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Individualism and Collectivism in Library Architecture. An Analysis of Selected New Library Buildings in the Former East Germany

(*Indywidualizm i kolektywizm w architekturze bibliotek. Analiza wybranych (nowych) budynków bibliotek na terenie Wschodnich Niemiec*)

Słowa kluczowe: kultura organizacyjna, budynki biblioteczne, biblioteki niemieckie

Abstrakt: Artykuł porusza problem przestrzeni bibliotecznej będącej jednym z elementów kształtujących kulturę organizacyjną biblioteki. Model pięciu wymiarów różnic kulturowych Hofstedego stanowi podstawę analizy oraz porównania budynków bibliotecznych zaprezentowanej w artykule.

Key words: organizational culture, library buildings, German libraries

Abstract: The article addresses the problem of library space as a component of and a formative element of organisational culture. In particular it uses Hofstede's five cultural dimensions as a tool to analyse and compare library buildings with each other with an idealised theoretical model of a library.

Culture, in the sense used in inter-cultural studies, is an all-encompassing phenomenon, which influences virtually all areas of life [15; 24]. Culture in this context is defined as "software of the mind" [8; 15], or the underlying set of convictions and patterns of behaviour common to a group of people. This group is usually a nation or ethnic group, but similar tools are used to describe an organisational culture, i.e. the common set of practices and assumptions shared by members of an organisation, such as a library.

One of the best known theories of culture, which is also referred to in this article, is Geert Hofstede's six-dimensional model. Unlike many other models of culture, Hofstede's is based not only on observation and theoretical analyses, but also on the statistical analysis of responses in large scale research. It is also constantly updated to include the results of research projects such as GLOBE [12] and World Values Survey [29; 412], which largely support Hofstede's conclusions [15]. Furthermore, Hofstede's results are clearly expressed on a percentile scale, which helps to easily compare different cultures. Importantly, Hofstede's 6D model is described in great detail in reference to various aspects of social life, both by Hofstede himself and by other authors, who make use of his theory in their research. This makes the model particularly useful for analysing an area less well researched,

as is demonstrated by Bożena Jaskowska, who used Hofstede's model to analyse the organisational culture of libraries [19]. Hofstede's six dimensions are:

- Power distance index (PDI);
- Individualism vs. collectivism (IDV);
- Uncertainty avoidance index (UAI);
- Masculinity vs. femininity (MAS);
- Long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation (LTO);
- Indulgence vs. restraint (IND).

This article focuses Individualism and Collectivism (IDV), which is a measurement of an individual's identification with a group. In collectivist societies the good of the group is superior to the good of the individual. Besides people see themselves and others primarily as members of various groups rather than individuals. Most societies in the world are collectivist. Fewer individualist societies prioritise the good of the individuals. People tend to focuse on their own merit rather than on group identity. It is significant to note that this dimension appears in various other models of culture. Apart from Hofstede it is also listed by Florence Kluckhohn and Frederick Strodtbeck [20], Fons Trompenaars [40] and David Livermore [24, Lecture 3]; two types of collectivism were distinguished in the GLOBE project [12], which Paweł Boski describes as familial and institutional collectivism [2, p. 139], while Shalom Schwartz's model includes the autonomy vs embeddedness [36] dimension, which is equivalent to Hofstede's individualism. According to Hofstede the United States have the highest IDV score (i.e. the greatest degree of Individualism; IDV=91), while Guatemala has the lowest (IDV=6) [15, p. 95, 97]. Generally, Anglo-Saxon countries tend to have the highest IDV scores, while Latin America, the lowest.

Like with all the dimensions of culture, the level of individualism is fostered first of all by family and school. In collectivist societies families are extended and children are taught to perceive themselves primarily as members of the family. Group loyalty is highly valued, as is the ability to share and to preserve harmony and to avoid conflicts. In school students are expected to speak up only as representatives of a group (which is often a problem for western teachers working in collectivist countries) [6]. The aim of education is to obtain concrete skills confirmed by a diploma, which provides membership in a higher-status group. Relations between managers and staff follow patterns established in the family. Distinguishing employees with individual rewards disrupts harmony and is therefore avoided. Some clients are treated as in-group members and therefore treated better. Joining the in-group is often a prerequisite to establishing permanent business relations and requires time for forming personal relations.

The nuclear family is typical for individualistic cultures. Children are taught to be independent, honesty and freedom of expression are highly valued. These behaviours are reinforced by schools, where students are encouraged to openly express opinions and a high premium is put on standing out from the group. The aim of education is to train the ability to obtain knowledge and build up self-esteem. Friendships in individualistic cultures are voluntary and need to be sustained, but there are few restrictions as to the choice of one's friends.

Similarly, relations between employers and employees are seen as strictly contractual, with no expectation of loyalty beyond the bounds of the contract. Outstanding employees are rewarded individually, usually following a single universal incentive system. Clients are also expected to be treated equally. Universalism and personal freedom are the primary rules of law and the social order.

Research conducted by Jaskowska indicates that organisational cultures of Polish libraries are typically collectivist [19]. Interestingly, the author is not so much in favour of individualism in library organizational culture, but rather what she calls "creative collectivism". However, most Polish scholars express different sentiments. For example, the idea of talentship described by Hanna Andruszko [1] is decidedly individualistic, as it involves treating every employee as an individual. Andruszko also lists as "ethical" such attitudes as equal treatment and individual career paths. The concept of information culture proposed by Katarzyna Materska [25] relies on vertical transmission of information in an organization, which is easier to achieve in an individualistic culture, where group loyalty, and thus barriers between groups, is weaker. Gabriela Meinardi [28] proposes a "culture of adaptation" as desirable for libraries, the main values of which are personal freedom and responsibility, as well as individual professional achievement.

