices are accommodated in one public and one semi-private space (private in the sense that the owner controls it and runs it as a business, public in the sense that it is open to the public). Library 10 provides services for free while Café Köket is a place that requires some type of payment.

Library 10 has revised the concept of a traditional library by incorporating new services and facilities (such as areas for exhibiting art, playing music as well as arranging meetings) and by re-designing the library spaces with new and more comfortable furniture. In addition, the Helsinki City Library has already introduced the concept of the 'urban office' in the library of Kallio and in Kaupunkiverstas, and it will be used in the new Oodi library (City of Helsinki 2012), which is still under construction at the time of writing (<http://keskustakirjasto.fi>). The concept of an urban office means flexible space equipped

with electrical sockets and comfortable seats, movable walls and tables suitable for both individuals and groups of people.

At the time of this research, Café Köket was already providing services, such as table and room reservations for those customers who used to visit the coffee shop to meet colleagues and clients. However, the manager planned to move Café Köket into new premises which were close to the location observed. The main idea was to offer additional spaces, such as meeting rooms, and new services to the customers, such as an all-inclusive package: providing a meeting room (e.g. conference or workshop rooms) equipped with a projector and a catered coffee or lunch. Due to the larger spaces and mixed functions, the concept of Café Köket has recently evolved offering additional meeting rooms for bookings (<http://www.cafekoket.fi/>).

Data collection

Data were collected through observations, spatial analyses (city maps and space layouts of the target sites) and semi-structured interviews. Library 10 was observed in eight separate sessions for a total of 20 hours while Café Köket was observed in seven separate sessions for a total of 21 hours. Observations were carried out from 8.30 a.m. until noon in the mornings, and from noon to 5 p.m. in the afternoons from June to October 2013, excluding July, the summer holiday month in Finland. The focus of the observations was on customers using IT devices (e.g. laptops, tablets or mobile phones), and those who were subsequently confirmed to be working (in contrast to studying or conversing), as well as their use of space and furniture, including the location of other customers. Extensive visual documentations and field notes were recorded regarding the spaces'

accessibility, nearby functions, spatial layout, quality of interior design and type of furniture. Furthermore, specific maps were drawn of where people sat indicating whether they worked individually, in pairs or in groups, and whether they were virtually or physically connected with other workers.

In addition, a land use analysis was conducted on both sites. The Helsinki City Real Estate Department was asked to provide the most current topographic map of the city centre. Geo-referenced data, such as urban functions, were extracted from the Finnish database PaITuli (<https://research.csc.fi/paituli>) while the distribution of public Wi-Fi spots was extracted from the Helsinki City Service Map.

In addition to the observations and spatial analyses, semi-structured interviews were conducted by approaching as many workers as possible at Library 10 and Café Köket, and by asking specifically if they were working (and not chatting with friends or studying). A total of 60 interviews were collected (N=29 in Library 10; N=31 in Café Köket). The interviews in both places usually lasted 10-15 minutes, and were documented in the form of written notes. The multi-local workers were interrupted for a limited period; therefore, it was not difficult to convince them to participate in the study. In Library 10, multi-local workers were found sitting in the most silent areas of the library and especially in the afternoons from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. In Café Köket, multi-local workers were found mainly in the morning between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., or at 12.00 noon during lunchtime. In the afternoon, workers visited the coffee shop mainly between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., and only a few of them arrived after 4 p.m. Multi-local workers were found sitting individually or in pairs in the most crowded areas of the coffee shop (at the entrance and around the counter), while groups of multi-local workers were sitting in the quiet zones of the coffee shop.

The multi-local workers were asked about background information (such as age, sex, gender, level of education, fields of occupation, and type of contract). The interviewer also asked each multi-local worker 12 semi-structured questions, such as their reasons for choosing the library or coffee shop for working purposes, and which other workplaces they had visited before arriving at Library 10 or Café Köket.

Furthermore, the directors of Library 10 and the manager and owner of Café Köket were interviewed. The questions were related to several topics, such as the new services recently provided and their purpose, as well as whether they were planning to offer new services and respond to the needs of users. The interviews were again recorded in note form, and lasted around 45 minutes.

