

COLLECTION BUILDING IN GERMAN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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I. *Structure of literature demand and book provision in German Universities*

Problems of collection building in German libraries can only be understood if three aspects are pointed out:

- 1) The structure of German university libraries.
- 2) The establishment of German departmental libraries.
- 3) The system of teaching and research at German Universities.

1. Since the 19th century the German university library has traditionally been built with three parts: the user department, i.e. the reading room and the loan department, the stack room and separated from them the library administration offices. In the reading-room only a few handbooks were available to users. As a rule the user (except for the professors) had no open access to the stacks. All users could lend books to read them at home or in the reading room. Nevertheless the books were shelved in a systematic arrangement. As a result of the closed stacks the German libraries changed however from the systematic arrangement of books to one in current numbers (numerus currens). All books of the same size are shelved now in order of their entry which is an extremely space-saving method. At the same time it is less difficult for the library staff to administer the book stock.

2. At the end of the 19th century the German departmental libraries were established as textbook collections for students. They soon became research libraries for professors and students which partly developed into large special libraries at the universities. At big universities there are 100 to 150 departmental libraries. They were at their height in the 50 s and 60 s, when the demand of academic staff was very high by low supply. Then the university professors could get high grants for the departmental libraries when they were offered a chair. That led to a rapid growth of departmental libraries especially in the humanities. All departmental libraries had more accessions than the central library.

3. The education at German universities is based on the idea of a very close connection of research and teaching. This means that students, too, need research literature fairly early during their studies. As research is increasingly internationalized, most of the research literature is not in German but in foreign languages. More than 50% of literature bought in German University libraries are foreign books. In the middle sixties it became quite clear that the dual system of the university library and the departmental libraries without coordination could not be carried on for financial reasons.¹ The demand for specialized literature was increasing as well as the number of copies required. The great number of small departmental libraries led to an extremely high multiplication of books within the university. The accessioning of books and periodicals was (and still is) not centralized. There were no uniform cataloguing rules in the university and finally there was not even a local union catalogue. The researcher wanting specialized research literature had to walk from one departmental library to the other. Furthermore, the reading restrictions and the few opening hours in the small departmental libraries led to a very low utilisation factor of the literature. There were distinct tendencies to more efficient library

¹ Cf. *Gesamtplan für das wissenschaftliche Bibliothekswesen*, ed. by Arbeitsgruppe Bibliotheksplan Baden-Württemberg, Pullach, 2. Aufl. 1973, Bd. 1: Universitäten, pp. 44-73.

organisation of the universities. The foundation of new universities made it possible to try out new conceptions for establishing library systems.

II. *Reorganisation of University-library-systems*

The further development proceeded in three stages.

1. The first one might be called the phase of *ideology*. The new libraries were partly planned according to extremely new ideas. In Konstanz,² for example, it was intended to centralize the bookstock in one central library besides which no departmental library of any kind should exist. This bookstock should be totally available as a reference library. As the university should only have a maximum capacity of 2,500 students, the idea was that a permanent working place could be provided for each student. Exactly the opposite philosophy was tried out in Bielefeld.³ There the stocks should be shelved in about 20 departments completely decentralized with a library administration centre only.

2. The second stage, the phase of *realisation*, showed that none of the models could be realized in their pure and extreme form. In Konstanz it appeared very soon that the number of students had to be increased and therefore the books could not be kept as a no-loan-collection. In the meantime this conception was completely given up and the centrally arranged stock is now available for loan. In contrast to the older university libraries with current number arrangement the bookstock in Konstanz remains in a systematic order. All users have free access to the whole bookstock. In *Bielefeld* it has been possible to arrange the books in a much more concentrated form than originally intended by centralization of university buildings.

² Cf. Stoltzenburg, Joachim u. G. Wiegand, *Die Bibliothek der Universität Konstanz: 1965-1974*, Pullach 1975 (Bibliothekspraxis 18).

³ Heim, Harro, *Die Bibliothek der Universität Bielefeld in Theorie und Praxis*. In: *Vom Strukturwandel deutscher Universitätsbibliotheken*. Frankfurt 1973, pp. 92-105 (Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie. Sonderh. 14).

On the whole the experiences made at new universities show that the using habits of German readers cannot be changed easily. In particular the habit of lending books and working at home is much more consistent than expected. In Konstanz and other university libraries the great number of reader places in new buildings are not used up to their capacity.

