THE MULTIFACETED ROLE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SUBJECT SPECIALIST

FINAL REPORT AND WORKING PAPERS OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SEMINAR ON THE ACQUISITION OF LATIN AMERICAN LIBRARY MATERIALS

Secretariat
Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials
Benson Latin American Collection, General Libraries, Univ. of Texas at Austin.
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LATIN AMERICAN SUBJECT SPECIALIST

Final Report and Working Papers of the Twenty-second
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University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida
June 12-17, 1977

Anne H. Jordan
Editor

SALAIM Secretariat
Austin, Texas
1979
The funding and development of international studies at U.S. universities (particularly in the Latin American area) peaked in the 1960s as a result of domestic and foreign events. The U.S. government enacted and funded the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) which established language and area centers as well as fellowships. (Also enacted was the International Education Act--IEA--which remains unfunded.) Ford as well as other private foundations poured millions of dollars into Latin American studies and programs especially during 1960-1967. The Alliance for Progress gave impetus to the Latin American studies boom through developmental agencies (e.g., AID, IDB) which provided grants and signed contracts with U.S. universities to aid Latin American countries in numerous fields (e.g., education, agriculture). Finally, the universities themselves made a significant commitment to the development of Latin American centers, programs, and library collections.

In these years of "vacas gordas," artificial programs were often created and costs disregarded in building and expanding library collections.

The tide began to recede in the late 1960s when the Ford Foundation's budget for international (including Latin American) studies started to decline. It was then erroneously hoped that the IEA would be funded and that the NDEA would continue at the same level of funding and perhaps even at increased levels. Tragic events such as the Vietnam War, the Middle East crisis, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia moved U.S. interests away from Latin America. The Alliance for Progress was replaced with a "low profile" policy and aid contracts to universities rapidly dried up. Most universities with large Latin American programs found they could not afford to support these programs formerly carried on soft money.
The situation became worse in the 1970s. Significant reductions in the Ford Foundation's budget for the Latin American area began even before the drastic budgetary cuts caused by the recession of the 1970s. By 1973 Europe (West and East) received 30 percent of Ford funds for international studies while Asia received 20 percent, and Latin America only 10 percent. Furthermore, the scarce resources available were concentrated in programs and institutions with a Latin American base while support for U.S.-based programs practically disappeared. On June 14, 1976, the day before he died, Kalman Silvert wrote us a distressing letter commenting on "the absolute lack of a sufficient program for Latin American work inside the United States" and on his unsuccessful efforts during the previous four years to increase the proportion of the budget allocated to U.S.-based Latin American programs.

The bottom of the barrel has not yet been reached: the Ford Foundation plans to further cut its budget by 50 percent in 1978, estimating that by then the level of support to international studies will be one-twelfth to one-sixteenth of what it was in the peak year of 1966. And yet some areas do significantly better than others: in 1976, seven programmatic grants to U.S. institutions from Ford totalling more than $3 million went to Asian studies while no programmatic grant has been awarded to Latin American studies in the U.S. since 1970.

NDEA funding of international studies has sharply declined in the 1970s and Latin America has received the biggest cut. The proportion of NDFL fellowships going to the Latin American area gradually fell from 16 percent in 1969-1970 to 6 percent in 1977-1978. In the same period, although the overall number of fellowships decreased, the proportion of fellowships going to other world areas increased: Eastern Europe from 17 to 19 percent, Near East from 15 to 18 percent, and Southeast Asia from 5 to 9 percent. If all the subregions of Asia are clustered, their
combined proportion of fellowships in 1977-1978 is 44 percent; more than five times the proportion allocated to Latin America. Not only did the pie get smaller, but Latin America's portion shrunk the most. The situation is similar in the allocation of NDEA language and area centers: in the 1976 competition Latin America was assigned 11 centers, compared to 27 centers for Asia, 21 for Africa/Middle East, and 14 for Eastern Europe. The average funds per Latin American center ($77,000) was the smallest of all areas; for instance, the Asian centers had an average allocation of $96,000.

What Can We Do to Correct the Situation?

The bottom priority assigned to Latin America within international studies is largely a result of the relatively low international political significance, leverage, and capacity to generate world crises of this area. Thus the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, the opening of relations with China and the entrance of the latter in the nuclear club, as well as the economic power of Japan explain why the highest priority is given to Asia; the increasing military and political power of the USSR, the high priority given to Eastern Europe; and the Middle East crisis and the recent events in Angola, Rhodesia, and South Africa the rising priority assigned to this area. It is obvious that we cannot do anything significant to change this situation; the initiative here is in Latin American hands. Events like Cuban involvement in Angola, the delicate negotiations on the Panama Canal, the active membership of Venezuela in OPEC, and the fears that Argentina and Brazil may join the nuclear club have given slightly more prominence to the area in the last two years.