Data Analysis

We analysed the collected multi-method data through a combination of qualitative analysis methods. First, the collected documents (topographic map of the city centre and geo-referenced data, such as the Wi-Fi spots in the public spaces, urban functions and infrastructures) were analysed to trace the accessibility and land use around Library 10 and Cafe Köket. Then, the spatial layouts of Library 10 and Café Köket were redrawn based on the original sketches and field observations.

Secondly, based on the observations, thematic maps of people's usage of IT devices were drawn, indicating the concentration of individual workers or groups of workers for each place, as well as the ways they used the space (e.g. sitting along walls and windows, close to one another or separately). Finally, the authors constructed the different ideal types of

multi-local workers by analysing the background information and the interviews. The quotations from the interviews were used to illustrate some of the findings, such as the criteria on which the multi-local workers chose the spatial location of Library 10 or Café Köket, the network of urban spaces that were used before the multi-local workers visited Library 10 and Café Köket for working purposes, as well as the multi-local workers' expressed needs.

Results

The urban context and spatial layout of Library 10 and Café Köket

Library 10 and Café Köket¹ are both surrounded by offices (both public and private) and commercial functions. While Library 10 is mostly surrounded by cultural buildings, such as the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art and the Helsinki Music Centre (Fig. 1), Café Köket is relatively close to the University of Helsinki, the Government Palace, and several state buildings (Fig. 2).

¹ At the time of the study (2013), Café Köket was located in Aleksanterinkatu 16-18. In 2015, the coffee shop moved to the other side of the block renting a larger space.

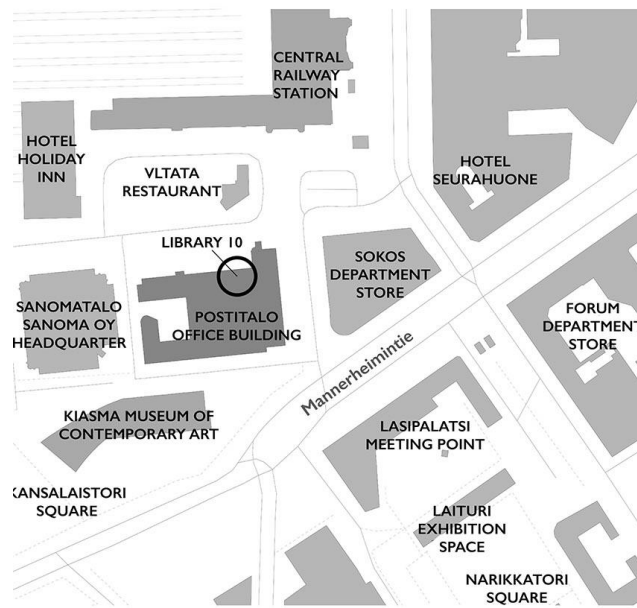


Fig. 1 Library 10 – surrounding urban functions

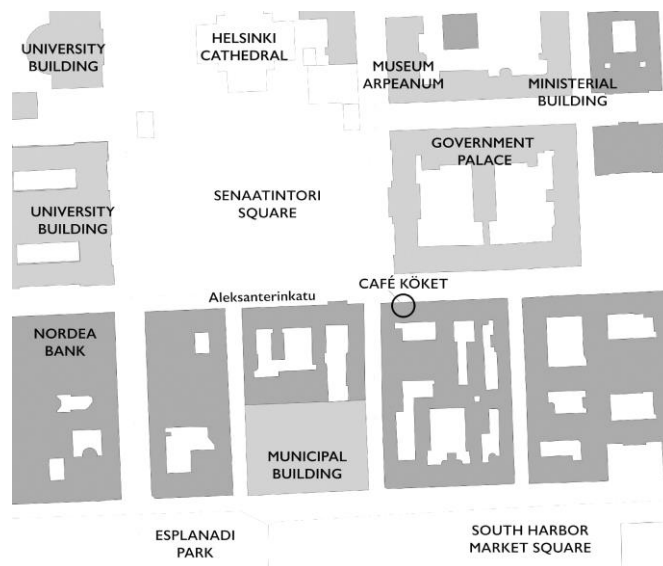


Fig. 2 Café Köket – surrounding urban functions

Library 10 opens onto Elielinaukio Square and the Central Railway station of Helsinki (Fig.3). It dominates the view from the square and Mannerheimintie Street on the other side. At the time of the study, Café Köket partially overlooked Senaatintori Square while

the whole building faced Aleksanterinkatu, which is the main commercial street of Helsinki (Fig.4).