Similarly, Michael Gorman, an esteemed British-American librarian, points, albeit indirectly, towards individualistic values as essential to professional librarianship. In *Our Singular Strengths* [11, p. 55–69] he writes about the altruistic nature of the librarian profession, claiming that its main reward is the satisfaction of a job well done, which is a typically individualistic sentiment – in collectivist cultures achievements and rewards need to be recognized by others. Furthermore, one of Gorman's key values of librarianship listed in *Our enduring values* [6] is „intellectual freedom", which focuses on allowing all patrons unrestricted and equal access to library services, as well as freedom of expression. Similarly, the sixth of the seven values is „Equity of access to recorded knowledge and information", which demonstrates how important intellectual freedom is to Gorman. It should be noted that Gorman is British even though he spent most of his professional life in the USA, so he represents two highly individualistic cultures (IDV=89 and IDV=91, respectively [15, p. 97]) and thus seems to be presenting his national cultural values as universally desirable.

As noted by architect Marek Budzyński, there is a strong connection between us and our spaces [4] and although it seems to be often ignored by scholars, who pay more attention to the perception of time, it is strongly influenced by culture. One of the few scholars who devoted much attention to the issue of spatial perception and the way spaces are used and organised is Edward T. Hall. His seminal work "The Hidden Dimension" [14], while perhaps not his best known book, is the most comprehensive work on this subject, which is also touched upon in his other works [e.g. 13]. Hall points out the strong connection between culture and the way we make use of space and organize it around us. A library building can be on the one hand seen as an artefact of its organizational culture and on the other hand must have an influence on the formation of this culture, as it influences the patrons' and librarians' patterns of behaviour and relations with each other.

One of the main features of individualistic cultures is universalism. Therefore, in order to strengthen the individualistic character of a library's organizational culture it would be useful to unify the furnishings of all reading rooms and offices. However, it is necessary to maintain the ability to accommodate various styles of work and individualize workspaces. Open stacks are preferable and the library should not be divided in departments serving different groups of patrons. From the point of view of a library patron, the main elements helping create an organizational culture with a more collectivist feel, would be providing spaces for group work and clearly dividing and differentiating reading rooms for various groups of readers. Similarly, the collectivism of the library's organizational culture is increased by strong differentiation between the furnishings and organization of various departments. However, within a given part of the library there would be little variety or room for the patron to adjust their work space, collectivist societies see little reason to accommodate individual needs or work styles.

The subject of the features of library space that may be connected with its organizational culture has been elaborated in my earlier work [32; 33; 34]. This article aims to present the results of my research, which was conducted in order to observe whether library spatial organization and design reflected more individualist or collectivist values. For this purpose an observation sheet composed of 25 questions has been created and observations have been conducted in twelve libraries in Poland and eight in Germany. This questionnaire has also been applied to analyse the subject literature and to find out what cultural orientation is deemed preferable by scholars working in the field of library architecture and design. This article focuses only on individualism and the 11 observation questions pertaining to it. Furthermore, only German libraries will be described in detail, although some information about Polish libraries will be provided for the sake of comparison.

The observations were conducted in academic libraries in former East Germany (in Berlin and Dresden) and Poland. These countries were selected for comparison because of common history of fairly recent political transformation, which also provides a convenient cut-off point, from which new libraries can be considered to be fully modern – since 1989 when the iron curtain fell and international standards and examples of design could be freely implemented. Only buildings purposefully designed as libraries were included in the study, as only then can it be assumed that their spatial organization and design were deliberate choices, not stemming from the restrictions of an existing structure. Since the research was qualitative rather than quantitative, the buildings were selected for variety rather than uniformity or completeness. Creating a comprehensive cultural image of libraries in either country would not have been possible in any case, because of the natural limits on the size of the sample and the highly individual characteristic of each building. Therefore, the main objective of the analysis was to evaluate each individual building's apparent organizational culture, although certain generalizations and overall comparisons are also presented.

The observation form opens with a question concerning open stacks, which allows readers a greater freedom in accessing the collections, more independence. They also make it more difficult to supervise and control patrons. In a way they also serve to lower

the status of the librarians in relation to the readers (at least of the ostensible variety, stemming from the power a librarian holds), because the patrons can essentially handle without their assistance, or at least do not feel as if they cannot. In an open stacks library the librarians' aid is still occasionally necessary, but interacting with the staff is optional. It seems therefore that open stacks can be associated with higher individualism.

The next question refers to the presence of group work spaces, which can be associated with lower individualism, as it is the preferred work format in collectivist cultures. Such spaces also allow student to work under the direct supervision of a teacher, which is also more likely in collectivist cultures. On the other hand, in individualistic cultures it can be expected that various work styles will be accommodated, including group work. Therefore, the presence of only one group work space cannot be taken as a sign of collectivism. It should also be noted that even though the small size of some buildings may make it harder to find a separate room for group work, many small libraries are able to find sufficient space for even a number of them, so a complete lack of such spaces cannot be attributed solely to physical restrictions.

Individualism can also be associated with the way a library building is divided. Four answers were predicted for this question: the collections can be divided according to the form of document, according to contents, between departments for various groups of readers, or stored in a single space without clear divisions. In collectivist cultures it would be natural to assume that various groups of patrons have their own separate spaces and collections. A division into specialized reading rooms can also be seen as oriented towards various groups of readers (especially, for example, in the case of students of various faculties). This approach limits in some way the readers' ability to decide which books are appropriate for them (especially if the division is a deliberate choice, rather than dictated by subject matter) and is more in line with collectivism, which puts group identity before individual preference. Conversely, placing all collections in one open space gives readers access to all materials and allows them to decide or even discover for themselves which of them they may need. This independence is a characteristic of individualist cultures. Finally, dividing the collection according to the form of documents is more of an organizational and technical decision, as some materials may require specific conditions or equipment. Therefore, this cannot be seen as an indication of collectivism, especially as most collections are dominated by one document type (usually books), assembled in a single area.

One of the characteristics of collectivist cultures is the different treatment of various status groups. In an academic library this specific privileged group would be the academics and/or professors. Therefore, it is an important question whether these patrons have access to separate facilities. In the mildly individualistic Polish culture they can expect a certain degree of VIP treatment, be it through formal or informal arrangements. However, a separate reading room (or similar limited access facilities) is not the norm [16, p. 22; 21, p. 255] and could be seen as a vivid symptom of cultural collectivism.

