Film collection development: methodological approaches

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Introduction
This poster will present two methodological approaches to the appraisal of library film collections. First methodological approach is the appraisal of the library film collection diversity. Poster will draw attention to the possibility and need of using UNESCO methodology in appraising library film collections. Important reason for use of this methodology is that most important part of the libraries mission, acknowledged in their statutes, is to offer diverse cultural works to the users. But if we look for example at the library film collections in Croatia we will notice imbalance in favor of the recent Hollywood films. If libraries want to satisfy various (potential) users’ needs and interests they need to take care of the collection diversity for each type of the media that they collect. For that reason UNESCO methodology can be valuable to appraise diversity of their collections.

Second methodological approach that will be presented is the appraisal of the library film collections by comparing library film collection with film canons or lists of the important films. In this work we will present canon definition and types, their relevance for appraising library film collections and we will give example of study in which this methodological approach was used. Methodology of “canonical comparison” enable appraisal of library film collection with regard to value or importance of films that are in the collection. However, because of the subjective aspect of value perception, attention will be drawn to the possibility and need of using various, sometimes mutually opposed canons, to appraise library film collection.

“UNESCO methodology” – first methodological approach
In last decade we have witnessed development of UNESCO inspired methodology for appraising cultural diversity. It was described by Ranaivoson who defines cultural diversity as a three dimensional concept:

- Firstly, any form of diversity is a mix of variety, balance and disparity.
- Secondly, a distinction should be made between supplied and consumed diversity.
- Thirdly, cultural diversity relies on complex interactions between the diversity of producers, products and consumers.

One of the research examples in which this methodological approach was used is Moreau and Peltier paper "Cultural diversity in the movie industry: A cross-national study" (2004). From this and similar research papers we can get valuable insights and get inspired to think of how to accommodate UNESCO methodological approaches for appraising library film collections diversity. To make this more clear now we shall give a few examples of methodological appropriations that could be extracted from aforementioned approaches.

Accessibility of the supply
Measurement of the variety supplied can be implemented if we find out in which towns or regions library film collections are available and what types of films are available in different places.

Variety consumed
On the consumption side, the variety consumed can be evaluated on the basis of film collections circulation data. For example, we can investigate what type of films are borrowed or is there any correlation between film geographical origins with the frequency of their borrowing.

Balance
Balance of library film collections can be also appraised using the Herfindhal-Hirschmann index, to reflect the degree of concentration of the various types of films that are in the library collections.

Canonical comparison – second methodological approach
O’Loughlin analyzed film collections in seven university libraries to determine the role of film canons in collection development (2008). Catalogs of these libraries were searched in quest for films found in four different types of canons:

- **Industrial Canon** (AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies)
- **Populist Canon** (50 top ranked films from Empire magazine)
- **Critical Canon** (Sight and Sound Critics’ Poll 2002)
- **Elitist Canon** (personal canon of film critic Paul Schrader)

This methodological approach can be used in appraisals regarding the availability of various film types in library collections. We can determine that certain library has mostly films from “Populist Canon” or that some other library has mostly films from “Critical Canon”.

Important question is how canons are defined. There are many definitions, but this one is of special importance: “Canon is collection of works which are regarded as most important in certain field.”

Works in the canon can be selected using various criteria, for example, above mentioned “Populist Canon” can contain films that are mostly entertaining and popular, although they can be significant cultural artifacts, representative of mass culture. On the other hand, if library user wants to borrow some other type of film he may look for the films included in “Critical” or “Elitist” canons. It is important to recognize that we can use diverse type of canons to build and appraise library film collections. The value of this methodological approach is exactly the possibility of multidimensional appraisal of library film collection by using different canons as evaluative point of reference.

**Keywords:** film collection development, methodology, UNESCO, canon, diversity

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**Curriculum Vitae**

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