Figure 3 Library 10- views of the exteriors



Figure 4 Café Köket - views of the exteriors

Library 10 is reachable by metro, bus and tram from the surrounding areas, and by train from the metropolitan area of Helsinki. Café Köket is accessible by tram from the surrounding areas and is within walking distance from the Railway Station as well as the two metro stops of Kaisaniemi-University of Helsinki and Rautatientori.

The three small music rooms, the open space and the meeting room (suitable for 12 persons) of Library 10 were open to everyone without any time restrictions from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. All users were allowed to read magazines and newspapers, download music,

play the piano, and sit in areas equipped with small tables suitable for laptops, as well as the use of free Wi-Fi, printers and scanners (Fig.5).



Figure 5 Library 10- views of the interiors

At the time of the research, Café Köket provided customers with three different rooms. The first room at the entrance was pleasantly decorated and suitable for one to four persons (Fig.6). Behind the counter, one could locate the second room which was suitable for larger meetings (up to 15-20 seats). The third room to the left was furnished with large benches, cushions, and low and regular tables. Café Köket provided customers with free Wi-Fi, as well as a buffet for breakfast and lunch.

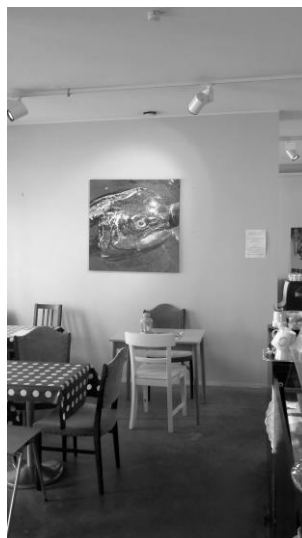


Figure 6 Café Köket - views of the interiors

The ideal types of multi-local workers in Library 10 and Café Köket

From the empirical study, we constructed ideal types of multi-local workers by highlighting the dominant background information and data based on the fields of occupation (Table 1) and the type of contracts (Table 2), with the needs of multi-local workers expressed within the interviews (e.g. their reasons for choosing the spatial location of Library 10 or Café Köket and the network of urban spaces used for working purposes).

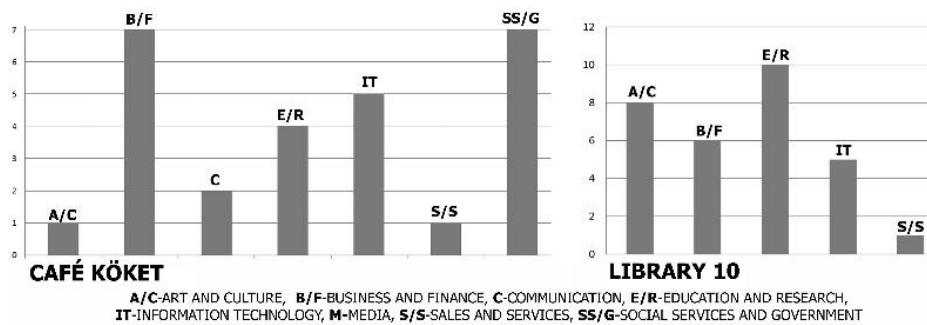


Table 1 Fields of occupation of multi-local workers in Library 10 and Café Köket

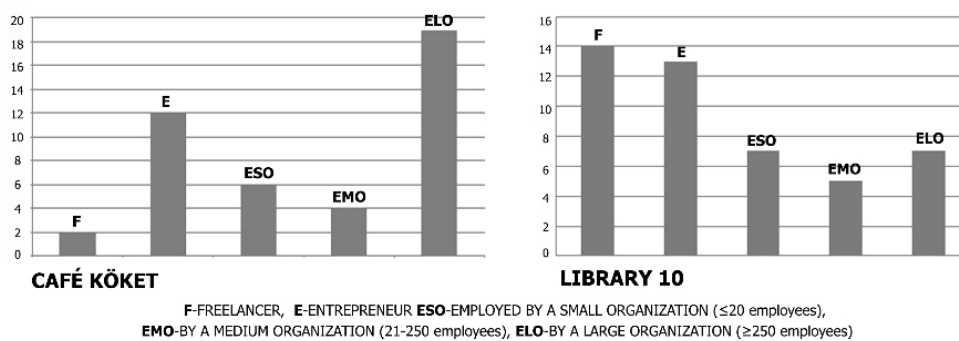


Table 2 Types of contracts of multi-local workers in Library 10 and Café Köket

Certain fields of occupation, such as art and culture, business and finance, education and research, information and technology are well represented in both places (Table 1),