The presence of self-service stations increases the independence of the reader and is thus an indication of individualism. However, the lack of such equipment cannot be taken as very meaningful, because this is still fairly new technology and other (especially financial)

reasons may be in play. This may change as technology improves, becomes more common and cheaper, and librarians and patrons come to expect it.

The next question was concerned with computer stations and information desks – not so much how many of them there are, but how visible and prominent they are. Every modern library will include both, but the way they are placed and presented may be an indication of a library's priorities. Computer use, whether for OPAC, databases, or the internet – requires and gives readers more independence, so it may be associated with individualism. Information desks on the other hand give patrons better access to librarians' help and send a signal that it is desirable. Especially in academic libraries stressing independence or the role of a master/teacher may be an indication of individualism or collectivism respectively. However, if there are very few computers at all, this may be due not so much to deliberate decisions, but financial constraints – for example when old computers are removed, but cannot be replaced. At the same time, if the lack of computers is supplemented by granting users unlimited access to Wi-Fi, this may also be an indication of individualism, although at the present time it is increasingly more accurate to say that the lack of Wi-Fi access (which has become the norm) is an indication of strong collectivism (or perhaps uncertainty avoidance).

Concerning computers for the patrons, their placement is also significant. They may be dispersed throughout the library, or concentrated in one or two "computer labs". The first solution allows the patrons to use them wherever and whenever they want, freely combining computer use with other tasks, as needed. Therefore, it can be seen as a sign of individualism.

Both the esteemed architect Harry Faulkner-Brown [7] and Andrew McDonald [27] listed variety as a part of their respective "dialogues" of key aspects of good library space. Variety creates the conditions to accommodate various patron needs and work styles and can be therefore associated with individualism. It should be noted that in collectivist cultures it can be expected that spaces for various groups will differ. The important issue is whether the readers' working conditions are dependent on their choices or on the groups they belong to. Variety may also be associated with other cultural dimensions.

The idea of the library as the "third space" [3; 25; 30] requires that library space fulfils not only the patrons' intellectual, but also social needs. Therefore, the observation form included a question concerning the presence of spaces fulfilling these needs. Apart from the obvious options of a library building including or not dedicated social spaces, such as a café, bar, or common-room of some sort, it is also quite common to organize other spaces, such as corridors, or entry halls, to fulfil these needs by placing furniture in these areas, which allow rest and interaction between readers. It should be noted that this is not a culturally universal idea. In collectivist cultures there is typically less of a need to sustain social relations through verbal exchange – just being together is often enough [15] – and thus common work spaces are sufficient. Conversely, the presence of dedicated social spaces in a library building may be an indication of individualism. Attitude to this role of a library may also be influenced by the masculinity vs femininity dimension. A detailed discussion of this problem lies beyond the scope of this work, but, in short, feminine cultures put

a premium on social relations (i.e. social spaces are needed) and masculine cultures on efficiency (i.e. social spaces are a waste of space). Therefore, placing social spaces in areas with other functions (such as hallways) suggests an individualist masculine culture – social needs are recognized and somewhat fulfilled, but not at the cost of the core tasks of a library.

This last issue can be generalized to how strongly the library building is focused on its primary tasks, which in turn leads to the question of how subservient it is to the broader needs of the university. Obviously, an academic library by definition serves the needs of the university by performing its basic tasks, but sometimes space in the library is taken over for other non-library needs. Many buildings have conference or exhibition halls, which serve the needs of the library, but also of the university as a whole. A similar dual purpose is served by a bookstore specializing in the university's own publications. Sometimes lecture rooms or administration offices are also placed in the library building. Sometimes the university simply takes over some of the library's space, while in other cases the buildings are designed with teaching spaces, perhaps with the view to re-adapt them later as the collections and needs grow. On the other hand, a library can go beyond the needs of the university by opening to readers from outside the student body and faculty.

This may be connected with the level of individualism of the organizational culture of the library and the university as a whole, as well as its long term orientation. Placing teaching rooms or university administration offices, as well as combining the university building with another university building is both a symbolic and practical expression of the library's belonging and subservience to the larger institution. The restrictions on library independence may be associated with collectivism, while sacrificing its needs for the benefit of other university tasks may be the result of short term orientation.

The last feature of library space primarily connected to individualism is perhaps the most difficult to identify and define. McDonald coined the term wow factor [27] to describe it. Good library space should be surprising, inspiring and imaginative. A trip to the library should be something of an adventure. This is a very subjective aspect of library design, but a lot can be gleaned from looking at specific examples of buildings that they do have a *wow factor*. Perhaps the most important thing is the project's originality – a brave, unusual form. Like the proposed bold design for the National Library of the Check Republic (Národní knihovna České republiky) [18]. However a library does not need to be as controversial as that to be original. For example, the Vennesla bibliotek og kulturhus in Norway combines a traditional material – wood – with a futuristic quasi-organic form, to create a whole that Kruszewski describes as both stimulating and full of vitality [21, p. 276]. Originality can also be achieved through the use of known motifs and materials in innovative ways, or at an exceptional scale. For example the Seattle Central Library uses typical glass and steel office architecture in a structure of an unusual, unexpected shape, which has been called "the most important new library to be built in a generation" [9]. Apart from originality it is also important for a building to be varied, as in the Veterinärmedizinische Bibliothek der Freien Universität Berlin (which will be discussed later), where the mix of books, art, greenery, and biological exhibits gives the library a strong 'wow factor' despite its small size. Variety also helps a building maintain the impression it makes for longer, as in the Warsaw University

Library, the irregular structure of which allows it to be 'rediscovered' on subsequent visits, encouraging patrons to return. Finally, a small library can also create a form of quiet awe by having everything in its place and exactly as it should be. Such is the public library in Druskinnikai (Lithuania) or the "Stacja Kultura" public library in Rumia (Poland) [38]. Monumentalism is not necessarily synonymous with 'wow factor'; although it can elicit awe, it is also overbearing, while 'wow factor' should be more about delight than fear.