3. In the third phase which might be called the phase of *flexibility* or realism it has been understood in Germany that the following conditions are of fundamental importance for the structure of library systems: the spatial relation of the university buildings, the number of students and of library users, and the special user habits depending on the subject. A library system for a university in a city centre has to be different from that on a new-built campus in the open-fields. A library for 2,500 students has to be different from a library system providing literature for 25,000 students. Universities with faculties of medicine need other forms of book provision than technical universities or those emphasizing on the humanities. In this phase different solutions were found for the old library systems of universities too. Librarians at new as well as at old universities agree that library systems can only work under the three following conditions.

- 1) A coordinated acquisition which shall achieve the best possible location of a book and the adequate number of titles.
- 2) The acquisition and cataloguing of books adequate to common rules particularly for central information by a local union catalogue.
- 3) A general access for every member of the university to all bookstocks within the university.

The structure of library systems at older universities contains centralized and decentralized elements.⁴ The uni-

⁴ Mittler, Elmar, *Der Aufbau von Bibliothekssystemen an den Universitäten des Landes Baden-Württemberg*. In: *Vom Strukturwandel deutscher Hochschulbibliotheken*. Frankfurt 1973, pp. 44-85 (Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie. Sonderh. 14).

versity library is the central library. It acquires books for loan, but it is the centre for reference and information too, and has reading rooms as well. The departmental libraries provide the actual stock as reference libraries without loan. Besides there are reference collections for the teaching staff. The main characteristics of the new university library system are the short ways for the user, a reasonable number of departmental libraries and an efficient central library.

III. Coordinated acquisition in University-library-systems

In order to work economically in this system a close cooperation between central library and departmental libraries is necessary. At many universities regular purchase conferences on new books are common practice. Then the new literature is presented by the subject specialist on account of his extensive bibliographical knowledge in great detail and discussed in order to decide in cooperation with researchers and students which literature is acquired by the university library and which by the departmental library, and which should be bought by both of them and how many additional copies of important textbooks should be acquired. These purchase conferences seem to be rather expensive at first glance, but those concerned find them necessary for they give an improved knowledge of new publications on the one hand and the better information about the demand of research and teaching on the other. If such meetings are practised, it depends very much on the good will and the flexibility of the subject specialist who has to be the motor for coordination.

Now the question arises what are the differences between ordering books by the departmental libraries or by the university library? In this connection two pairs of concepts are particularly important:

- 1) Books for reference collections and for loan collections.
- 2) Study literature and research literature.

1. One important difference between reference and loan collections is that reference literature can be used by far

more users in a shorter time because one user cannot block a book over a longer period. On the other hand the intensive using of a book is reduced in reference collections not allowed on loan. In contrast the user can work very intensively with the book taken home from the loan collections. On the other hand one user can block a book for a great number of interested people for at least 4 weeks. The difference between reference and loan-collections is important for the German library system, because the departmental library makes available often used literature of immediate interest as a reference library.

2. It appears reasonable to differentiate between "special research literature", "basic research literature" and "study literature" to enable an agreement on the acquisition between departmental libraries and central library. "*Basic research literature*" contains all publications characterized by an important subject of common interest, by scientific quality and generally by a larger size of the book. In contrast "*special research literature*" is only interesting for a small group of researchers. It is characterized by a highly specialized subject, often a small size like pamphlets and sometimes a language not commonly understood. "*Study literature*" contains textbooks and all titles of the basic research literature important for studies and examinations.

For a department of the humanities the following principles of acquisition are the consequence of those considerations. The university library acquires the basic research literature and duplicates or acquires many times the often used study literature. The departmental library acquires that part of research literature which is study literature as well. In addition it also buys very special literature, if it belongs to the main field of research of the department. The effect is, that all literature frequently used in the department is available in the departmental library. In addition the university library complements the departmental stocks with basic research literature in those disciplines which are not the main field of research of the department for the time being. This literature is collected to prepare future research. It is obvious that the distribu-

tion of literature between university library and departmental libraries and the percentage of overlaps differ in each department. The coordinate acquisition as just pointed out is aimed at making the most of the means which are available for the purchase of books at a university. Consequently it is intended to obtain relative self-sufficiency in the book provision of the particular university. The building up of union catalogues of the universities which has already been very progressive in many places is another step in this direction. Finally, efforts are going on at all universities to make all departmental libraries accessible to all members of the teaching staff and to all students of the university. In this connection it is particularly important to unite smaller departments by new buildings or changes of residence so that larger library units are formed. They must be staffed with trained librarians and guarantee a better access through more convenient opening hours. In recent years, during the education boom, managed to establish a lot efficient departmental libraries.