whereas those employed in the social services and government were only found in Café Köket. Table 2 shows the different types of employment contracts (e.g. employed by large, medium and small organizations, as well as freelancers and entrepreneurs) that were found in both places.

Therefore, the relationship was considered between those employed by medium or large organisations and the need to spend some time away from the office (e.g. from the office routine), or only for meeting colleagues at lunch and in more informal places. Office spaces do not always provide adequate spaces for meetings and employees' well-being. In addition, the relationship was considered between freelancers and entrepreneurs, for instance, and the access to free spaces and Internet. Small size companies and new start-ups cannot always afford the cost of renting an office space.

In this study, the ideal types of multi-local workers were grouped into five profiles. In a previous study, a profile approach was used to categorize the multi-local workers in three public spaces (Di Marino and Lapintie 2015). In this study, the use of the profiles aims to compare the habits of multi-local workers in a coffee shop and a public library with the ways in which the socio-spatial working practices are accommodated in the two places, one public and one semi-private. Profiling the customers can also help to support the new challenges of the service providers.

Multi-local worker 1(from education and research)

Traditionally, public libraries have provided extensive resources to researchers and are also used for reading and writing purposes by both teachers and researchers. Nonetheless, currently, the social and cultural milieu of the coffee shop might also become as attractive to researchers and teachers as the public library. However, the reasons for

visiting both places are quite different. On the one hand, the multi-local worker visiting Library 10 likes to read and write in a quiet place which is centrally located and close to public transport. In contrast, the multi-local worker choosing Café Köket likes the proximity to the office and the idea of enjoying a working lunch with colleagues. In both places, the profile representing all age groups was employed in the fields of education and research (with a doctoral degree). Both places attracted workers from large or medium-sized organisations, such as the university.

I live and work in Helsinki, I visit Café Köket once a week for two hours. It is a convenient place to have a working lunch, but I also come here in the afternoon. This place is really close to my office. Today, before coming here I worked at home, on the metro and at the office. The main place to work is the office. However, the best place to work depends on the tasks: coffee shops are better for reading, the office and home for writing.

(Café Köket 10 respondent)

Multi-local worker 2 (from art and culture)

The activities of art and culture expand rapidly in the digital age and offer new job opportunities to the youngest workers (e.g. freelancers or small entrepreneurs who run small businesses). Thus, the access to the library with its free facilities and stimulating atmosphere seem to represent important features when designing new public spaces. This profile was more highly represented in Library 10 and less in Café Köket. The multi-local workers were employed in the field of art and culture, and held a university degree. Both places attracted young freelancers and entrepreneurs who work mostly at home, in the library and free co-working spaces.

I usually work in the library between 1 to 5 hours depending on my work. I usually work at home; however, sometimes working at home is not sufficiently inspiring. Coming to the library to work can also reduce my distractions. There is a possibility to use some facilities and equipment, such as printers, scanners and the Internet.

(Library 10, respondent)

Multi-local worker 3 (from business and finance)

In the field of business and finance, the working practices are increasingly flexible and mobile. In between meetings with clients and colleagues, workers often need a temporary space to quickly check emails or plan future meetings with clients or colleagues. This type of worker was found at both Café Köket and Library 10. While the multi-local worker in the library seeks some quiet and free Wi-Fi as well as proximity to public transport, the multi-local worker in the coffee shop wants to optimise his daily working hours and be surrounded by people. They were employed in the field of business and finance (with a university degree). While in Library 10, small organisations were over-represented, the coffee shop attracted workers from small, medium and large organisations.

I live and work in Helsinki. I come here 4 hours per week in the afternoon, and afterwards I play the piano nearby Library 10. I like the quietness of the place which is also convenient because of the free Wi-Fi.