This aspect of library design can be associated most strongly with individualism, as well as uncertainty avoidance and the newest of Hofstede's dimensions: indulgence vs restraint. The uniqueness and individual qualities of a building with a strong wow factor, are characteristic of individualistic cultures. The necessary departure from tried and tested formulas is also an indication of low uncertainty avoidance. Finally, in restrained cultures such a building might be considered overly extravagant, indicating that wow factor might be associated with indulgence.

The questionnaire predicts four standard answers concerning 'wow factor'. The first option is that the building has a strong wow factor – it elicits awe and makes a strong impression. The opposite is that the library is utterly devoid of anything that could be described as a wow factor – it is boring, ugly, chaotic, and/or discouraging. One specific case here is what could be described as a pragmatic style (typical of office buildings) – focused on functionality and unoriginal. Because this aspect is so difficult to define, a neutral answer is also necessarily possible. Sometimes a building can be aesthetically pleasing and somewhat interesting, but not make much of an impression, in other cases only parts of it elicit awe, or it causes mixed feelings for some other reason.

The question arises: how can these questions be answered based on subject literature and examples of good practice? In other words: what is the ideal organizational culture of a library, as presented by its building? With regards to individualism, the rules of library space management, as presented in subject literature, suggest a strongly, if not extremely, individualistic library.

To begin, as is noted by Henryk Hollender [17] and other scholars [37] that open stacks are universally accepted and desirable in modern libraries. Furthermore, one of McDonald's qualities of good library space [27] is that it should be interactive. Group study spaces are some of the sociopetal spaces [14, p. 108; 31] necessary to facilitate interactions between patrons. Including such areas increases the variety of a library building[1] by allowing different work styles. Spaces dedicated to social interactions between patrons, such as a bar, café, or even rest areas in hallways, are also sociopetal, their presence increases the variety of library space, and is consistent with the concept of a library as the third place [3; 25; 30].

The division of library space following formal criteria is often used and quite natural, but many authors oppose this strategy and would prefer libraries to be organized following the subject matter of the items in their collections (e.g. Wojciechowski [411], Hollender [17]). In an academic library such organization of collections might easily divide the library

[1] Which is considered desirable for good library space by both Faulkner-Braun [7] and McDonald [27].

into departments for diverse groups of readers, such as students of various faculties. This may seem like a good realization of Ranganathan's second and third law[2], but it contradicts the model of an open library promoted in subject literature [17; 22], which is better realized by placing all collections in a single space. A lack of strong divisions is also more compatible with open stacks (where all items are stored in a single open space) and flexibility, which is one of the key qualities of good library architecture[3]. It seems, therefore, to be the preferred model for a modern library building.

Nowhere in modern subject literature it is stated that special areas dedicated solely for use by academic staff are in any way necessary for the effective functioning of an academic library. On the contrary, this runs counter to the notion of accessibility and openness.

As far as self-service equipment is concerned, there does not seem to be a single answer commonly given in subject literature. Libraries which are equipped with self-service stations seem to be somewhat boastful about having them, but more general texts do not present them as necessary. Neither are they in any way criticized. Gorman warns about overreliance on modern technology, but does not discourage its use entirely [11, p. 61–69]. If nothing else, the presence of self-service equipment should be encouraged for the sake of variety.

Similarly, in the case of information desks and computer stations it is hard to find an unambiguous answer in subject literature. As Gorman [11, p. 61–69] suggests, computers should not dominate. Especially that in a modern library with open stacks the readers have enough freedom and responsibility as it is, so perhaps more than a stronger sense of self-determination offered by computers they need access to help offered by information desks. As was already mentioned, subject literature clearly states that variety is a desirable trait of a library building. Therefore, computers for patrons should be spread throughout the library, rather than concentrated in dedicated areas.

As for subjecting the library building to the broader needs of the academic institutions it belongs to, literature offers no clear answer and it should be assumed that library designers should strive for some balance in this aspect. Finally, as far as 'wow factor' is concerned, recommendations may not be as clear and frequent as in the case of flexibility or variety, but there is no doubt that this is a desirable trait.

To sum up, subject literature indicates that library space should definitely favour individualism, although not in the extreme, mostly because it is in the nature of individualist cultures to accommodate work styles that are most comfortable for the patrons and employees, including those with more collectivist needs (e.g. by providing access to guidance from the staff or group work areas).

Designed by Norman Foster and completed in 2005, the building of the Philologische Bibliothek der Freien Universität is a part of the Rost- und Silberlaube – the campus of the Freien Universität in Dahlem. Although the library building, which houses 750 000 volumes, is freestanding, patrons enter from one of the Campus buildings. The shape of the four-storey, 6 000 m^2 oval structure is supposed to resemble the human brain.

[2] Every reader his book, Every book its reader [35].
[3] As argued by, among others, Faulkner-Braun [7], McDonald [27], Cudnik [5], Lamis [23].

There are only two group study areas in the library and neither of them is in the library building, but rather in the basement of a nearby campus building, connected to the library with a long underground corridor. Automatic doors have been used to minimise the psychological barrier created by this access tunnel. The location of these rooms suggests that they were not a part of the original design. It also seems that one of them was added even later and/or is supposed to replace the other. The library building proper does not even contain desks which could accommodate two or more people working together.

Photography 1. The interior of the Philological library, as seen from the entrance

Source: self-elaboration.

The library is not clearly divided into departments, although periodicals have been separated from the rest of the collection, which is sorted by subject, and stored in a single open stacks area covering the whole library. Almost all of the space is open – apart from the group study rooms there are no enclosed spaces, even the multimedia stations are placed in open cubicles.

There are no social spaces in the building and its organisation clearly discourages socialising. Reading desks are placed along long wavy edges of the individual floors, which makes it impossible for two or more people to sit together. The few comfortable armchairs have been spaced apart from each other, yet close to other reading areas, making it impossible to converse without disturbing other readers. The only place where a few people could sit next to each other and talk is a table in the hallway leading to group study rooms. This problem is somewhat mitigated by the close proximity of campus buildings, which does contain social areas, although the benches in the hallway immediately adjacent to the library entrance has a clearly sociofugal character akin to an airport waiting room. Overall, this is a utilitarian space not conducive to socialising or even quietly being together.