Another reason given, this by U.S. Office of Education (USOE) officials, for the low priority of Latin American studies is the high availability of people trained in the languages of this area. Here we can use two solid arguments with USOE staff to increase the share of funds to Latin America:
(1) Availability of people trained in Ibero-American languages should be measured not in absolute terms nor only in view of how esoteric the language, but in proportion to the economic-political significance of the area. Thus Brazil is obviously more important than Ethiopia and, hence, proportionately we should have more people trained in Portuguese than in Amharic or Anuak.

(2) The pool of people trained in these languages should be disaggregated by field or discipline. In 1973, Richard Lambert indicated that although there was an oversupply of those trained in Spanish in literature, history, and anthropology, there was a serious shortage in fields such as business, public health, and education.

Finally, the low level of funding to Latin American studies (particularly from the federal government) may also be explained by the poor degree of organization and pressure exercised by this area vis-à-vis other area studies. The Association for Asian Studies, for instance, has demonstrated how a well-organized membership has efficiently articulated the demands of the profession to gain substantial rewards. Conversely, the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) has only recently started to center its interest around and address these issues. Thus some steps have been taken to show U.S. congressmen and government officials the geographic, economic, demographic, and political importance of Latin America to the United States and to request a better distribution of federal funds to area studies. The 1976 increase in the number of area centers allocated to Latin America from six to ten may have been a modest result of these initial efforts.

Another potential "pressure group" could be a council of directors of the most prestigious Latin American programs in the United States. Last October, by initiative of the Department of State, seventeen directors met to discuss (among other things) the lack of funding for the area and the avenues to tackle the problem. Efforts are underway to establish
regular meetings of this group and to design a strategy for action. The Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM) could join these efforts by publicizing in government, academic, and other circles the precarious situation of library acquisitions in the field. This roundtable is a good starting point but should not end here.

The Experience of the Latin American Studies Program at Pitt

The depression of the 1970s in the field of Latin American Studies has probably had the worst impact among those programs which had been heavily subsidized by outside funds and which grew beyond the real long-run financial capability of the host institution. A significant portion of the "growth" of these programs was artificially induced and lacked a proper academic infrastructure (e.g., in student enrollment, faculty commitment, solid curriculum, and library resources developed on the bases of the users' demands and interests). For instance, a large number of the Latin American faculty were paid with soft money and a significant portion of institutional efforts were focused on activities abroad.

The University of Pittsburgh's Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) had a different experience. CLAS was established in 1964 and did not start to fully function until 1966 when the boom in Latin American studies had reached its peak. The program was unable to receive substantial federal funds (the last group in the first stage of NDEA centers was established in 1965) and only partially benefitted from a Ford grant for international studies at Pitt and a couple of short-term technical assistance contracts focused on higher education. Our Latin American program evolved cautiously, realistically based on the human and material resources available in various departments and schools and on the interests of its
faculty and students. When the financial crunch hit, there was very little
fat to cut and the University absorbed the small portion of the program that
was on soft money. In the midst of the 1970s recession and the declining
support for international education, CLAS continued its "natural" growth
via University support combined with an increasing number of outside grants
attracted by the excellence of its resources on specific countries and topics.
As the following table shows, between 1964 and 1976 our Latin American program
increased its overall size by more than five times, with even higher growth
rates in pivotal areas such as enrollment and number of courses.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1964</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>Increase (1964 = 100)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating departments/schools</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of area courses</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (only in area courses)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library volumes</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>126,000</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall growth rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>570</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Arithmetic average of growth in the six categories.

The objective of most outside grants received by CLAS has been to
capitalize on existing resources. For instance, the prominence achieved
by Pitt in Cuban Studies has generated a series of grants: 1974-1977 Ford
Foundation grant to support the publication of the journal Cuban Studies;
1976 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to organize an international
conference on "The Role of Cuba in World Affairs;" and 1976 contract with
the State Department for a study on "Inter-American Relations in the Mid-Term:"
The Role of Cuba." On another front CLAS has developed a program of fellowships for Latin Americans, signed exchange agreements with half a dozen Latin American academic institutions, and published two journals in Spanish with a large number of contributions by Latin American scholars. These strong ties with Latin America were the basis for a generous 1976-1979 grant from the Tinker Foundation to establish the "Tinker Research Internships on Latin American Studies."

Library Resources on Latin America: Toward More Rational Acquisition Policies

During the Latin American studies boom, funds were made available for heavy purchases of library materials. But due to a scarcity of sound bibliographic information, these materials were acquired in a disorganized and costly manner. The situation has changed in the last few years, however. Funding is now much more limited and acquisition costs have skyrocketed. On the other hand, the quality and availability of bibliographic information has improved and libraries have refined and systematized their acquisition processes. Our experience indicates that the supply of literature of reasonably high quality is plentiful, both in Latin America and in the United States, and that the marketing process is now sufficiently well developed to allow us to generate more rational acquisitions policies. What follows is a set of recommendations largely based on our experience at the University of Pittsburgh.