(Library 10, respondent)

Multi-local worker 4 (from Information and Technology)

Information technology companies currently contend as being one of the fastest growing industries, but start-ups are also proliferating in both the public and private sectors. For

example, small entrepreneurs and freelancers seek places which are easily accessible or provide an inspiring environment.

The profile was found in both places. On the one hand, the multi-local worker in the library uses the place as an incubator which allows easy access to facilities. In addition to home, the library is a place to work. On the other, the worker visits the coffee shop during a break or because of the proximity to the office or home. They were employed in the field of information technology, with a master's or doctoral degree. Library 10 attracted freelancers and entrepreneurs, whereas Café Köket was visited by entrepreneurs or employees of small organisations.

I live and work in Helsinki. The main work places are the office and home. I come here every week for one hour. My office is close to the coffee shop. I like the friendly environment and the staff. Both office and home are the best places to work.

(Café Köket, respondent)

Multi-local worker 5 (from social services and government)

Customarily, the policies in the public sector have been less flexible than in the private one. However, presently, large public organisations increasingly implement new flexible working practices and arrangements for employees. Moreover, employees want to escape from the routine of the office and meet colleagues in a more informal atmosphere, such as coffee shops. This profile was only found in Café Köket. They represented all age groups between 25 and 54 years. They were employed in the fields of social and government services, and held a university degree. Typically, they were employed by medium and large-sized organisations.

I live in Tuusula and commute every day for 30 minutes since I work in Helsinki. I come here 3 times per week and usually for 1-2 hours. It is like a routine since we do not have any meeting room. I appreciate the light and the open space. The coffee shop does not appear too formal for very important work matters. Usually I work at home early in the morning before commuting.

(Café Köket, respondent)

The five profiles are not equally distributed in Library 10 and Café Köket. Researchers and teachers work in both places: Library 10 is frequented more for its quietness, while Café Köket is chosen for its proximity to the university. Library 10 is an attractive place for multi-local workers engaged in the field of art and culture who search for free facilities and inspiration, whereas Café Köket does not represent the main destination. Multi-local workers engaged in business and finance as well as information technology work in both places. While Café Köket represents the main destination for those employed by medium and large organisations, or entrepreneurs who want to enjoy a break and change from the office atmosphere, Library 10 is chosen by the entrepreneurs and freelancers who look not only for a silent place, but also free facilities. Café Köket is an attractive place for the employees in social services and governments when they need to meet colleagues for lunch or breakfast, or arrange informal meetings in larger spaces. The presence of this categories of employees only in Café Köket can also be related to the surrounding ministerial and municipal buildings of the coffee shop.

Spatial analyses and observations inside Library 10 and Café Köket

The furniture in Library 10 was not very flexible. The tables along the windows and perimeter walls seated two, and it seemed to be difficult to move or combine them. The layout and furniture in Library 10, such as the workstations and small and fixed tables, seemed to encourage people to perform individual activities and have fewer interactions. Only the tables that were placed centrally in the library accommodated up to 4 persons and seemed to be easier to move if needed.

During our observations, the multi-local workers did not have any socio-spatial interaction with other workers or staff in the open spaces of Library 10. Additionally, the multi-local workers sometimes seemed to be so completely absorbed in their activities that no one sitting beside or in front of them seemed to distract them. Usually, workers with laptops occupied the portion of the library that was more quiet and away from the flow of customers. Interactions between workers only occurred in the large meeting room behind the workstations that was occupied by groups of colleagues for presentations and meetings. In addition to the tables, a new spatial design was used to support the workers, such as the red benches that surround the pillars of the libraries and face the quietest areas of the library. The red benches are provided with small and mobile tables that would accommodate a standard laptop (Fig. 7). They were mostly occupied by individual workers and for short periods.



Figure 7 Library 10 – multi-local workers

Unlike Library 10, Café Köket provided a more varied picture in terms of spatial organisation of the furniture and use of the space. At the entrance of the coffee shop, there were small tables, which were more often used by individuals or pairs of multi-local workers (Fig. 8).