Photography 2. The 'waiting room' in the Dahlem campus near the Philological Library

Source: self-elaboration.

The first thing that a patron sees upon entering the building is the main information desk, while there are only six computers for the patrons, although there is WiFi and electrical sockets at all reading desks.

The interior of the library is not especially varied, as it has a consistent style, uniform furniture and organisation, even the artwork repeats the same motif. Overall it seems rather monotonous.

Although the building's only function is to perform core library tasks, it should be noted that it is inaccessible from outside. Neither is there any clear signage in the street revealing the location of the library. This suggests a strong focus on accommodating students (and by extension the needs of the university), even though outsiders face no obstacles in accessing the library, once they manage to find it.

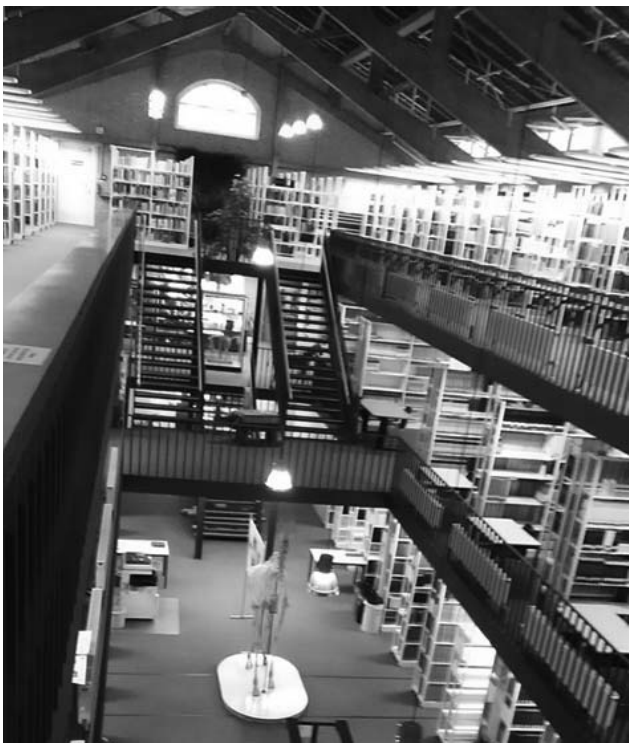
Even though it is one of the better known modern European libraries, designed by a famous architect, it has very little 'wow factor'. It is encircled completely by other campus buildings and thus not visible from the outside, while the interior only makes a strong impression at first sight, as it is surprisingly small and monotonous. In the long run, despite its undoubtable originality, it is overwhelmingly practical.

To sum up, the building of Philologische Bibliothek der Freien Universität suggests a high level of individualism, but slightly lower than that of the theoretical model.

Since 1998 the Veterinärmedizinische Bibliothek der Freien Universität has been housed in a converted riding hall in the centre of the Düppel campus. Although the four-storey building (housing 160 000 volumes) was adapted from a pre-existing building, it should be stressed that this was originally an open space of simple shape, so the designers

of the library were only restricted by the structure's volume. It is therefore appropriate to include the building in this analysis.

Photography 3. Interior of the Library of Veterinary Medicine, as seen from the top floor mezzanine



Source: self-elaboration.

The library has no clear division into departments – periodicals have been separated from books, but within a single open stacks area, which contains the majority of the collection (other than a small closed stacks area in the basement).

According to the library website the building contains two group study rooms, although apart from the rooms labelled as groups study areas there is also a number of unmarked, but otherwise identical, rooms. Even though the building is small it has two rooms where readers can take a break (with one of them clearly marked as NOT for work), as well as a discreet resting space in the open stacks area and a room for patrons with small children. The placement of desks in the open stacks area also encourages socializing. There are no dedicated spaces for university staff members.

It is hard to decide whether computers or information desks are more prominent, as there are few of either in the main library space. There is only one information desk and all but two computers are placed in a separate computer lab.

Despite its small size the variety in the building is staggering. Apart from bookshelves and a variety of desk arrangements, there is a resting area, numerous separate rooms for group work or rest, and most importantly a wealth of exhibits – animal skeletons, preserved animal organs in jars, artwork (also mostly depicting animals), educational posters, and greenery – dispersed throughout the library. A visitor encounters something fascinating at every turn.

It is difficult to say how strongly the library is subordinate to the needs of the university. The building is in the middle of a campus (clearly separated and far from the city centre), but open to anyone with no restrictions. Some of the rooms inside are used for classes, but even though they are not marked as library spaces and may seem to be dedicated for this purpose, neither are they clearly labelled as classrooms and the schedules on the doors suggest that they are only sporadically used as such.

The beauty of the old riding hall is dwarfed by the abundance of the collections housed within. In a single open space books and periodicals are accompanied by numerous zoological exhibits: preserved animal organs in jars, animal bones and complete skeletons (including a life-sized giraffe), as well as animal themed artwork, in the form of sculpture, relief, and paintings, and teaching aids, such as educational posters. Having so many interesting items in the relatively small space of the library is quite stunning. To sum up, the spatial arrangements of the library suggest very strong individualism, comparable to what is suggested by the theoretical model.

The Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum Building houses the Central Library of the oldest of Berlin's universities – the Humboldt University (Zentralbibliothek der Universitätsbibliothek der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin). The ten-storey building opened in 2009 has over 20 000 m^2 and houses 2.5 mln volumes, of which 2 mln are placed in open stacks. It stands in the band of the Spree river in the very centre of Berlin, directly adjacent to the main University buildings and the Museum Island (ger. Museuminsel). Its most characteristic part is the 70-meter-long, 12-meter-wide and 20-meter-high central reading room with staggered terraces.

Open stacks are the main mode of access to the collections, but, even though they contain 2 mln volumes, with many empty shelves, they occupy surprisingly little space on each floor. The collection was divided by form of document, clearly separating periodicals (on the ground floor), as well as a multimedia collection and a research reading room (ger. Forschungslesesaal), where particularly precious items can be used, while a learning/teaching collection has been isolated on the ground floor (surrounding the so called Leselaunge).