At the old universities it has not yet been achieved to set one common budget for the university library and the departmental libraries and to give it at the chief librarian's disposal. But it is possible to transfer the means of the departmental libraries to the university library, when the departmental libraries did not spend the money. For this reason at many universities the budget cuts affected the central university libraries very little.

IV. Problems of growth in the University library system

As the storage of literature in the central or in the departmental library depends on the frequency of use, it is necessary to develop flexible regulations of location. Literature no longer used in departmental libraries should be given to the central library. Literature is given as permanent loan from the central library to the departmental libraries, if it is required there for special research work covering a relatively long period. The interdisciplinary and basic research literature bought for future research in the university library is a useless investment if the university libraries

had to remove literature not yet been used within a short time, in order to provide space for new stocks. If this happens future research would extremely suffer.

If we want weeding the shelves we must observe the frequency of use of books over a longer period (at least 10 years) by lists worked out by an automated circulation system. Alternatively we could remove whole groups of literature like old newspapers or dissertations. In any case, by the changing interest of academic research even in the natural sciences, there is a risk that "dead" literature turns out to be "apparently dead".

On the other hand it seems much more sensible to reduce the growth of the departmental libraries in the German university by transferring the outdated literature into the closed stacks of the central library. The need of space can further be reduced by weeding and selling the multiple books.

In most of the new library buildings the technical prerequisites already exist to make additional shelving space by compact storage of literature. Such a rearrangement seems to be even more effective in Anglo-Saxon libraries than in Germany, as the aisles between stacks with open access are usually much wider than in German closed stacks.

Obviously the growth of central university libraries in the long run is limited in Germany, too. The question has been thought over for years whether storage libraries should be built.

V. The regional and the national library system

There are different conceptions to build storage libraries at a local or a regional level. We prefer the regional level because the research library system in Germany is regionally organized. That means that the stocks of the academic libraries are recorded in seven regional union catalogues. Car services which provide a quick transport of books are working in most regions. If we have to build storage libraries in Germany the regional principle has priority. All titles weeded out in the university libraries are re-

gistered in the regional union catalogue too. If we put together the regional union catalogue with the regional storage library, the problems of changing the catalogues, eliminating multiple copies etc. can be managed in the most economic way.

This regional system is completed with a national system of central special libraries, for example for medicine, technique and economy, and of libraries with special collections, for instance psychology, archeology etc. In the Federal Republic in recent years it was very much under discussion if a national lending library replacing the libraries with special collections should be established as in Britain. A few weeks ago the German Research Society (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), decided to continue the decentralized system. By this way the continuity of the book provision is secured, a higher degree of specialization guaranteed and the financial burden is distributed on many shoulders. Surely such a system is slower than the British one. But, especially in difficult times, it is easier to keep it effective than a centralized system. There had been good reasons to establish this system in the emergency time of the twenties.

Various other efforts are made in order to accelerate the inter-library lending service. There are projects to copy regional union catalogues on microfiche and, in the long run, to put together all regional union catalogues in one German national union catalogue on microfiche.⁵ The great libraries shall be provided with copies of these union catalogues. The libraries with special collections publish periodical accession lists which allow direct ordering. In the new interlending regulations direct ordering at central libraries is allowed to a large extent. In these central libraries efforts are made to obtain a processing time equal to the British National Lending Library by organizing special inter-lending services.

⁵ Oberschelp, Reinhard, *Der Deutsche Gesamtkatalog*. In: *Deutscher Gesamtkatalog und Verbundkatalog*. Berlin 1978, pp. 5-55 (Bibliotheksdienst. Beih. 131).

VI. *Book supply at the European level*

I would like to mention another problem of book provision at the national level. An investigation of negative lending forms, the lending forms passing through seven regional union catalogues without any success, showed that a considerable number of German titles could not be found in German libraries. The deposit library in Frankfurt as a reference collection without lending facilities and the regional deposit libraries partly provided with very bad deposit laws could not make available the whole German book production needed for research. It seems to be necessary to multiply the stock of the national deposit library in Frankfurt for loan purposes at the national or at the regional level.

The growing interdependence of European countries will increase the demand for European literature. Consequently it is likely that the German problem with German books will arise at the European level as well. I am afraid that the British, French or Dutch book production is not yet sufficiently represented in German libraries. Vice versa, the provision of British, French or Dutch libraries with German books may be insufficient, too. It could be of great interest to the librarians represented here to investigate which percentage of the European book production is bought in European libraries in each country. Such an investigation should be the first step to work out proposals for a better book provision at the European level. It might be a task for LIBER to find out the actual demand and discuss alternatives for the organisation of a European library system. Is it worthwhile to build one central European lending library or is it more reasonable to create a coordinate system of libraries with special acquisition tasks at the European level?