Figure 8 Café Köket- multi-local workers

The entrance was often filled with a queue of customers, standing in front of the counter ordering and paying. The two other rooms in the coffee shop were more often used by larger groups of remote workers. Generally, the space was crowded with individuals or pairs of workers seeming to prefer to sit along the perimeter walls, close to the windows and electrical sockets.

Several multi-local workers interviewed in Café Köket were seeking more comfortable places which offer extra services, such as a good breakfast and lunch or free Wi-Fi. Apparently, they move around the city and they prefer a changing scenario from the original workplace. However, this does not always mean escaping from the office or needing to meet with clients. Some multi-local workers do not find the coffee shops extremely noisy but suitable for reading activities. Some of them do not have particular

spatial requirements, while flexibility seems to be one of the priorities of their ideal workspace.

However, apart from good coffee and lunch, it was found that multi-local workers visit Café Köket for another reason: because of its proximity to their home or office, or the vicinity of their clients' premises. It might be assumed that there are multi-local workers that come from the surrounding offices, since there are several ministerial and municipal buildings around Café Köket. The free access, central location, quietness as well as the natural and artificial light of Library 10 seem to attract the multi-local workers. However, at the same time, they specifically sought the use of outlet plugs, which are mostly spread out along the perimeter walls and windows, as well as free facilities.

The multi-local workers were asked which other places they had visited before arriving at Café Köket and Library 10. The multi-local workers in Café Köket used a network of public, semi-public and private spaces for working purposes which is composed of home, office, coffee shops, and clients' premises. On the other hand, the multi-local workers interviewed at Library 10 usually work at home and library, even if, for some of them, the office still represents an important workspace. Some of them move also around a broader range of workplaces, including university, restaurants, all kinds of public and private transport, and other libraries and coffee shops.

New challenges for Library 10 and Café Köket

The director of Library 10 and the manager of Café Köket both shared a beguiling description of the multiple services that the public library and coffee shop can provide.

The director of Library 10 reviewed the recent changes of the Library 10 thus:

Until 3-4 years ago, Library 10 did not have a sufficient number of electrical outlets, work tables and chairs. As a result, the library users were used to sitting on the floor. Accordingly, we started posting up several signs like "Please do not sit on the floor". Nowadays, the librarians have completely changed their approach and they let the library users work or study as they please using their personal IT devices.

According to him, the library users want to have their own privacy when working and studying in the library. However, a new spatial design might support novel habits. For instance, referring to the multi-local workers who visited the library, he said that Library 10 might offer new working spaces which cover these particular needs. Then he added:

In the Oodi Library, we will combine the concept of library as a 'place of learning and culture' (including music, art and design) together with the concept of 'urban office' [a temporary and flexible space for work that will be allocated on the second floor-added by the authors]. It would be nice to see more artists using the new library. I think that the idea of having a coffee shop in Oodi Library does not represent one of the main priorities.

According to the coffee shop manager and owner, in the central district where Café Köket is located, multi-local workers struggle to find places for collaborating or holding meetings. She noted that Café Köket was one of the few places in the area that supported

working by providing, in addition to good food and coffee, various facilities, such as free Wi-Fi and projectors. She stated:

Cafe Köket embraces the concept of an 'informal and inspiring place'. The space is comfortable with colourful furniture and natural light that help customers to have informal meetings, and where they can also find inspiration and a place to concentrate.

At the time of the research, the space of Café Köket was first designed as an art gallery and then transformed into a coffee shop. The manager mentioned that the space was not really functional for both staff and customers, and was often very crowded; nevertheless, the workers did not mind sitting in close proximity to other customers.

There is an emerging concept of multiple services in both places, but they are provided in different ways. From the director's perspective, the public library should remain a place of learning and culture, thus requiring that the spatial layout and furniture for informal working should be placed in dedicated areas of the library. The manager of Café Köket aims to create mixed uses by creating multi-functional spaces (both open spaces and meeting rooms).