Photography 4. Inside view of the famous stacked reading room of the Grimm Zentrum

Source: self-elaboration.

The building contains eight group study rooms. There is no typical professors' reading room, but the description of the research reading room suggests that it is only intended for use by academics (with prior reservation). It is understandable considering the character of the collection, although the size of the reading room seems somewhat excessive if it is only to be used occasionally.

Although the building is quite large there is no room inside for readers to socialize. There is a fairly large cantina, but its overcrowded and therefore more suitable to be used for a quick meal than to socialize. There are only some soft benches in the entry hall and two armchairs in one of the hallways. On the ground floor, surrounded by the course book collection, there is the so called Leselounge (a combination of German lessen – to read and English lounge), which contains comfortable armchairs with footrests. The small periodicals reading room on the first floor has a similar setup. However, these spaces seem to be designed to read in comfortable solitude – the armchairs are wide and spaced too far apart to allow comfortable conversations.

There are numerous self-service stations in the library. There are even two large machines allowing patrons to pick up books ordered from the closed stacks section. This allows readers to use the library without interacting with the staff. Especially that computer stations are ubiquitous, while there are only a few information desks. Combined with strong interior divisions it makes it difficult for readers to receive help from the librarians and encourages them to use the more numerous and accessible computers.

Even though the furniture and décor are standardized, they are also quite varied – there are desks and computer stations in the open stacks area, reading rooms and

computer labs, the Leselaunge and periodicals section furnished with comfortable armchairs, as well as other specialized areas. Nevertheless, the variety is not huge and most of it comes from functional concerns rather than deliberate design.

The library is open to all readers with few restrictions and there are public computers placed in the entry hall. There are also numerous classrooms in the building. Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that one needs to have their own padlock or electronic keycard to use the lockers. The card can be obtained in the cafeteria, but it still points to an emphasis on return customers (i.e. mostly students) who would know about this.

As for 'wow factor', Grimm-Zentrum is incredibly difficult to evaluate. On one hand the view on the main reading room is stunning and it has to be stressed that it is by no means fleeting – this is not something one gets used to. Few architectural spaces are so impressive. On the other hand, unless a visitor actually works in the main reading room or one of the individual work rooms overlooking it, this view is hidden from them. One must also cover quite a distance to reach it, through the outer part of the library which feels like a labyrinth of dull and gloomy corridors. Obviously, it depends on the individual needs of the readers where they would spend most of their time and it does seem like most of them spend it in the main reading room. In some way this is a manifestation of the designers' priorities, as there is no doubt that they did mean to make an impression. To sum up, the spatial organization of the Grimm-Znetrum points to individualism, although not as strong as suggested by the theoretical model.

The so called Volkswagen-Haus houses the Zentralbibliothek der TU und UdK Berlin – the combined libraries of Technische Universität Berlin and Universität der Künste Berlin, also known as the Volkswagen Universitätsbibliothek. The five-storey building was opened in December 2004. Its 30 000 m^2 hold some 2.7 mln volumes. The building is adjacent to a large area occupied by the Berlin University of Technology.

Photography 5. The Volkswagen Library building by night

Source: self-elaboration.

The library has both open and closed stacks. Interestingly, books from the latter are not available through a circulation desk, but from a special area where they are placed on shelves for readers to take and check out in one of the self-service stations.

The large periodicals collection has been placed in the basement, separating it very visibly from the book collection. There is also a media reading room and a part of the collection has been separated from the rest. Within the open stacks area the collection is divided by subject.

The Volkswagen Universitätsbibliothek building has more group study rooms than any other analysed library. There are a few of them on each floor, plus a large room on the ground floor with a number of large tables. There are more group study rooms than individual work rooms. There are also a few lecture rooms, although compared to the scale of the building they occupy little space. At the same time the library is in an easily accessible location and does not restrict access to outside readers.

There are few places in the library for readers to socialise. There are some sofas and a large table in the entry hall. There is also a cantina, but it is too overcrowded to be used for anything other than a quick bite (there is even a notice requesting patrons not to occupy the tables too long). The sofas and armchairs spread throughout the library are more suited for solitary rest. The large leather sofas forming the tiny newspaper reading room would seem like a nice place for a chat, if not for the "keep quiet" notice. There are a few two-person cubicles and numerous group study rooms, but they are meant for working together not socialising. It is hard to find a place here where one could sit in peace and talk to another person without disturbing other readers.

Computers seem more prominent than information desks. Although there is an information desk on each floor, computer stations are ubiquitous. They are mostly gathered in groups, but there is a number of those on most floors.

The layout of each floor is almost the same and most of the furniture is uniform, but efforts have been made to diversify – rest furniture is different on every floor, there are a few exhibition areas, as well as small surprises, such as the newspaper reading room with large leather sofas. Apart from traditional desks put in blocks of eight, patrons can use individual standing desks, comfortable armchairs, small one-person cubicles (basically desks separated by light walls), double cubicles with soft fabric-covered walls, cubicles equipped with lockers, as well as individual and group study rooms. The periodicals department is also completely different from the rest of the building, although this is more incidental and related to its location. Variety is also improved by the different views from the windows.

The style of the building can be described as pragmatic. At night the glass-covered and brilliantly illuminated building is quite spectacular, but inside it is mostly its scale that is impressive. German press described it jokingly as "a garage for books" [39]. To sum up, this is a space which suggests individualism, in line with the theoretical recommendations and similarly to other Berlin libraries included in this analysis.

Opened in 2002, the main Saxon State and University Library Dresden (ger. Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, or SLUB in short) is composed

of two five-storey buildings and two underground floors. On over 40 000 m^2 it holds 8.3 mln volumes, including special collections – photographs, maps, music, manuscripts, and old prints. The library is situated at the edge of the sprawling university grounds.

The main collection is placed in open stacks (with self-service stations). Other than that the periodicals and multimedia collections have been separated from the rest of the library, as well as a microform reading room and the "Deutche Fotothek". There are numerous computers for patrons throughout the library, but the many large and well-marked information desks are much more prominent.