Or does the rising demand force to plan European deposit libraries at the national level? I think, it is the time now to discuss these problems in a LIBER-committee.

At least let us have a look at problems of growth in German libraries.

VII. *Zero-growth in libraries?*

The German system of book provision with research literature is organized on the local, regional and national level. It's characterized by a relative self-sufficiency at each level. We try to practice the principle of short ways and small cycles. By comparison, our British colleagues discuss the principle of zero-growth in libraries. As an alternative we try to realize the following concept in Germany:

- to reduce the growth of libraries by coordination of acquisition from the start;
 - to locate the books according to their frequency of use;
 - and to get done book requests and provision as far as possible at the local level, then at the regional and only for highly specialized literature at the national level.
- That is a way we can avoid to overload the capacity of libraries at the next level.

On the whole the philosophy of zero-growth in libraries seems dangerous. Of course, its necessary to prepare for harder times when the budget is cut. Though we need long-range-concepts for libraries.

In this connection, only when the book production is decreasing, the zero-growth of libraries might be reconsidered. There are some tendencies which indicate that the end of the quick growth is reached in the book production like in other economic fields.⁶ For example, the number of researchers will not grow in the same degree as in the 50' s and 60' s. But we can expect the real effects not before the middle of the 80' s. Up to that time librarians should try to keep pace with world book production of research literature. That means that a zero-growth of the budget has to be fought as well as a zero-growth of book-stocks. For this reason we must develop an adequate concept for storage facilities. We should not cut off our future opportunities at local and regional level by the

⁶ Mittler, Elmar, *Mass und Umfang wissenschaftlicher Publikationen*. In: *Information und Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart 1977, pp. 51-59 (Marburger Forum Philipinum. 10).

model of one central storage library. In Germany regional development programs make it possible to build new libraries.

VIII. *Summary*

1. German librarians consider the library facilities of a university as a system consisting of a central library and decentral libraries. This system at the local level is integrated in a regional and a national library system.

2. At the old traditional university with more than a hundred departmental libraries a change takes place, as well. Great efforts are made to guarantee a steady and coordinated development by the following means:

- 1) the establishment of larger departmental libraries;
- 2) the processing and cataloguing of all books by uniform rules;
- 3) the registering of all holdings by a local union catalogue

3. A coordinate acquisition policy is attempted by acquisition committees and agreements whose task it is to realize that:

- 1) the actually used literature is accessible in reference collections of the departments;
- 2) the basic and often used literature is available for lending in the university library;
- 3) literature that seems necessary for future research is bought by the university library.

This shared acquisition policy strives for a relative self-sufficiency at the local level.

4. The local system is supplemented by a regional system with a regional union catalogue and by a national system of central libraries and libraries with special collections.

Weak points of this national system are:

- 1) the slowness of a decentralized system;
- 2) the insufficient provision of German books.

We are planning to reduce these disadvantages with three measures:

- 1) new inter-library-lending regulations;
- 2) integrating the regional union catalogues into a German; national union catalogue on microfiche;
- 3) establishing national or regional lending libraries for German literature.

5. At the moment we know little about the provision with European books in European libraries. LIBER should start research work in this subject. LIBER should work out proposals to improve the book provision at the European level.

In this context it could be discussed whether a centralized or a coordinated system should be established, that means one European lending library or several coordinated libraries with special acquisition tasks.

6. Another problem in the university library system is the removal of "dead" literature. To save space in the departmental libraries out-dated literature should be stored in the closed compact stacks of the university library. When the local facilities are exhausted, regional storage libraries will be established probably in connection with the regional union catalogue. From the German point of view that seems to be the better alternative than a national storage library. The German coordinated system leads to small growth-rates at each level. Therefore we hope we are able to avoid the zero-growth-concept, of self-renewing-library.⁷

7. Finally I would like to say that our system is typically German: decentralized, complicated and somehow perfectly organized. But one should take in consideration the positive effect, too: The system works on short ways and small cy-

⁷ *Capital Provision for University Libraries: Report of a Working Party*, ed by University Grants Committee, London 1976 (The report is commonly known as Atkinson Report).

cles. The burden of book provision is distributed. Especially in difficult times this system might be easier to maintain than a centralized system which breaks down when the library centre does not work effectively. It would be desirable if these positive aspects could be integrated into the European long-range-planning for book provision through libraries, too.