Discussion and Conclusions

The results confirm our original understanding of multi-local work as a combination of socio-spatial practices (e.g., freedom and flexibility of multi-local workers) and characteristics of places (e.g., identity, quality accessibility and multi-functionality). The network of urban spaces consist of places of origin (such as home or office) and other places suitable for work which can be used during a single day. However, the often heard

expression “work anywhere and anytime” is somewhat misleading, since multi-local workers are careful to choose the locations that satisfy their special needs, whether it is cosy atmosphere or the availability of services. They also have preferences of the times of the day when using these places, such as before or after the office hours or during the lunch hour. Moreover, multi-local workers can spend several hours a day in the informal spaces for work provided by libraries. This means that central, urban and multi-functional locations are preferable to more mono-functional ones, and the availability of public transport and walking distances is paramount. It also means that the socio-spatial challenges of multi-local working can be extended to several scales, from the design of individual spaces of coffee shops and libraries to the urban structure around them.

For design and urban planning, this supports the critique of functional design and planning, to the extent that we may use the term ‘post-functional’ city (Di Marino and Lapintie 2017). Mono-functional spaces are, of course, much easier to design, when providing only books and coffee, but this no longer represents the emerging socio-spatial practices.

By examining the library and the coffee shop, our research also contributes to the understanding of the concept of third place. The ambiance of a third place is still suitable for spending free time, enjoying casual conversations and socialising (Oldenburg, 1999), but it can also be suited to new flexible working practices of multi-local workers. Third places, such as public libraries and parks are increasingly used for working purposes as well as collaborative learning experiences (Bilandzic and Foth 2017; Forlano et al., 2011). In addition, the study suggests that the concept of third place should be further explored by embedding the evolving concept of both public and private services (e.g. inclusive paid

packages of lunch, hiring meeting rooms in coffee shops, as well as free spatial and technological services in the libraries).

Contrary to the expectations from the literature, the multi-local workers are not only freelancers, entrepreneurs in certain fields of occupation (web-designers, graphic designers, writers and technology consultants) (Hartman, 2009; Forlano, 2008), but are also employed by public and private organisations (e.g. business and finance, social services and government). The comparative case study illustrates that Library 10 is used with more freedom and flexibility than Café Köket. This can be related to the work contracts of the multi-local workers of the Library 10 and Café Köket. The presence of researchers is not always required at the university, especially when tasks are completed, such as meetings and teaching. They can move to Library 10 to read and write in a quiet place. Freelancers and entrepreneurs in art and culture, as well as in information technology, have more flexibility in their day than other professionals, thus enabling them to visit the library and spend long periods of time there. Furthermore, the library provides public services available to everyone, especially for those who cannot afford spaces for work and related facilities, and those without time restrictions.

The coffee shop is used for shorter periods. The type of work contracts of the multi-local workers seems to affect their chances of prolonging their presence at the coffee shop. For example, employees in the public sectors visit Café Köket mostly for one hour. It can be assumed that being physically absent from the office for a longer time remains difficult for those categories. In addition, there are also unwritten rules for using the space (solitary customers should not occupy a large table) and time (occupants are expected to purchase something to consume, but the amount was undefined). In addition to this, at

the time of the research, Café Köket could not easily accommodate every customer due to its limited space.

The results from the spatial analysis and observations show that the library was mostly used by solitary multi-local workers who seek quietness, a central location, natural and artificial light as well as open and free services; while the coffee shop was chosen for other characteristics, such as the cosy atmosphere, proximity to home and clients' premises, seeing people around, as well as the opportunity to meet colleagues and clients in informal spaces. Both Café Köket and Library 10 provide a comfortable environment and facilities. Multi-local workers claimed that the spatial features of the place, such as comfortable tables and chairs, are often conducive for efficiently working.

The study participants reported where they came from (e.g. home, office) and where they had already been working (e.g. home, office, library, coffee shop and public transport) as well as where they were going (e.g. home, clients' premises, office and library). Each site was fitted into the personal network of urban spaces that the multi-local workers used in Helsinki by creating their own spontaneous and mobile workspace around the city (Forlano 2011; Caldwell et al. 2012). Urban planners should be interested in embedding the results about the socio-spatial working patterns of the multi-local workers when planning the provision of services in the city as well as the allocation of living and working functions.