The open stacks area in the upper level is rather monotonous (uniform furnishings and layout), but the lower floors are quite different – they contain a large open-space reading room, a variety of readers' desks (high and low, individual and in groups), various sofas, individual and group study rooms, exhibition cabinets. The departments containing special collections have varied furnishings (specific to the form of documents). The library also offers surprises, such as the views of a garden in a patio, a typewriter exhibition, or a prayer and meditation room. A reader may use the library for a long time and still be surprised, which helps sustain the strong impression it makes with its overall form and its spacious underground reading room covered by a glass roof (which looks like a pond when viewed from ground level).

Photography 6. One of the above-ground buildings of SLUB Central Library seen over the glass roof of the main reading room

Source: self-elaboration.

There are multiple group study rooms, placed in various parts of the library, which makes them more accessible. There are also many places for patrons to socialise. Both in the entry hall and in the library proper there are many sofas and armchairs placed in sociopetal arrangements, allowing people sitting on them to converse. There is also a café, although it is rather small and far from the main part of the library (in one of the two over-ground buildings). The garden can also be used for socialising, although this is depending on weather conditions.

The library is clearly geared more towards outside patrons than towards students. There are a few small classrooms in the building, but this is irrelevant compared to its overall scale. At the same time the library houses a book museum and public gardens. To sum up, the space of the Saxon State and University Library Dresden suggests very strong individualism, similarly to the idealised theoretical model.

The Saxon State and University Library in Dresden also includes a number of departmental libraries, one of which is the Bereichsbibliothek DrePunct, located across the street from the main library. Its collection contains 600 000 volumes on engineering and related subjects. The one-storey building has glass walls on two sides and an area of 4 300 m^2, 3 000 of which are occupied by the main freestanding building holding open stacks. The library was opened in 1998. In 2014 a part called Makerspace was attached to the library building. This space is used as a workshop area where students can make things using a variety of equipment (including 3D printers).

Photography 7. Interior of the DrePunct library with a view of the surroundings

Source: self-elaboration.

Most of the building is occupied by a single undivided open stacks area, which houses various types of documents (with multimedia items placed on shelves alongside books). The only exception is the Makerspace, which is located in an adjacent building and organisationally is separated separate from the library, which is merely overseeing it.

There are no group study rooms in the library, although working in groups is possible in the Makerspace. Neither are there separate rooms for academic staff, or for socialising. There are some armchairs and padded benches in the entry hall. There is also a cafeteria in the building through which readers enter the library.

There are two information desks in the library – one in the entry hall and the other in the open stacks area, right beyond the entrance. There are also few computer stations and

most of them are gathered in one place. Therefore, neither of these can be said to be more prominent. The dominant part of the library is the open stacks area. There are also some self-service stations near the entrance.

There is little variety here. The majority of the library is a uniform space filled with identical bookshelves and desks. The few exceptions are the Makerspace and parents' reading room, but these also have uninteresting furniture and design.

It is hard to tell how much the building is subservient to the needs of the university. This depends on how one treats the Makerspace, which, as was already mentioned, seems more like a separate institution than an integral part of the library. Besides that there are no areas in the building that are not dedicated to core library tasks.

The huge open stacks area, which forms the main part of the library, is quite impressive, mostly because of its scale and openness. However, it is reminiscent of a warehouse – simple and utilitarian. The impression is also spoilt by the unclear connection to the neighbouring building through which one enters.

Photography 8. Entrance to the DrePunct library; in spite of appearances the library proper is a separate building

Source: self-elaboration.

Surprisingly, despite the open stacks and open planning, the spatial organisation of the DrePunct library suggests rather average individualism, lower than suggested by the theoretical model and lower than all but one of the other analysed libraries.

The Zweigbibliothek Erziehungswissenschaften, or Educational Sciences Library of the Technical University in Dresden is one of SLUB's number of specialised libraries. Its modest three storey building houses 125 000 volumes. Since 1997 it has occupied a new building in August-Bebel-Straße, in the same neighbourhood as the university, but within its campus and not directly adjacent to it.

Photography 9. Exterior of the Educational Sciences Library

Source: self-elaboration.

The collections have been made available in open stacks occupying two floors of the building. Although there is also a closed stacks area, it is relatively small. Periodicals and DVDs have been separated from the main collection and, despite the library's open floor plan, this separation is quite visible (some of the periodicals have been placed in a separate room).

Despite its small size, the library has two group study rooms, although it should be noted that they are not very prominent, indeed they almost seem hidden. Probably because they were not, as it seems, part of the original plan and were adapted for the purposes later. Perhaps due to the library's size there is no place for readers to socialise (apart from two armchairs near the entrance).

There are few computers in the library and they are not visible. Neither is the sole information desk near the entrance. There are also some self-service stations. There is little variety in design and furnishings. Although readers' desks vary in different parts of the library (including a small reading room and a few quiet corners) and there are separate rooms for parents with children and for copy machines (and a part of the book collection), as well as some greenery, in the end the library is filled with uniform utilitarian furniture.

The library is open to all readers and does not provide room for any other university tasks (such as classrooms). The building is aesthetically pleasing and modern, but not particularly impressive. The front wall is somewhat embellished by protruding vertical windows, but it is a small feature and adds little character to the otherwise nondescript structure. To sum up, the spatial organisation of Zweigbibliothek Erziehungswissenschaften clearly suggests individualism, but not as strong as in the theoretical model.

The Branch Library of Forestry (ger. Zweigbibliothek Forstwesen) is located in the centre of the campus of the Department of Forest Sciences in Tharandt, 15 km from Dresden.

After the old library was destroyed by a flood in 2002, a new building had to be erected. It was completed in 2004. This experience has largely dictated the architecture of the new building, which has closed stacks on the top floor, open stacks on the first floor, and a cafeteria on the ground floor, protecting the collection in case of another flood.