Both Library 10 and Café Köket are urban in the social and cultural sense. According to the Simmelian analysis of the metropolitan identity of urbanites (Simmel 2004), the workers in Library 10 and Café Köket seem to have adopted a complex attitude towards

their fellow citizens. The findings from the observations show that even if multi-local workers are involved in tasks that require concentration, they do not consider the people around them to be distractions but as part of the urban atmosphere. Other people do not present involuntary obligations for social encounters, which is an essential feature of 'urban privacy'. On the other hand, the lack of social interactions that was observed between multi-local workers as well as between them and the library staff in Library 10 can be overcome through new technological and spatial interventions. In the literature, one can already see the role of a host employed (e.g. community coordinator and co-working space manager) in co-working hubs (Bilandzic et al. 2013). Both public libraries and co-working spaces can facilitate encounters between the users of co-working spaces. Through a digital check (e.g. the so-called 'gelatine system'), the multi-local workers can easily discover each other in the workspace, share job interests and building collaborations (Bilandzic et al. 2013). Similar approaches might be proposed and pioneered in Library 10. In addition, as the director of the library envisioned, Library 10 could become a place of social learning where mobile furniture and flexible spaces might help activities of peer inspiration and collaboration among the multi-local workers. However, this study also suggests considering the socio-spatial working practices of those multi-local workers who visit the Library 10 seeking silence and privacy. This means that part of the interiors and related facilities should also be suited to individual workers.

The mobile workers originally described by Hampton and his co-authors (2008 and 2010) in urban settings, such as squares, as well as the clientele observed by Forlano (2008) in coffee shops (e.g. Starbucks or independent chains) and parks, use these places as an alternative workspace providing temporary and flexible arrangements. In addition to this, the multi-local workers reported on in this study presented a more varied socio-spatial

working practices (by e.g. using a network of urban spaces for working purposes, booking a meeting room for encountering colleagues and clients).

Furthermore, the study also reveals that the concept of remote work is evolving: some of the multi-local workers are still working remotely from their main workplaces (Koroma, Hyrkkänen, and Vartiainen 2014), but many of them did not even have a main workplace in the traditional sense (see e.g. the artistic profiles). Hence, as the professions as well as the urban and virtual infrastructures change, the term 'remote work' is becoming outdated (remote from what?). Nonetheless, this should be further explored qualitatively and quantitatively by investigating a wider network of urban spaces as well as by interviewing a larger number of multi-local workers.

Based on our results, it can be said that both coffee shops and libraries need to rethink the services provided to their customers. Instead of only providing coffee and food, or books and information, both are becoming more important as providers of space for different purposes, including work. The business model of the coffee shop is problematic in this respect, since customers have difficulties in judging the amount of time they can stay and the amount of consumption required to legitimately occupy the space. On the other hand, as information is becoming increasingly digital, and self-service more common in libraries, public libraries have particularly become targets of municipal savings. Unlike the business model of coffee shops, public libraries provide services for the community: a learning environment, flow of information and, more recently, spatial services and places for social interactions. This already seems to be understood, and in particular the provision of informal offices and meeting rooms for start-ups, freelancers and entrepreneurs can be seen in several public libraries. However, the mind-set of

politicians regarding the service concept itself may be changed concerning new users and people's habits, as well as the emerging working practices.

In fact, some of these developments can already be seen in the context of Helsinki and Finland, partly inspired by our results. Since Café Köket moved to its new and larger premises, it has continued to develop service packages that include the option of booking conference and workshop rooms and lunch (<http://www.cafekoket.fi/>). This new service in the city of Helsinki is provided by a single coffee shop thanks to the vision of the Café Köket's manager, but there are no other examples to date. The development of the library concept has become even more widespread. At the time of the project, a new Act for Public Libraries (Kirjastolaki) was being prepared, and the new concept of spatial service – after some hesitation – is now part of the national legislation since the beginning of 2017. Instead of defining the tasks of public libraries in terms of providing information, as in the earlier Act from 1998, they are now supposed to provide spaces for different activities: libraries "should provide spaces for learning, hobbies, working and civic activities" and "the library should have appropriate spaces, up-to-date equipment and a sufficient amount of qualified staff." (Chapter 1, 2 §).

The data collected from Library 10 has also been used in the new project of the Oodi Library when designing the functions and facilities within the building (see e.g. the teamwork and workshop areas at the second floor) (<http://keskustakirjasto.fi/avaintietoa>).

By embedding the new concept of library and coffee shop within the city planning, politicians with the help of librarians and managers will be able to contribute to defending the local services and networks, as well as the new and innovative functions within them.

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