The library has partially open stacks on the first floor, but they only include one third of the collection, most of which is housed in a closed stacks area on the top floor. It is unclear what criteria were used to decide which volumes go where, apart from the fact that the valuable 16th-19th century collection is in the closed stacks. The open stacks area, on the other hand, has no clear divisions. Even the periodicals have not been separated out.

Photography 10. The building of the Branck Library of Forestry as seen from the mountains overlooking Tharandt

Source: self-elaboration.

The building has no separate group study rooms, although groups of readers can work together in the special collections reading room (where older resources are made available), as well as in group study spaces in the main open stacks area. There are also many places for people to socialise. There is a large cantina on the ground floor and a number of sofas in the entrance area on the first floor.

Unlike the other libraries which are a part of SLUB, the Branch Library of Forestry has no self-service stations. Neither are the few computer stations (all placed on one long desk near the catalogues) made prominent. Although there is only one information desk, it dominates the building's centre of gravity.

It is hard to say how strongly the building is made to serve the broader needs of the university. On one hand, its only part which is not directly dedicated to basic library tasks is the cafeteria. On the other hand it occupies almost one third of the building and seems much too large for library patrons' needs (i.e. it is almost certainly designed to serve the whole faculty).

Despite its small size, the library is quite varied – there is a small space for parents with children, sofas in the entry hall, a cafeteria on the ground floor, and a special collections reading room. However, variety cannot be said to be a characteristic feature of the library, as is the case with some other small libraries (e.g. Veterinärmedizinische Bibliothek der FU). The furnishings are uniform, utilitarian, and arranged in repetitive compositions. Although the library as a whole is quite pretty, the impression it makes is more due to the stunning surroundings than to its architecture or design.

Unlike the other analysed libraries, as well as the idealised model, the spatial organisation of Zweigbibliothek Forstwesen suggests moderate collectivism. However, it should be stressed that some of its aspects are ambiguous and difficult to evaluate.

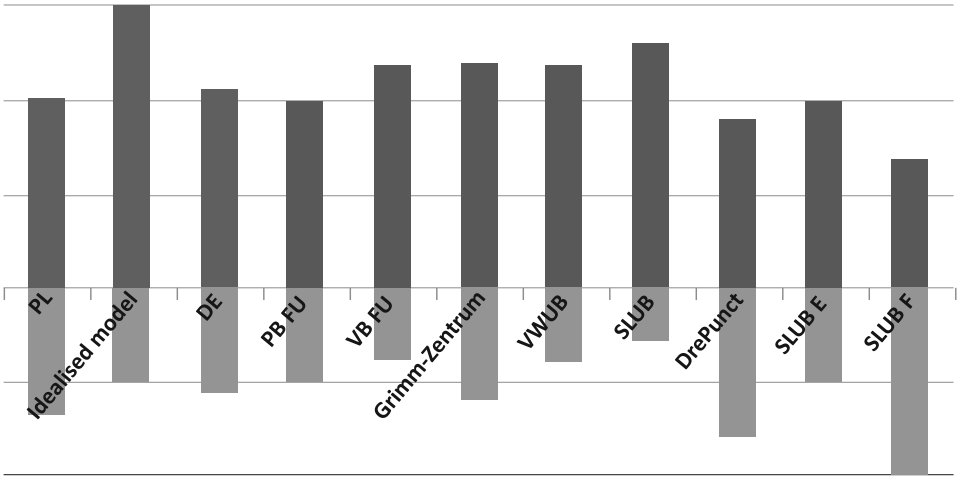
The average level of individualism suggested by the spatial organisation of analysed libraries is slightly lower than that suggested by the theoretical model, but still indicates that there are more elements that can be associated with individualism than those that can be associated with collectivism. Only one of the analysed libraries (SLUB Zweigbibliothek Forstwesen) diverges significantly from the idealised model towards collectivism. Significantly, this is the only library with closed stacks as the dominant mode of access to the collection. This correlation is confirmed by observations conducted in Polish libraries, as well as measurements of other cultural dimensions. Although it is merely hinted by the information presented in this article, a broader analysis confirms that open stacks are crucial in creating a library conforming to the standards of modern library architecture. However, the example of SLUB DrePunct (and also some Polish libraries, which diverge from the idealised model, such as the University Library in Gdańsk) shows that it is not sufficient itself. It also seems that smaller department libraries tend to have lower individualism, but in this case the difference is not confirmed by observations in Polish libraries. It is also not very significant and is likely to be accidental in a sample this small.

When compared to Polish libraries, German libraries seem to be much more homogenous. While all but one of the analysed German libraries have very similar results, Polish libraries have wildly differing ones – both towards the collectivist and individualist end of the spectrum. However, in the end the average level of individualism suggested by the spatial organisation of libraries in the two countries is very similar (slightly higher for Germany), which is consistent with Hofstede's observations about the two cultures having similar levels of individualism (60 for Poland and 67 for Germany [15, p. 95–96]).

Figure 1 shows the relative level of individualism suggested by spatial organisation of analysed libraries. The number of elements associated with individualism is indicated above the horizontal axis and the ones connected with collectivism below[4].

[4] PL – the average result for Polish libraries analysed in the same study, Idealised model – the idealised theoretical library space, as presented by subject literature, DE – the average for the analysed German libraries, PB FU – Philologische Bibliothek der Freien Universität, VB FU – Veterinärmedizinische Bibliothek der Freien Universität, Grimm-Zentrum – Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum, VWUB – Volkswagen Universitätsbibliothek, SLUB – Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, DrePunct – Bereichsbibliothek DrePunct, SLUB E – Zweigbibliothek Erziehungswissenschaften, SLUB F – Zweigbibliothek Forstwesen.

Figure 1. The relative level of individualism suggested by spatial organisation of analysed libraries



Source: self-elaboration.

As noted before, there is no strong indication of national culture influencing individualism in library space. The same is true for regional differences – there do not seem to be any characteristics common for libraries in any of the two cities. If there is any conclusion to be drawn about national differences, it is that Germans follow the rules of library design more strictly, while in Poland there is greater latitude, which is consistent with the popular stereotype. Finally, there is no indication of the trend for higher or lower individualism changing over time.

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