1. Close Relationship Between Area Centers and Libraries

In all situations but particularly under the current depressed state, it is an absolute necessity to have the active participation of the centers of Latin American studies (and faculty associated with them) in all activities geared toward acquiring adequate resources for the Latin American collections.
It is difficult for the Latin American bibliographer to obtain sufficient funding allocations to support programs when he cannot clearly demonstrate the urgent need for bibliographic materials to the administrators who distribute the budget. If pressure from the Latin American programs is weak or non-existent the administrators respond to stronger pressures and interests of other library users. The support of centers to the area librarians should not be limited to generating acquisition funds but also to assigning adequate staff for the processing of materials and the elaboration of bibliographical systems and tools to facilitate a better knowledge and circulation of available library resources. The following table shows how a close center-library cooperation at Pitt has been able to generate, in about a decade, a major library collection, with adequate staff, in spite of budgetary constraints during the last two academic years.

PITT LIBRARY RESOURCES ON LATIN AMERICA: 1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Language of Area</th>
<th>Number of Volumes in English and Other Languages</th>
<th>Number of Periodicals</th>
<th>Number of Newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>126,000</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>1,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIBRARY STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographer</td>
<td>1 (100% time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Library Associate</td>
<td>1 (100% time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogers</td>
<td>2 (90% time each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and Exchange Secretary</td>
<td>1 (20% time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistant</td>
<td>Temporary assignments for special projects (One worked full time for four months to assist in cataloging the 4,000 volume addition to the Brazilian collection.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Includes direct hard and soft money allocations to Latin American acquisitions as well as purchases in the area by departments and schools. Steps are being taken now to increase the funding in 1977 through a Provost commitment to raise the hard money allocation and a campaign to be launched by the University Center for International Studies to raise funds externally.

2. Establishment of Priorities for Acquisitions

Close area-library cooperation is also instrumental in the establishment of criteria for library acquisitions closely connected with the needs for teaching and research on Latin America. First, the center or program should clearly and precisely define its scope and specializations (countries, topics) and then, together with the librarian, set the corresponding clear-cut priorities for acquisitions. The latter could be implemented through a general long-run plan for the development of the collection combined with ad-hoc, short-run programs to support specific teaching and research projects being pursued at a given time in each institution. This policy would be conducive to cooperative projects among libraries and eventually lead to a better evaluation of resource-sharing projects.

Pitt has had a successful experience with this policy. In 1967, CLAS Library Committee developed a five-year plan (1968-1973) for the acquisition of Latin American materials. Detailed lists were compiled under the categories of comprehensive acquisitions (e.g., bibliographies, reference materials, textbooks) and selective acquisitions (e.g., monographs, periodicals, statistics). Such acquisitions were to be made according to priorities set by country and topic based on the teaching and research needs of faculty clusters in the Latin American program. Country priorities were: (1) Bolivia, Cuba, and Ecuador; and (2) Mexico, Peru, and Guatemala. Topic priorities
included: socio-politico-economic development, social change and revolutionary movements, social integration of the Indians. In 1974, due to increased interest in Brazil, an ad hoc program of acquisition was designed to build up this collection; currently another ad hoc program on Venezuela is being developed.

3. Reduction of Costs in Acquisitions: Trips and Exchanges

The implementation of systematic analysis of market and supply conditions (e.g., selection of dealers, comparison of prices, standing or blanket orders versus acquisition of individual titles) should result in cost reduction. This analysis should take into account the considerable market variety among Latin American countries and even within a country through time. Two acquisition techniques which are not always explored and have been extremely effective at Pitt are: trips by the Latin American bibliographer for obtaining library acquisitions in situ; and exchange of publications with Latin American institutions.

a) Travel to Latin America to gather material and maintain our exchange program has played a fundamental role in the development of Pitt's Latin American collection. In order to plan these trips, we had to bear in mind two principal factors: the institutional need for material originating in each country or region; and the developmental level of publishing and distribution facilities in each place visited. These factors determined which places would be visited and the amount of time dedicated to each. In countries like Mexico, Argentina, or Brazil, the publishing activity and distribution of publications has reached a high level of development which makes it possible to acquire materials through the mail using information provided by existing vendors. In other countries, however, the supply lists are inadequate and the best and least expensive way to gain comprehensive knowledge of what is being published and analyze the quality of available...
material is to make the trips and gather acquisitions in situ. Finally, there are countries for which it is impossible to obtain information of any kind without actually travelling to that country. Even in countries with an organized book market the trips are a valuable complementary method of acquisition. Even though libraries in the United States may put forth great effort in covering an area, a great deal of material can be found by looking through bookstores, publishing houses, and government offices and institutions. This is especially true in the case of out of print material and current material not included in dealers' lists.

The most significant advantage of the trips is the money they save. If purchases in foreign countries and shipment are handled personally, the local price is paid. In spite of variations from country to country, in every case during our trips we have paid prices which were substantially lower than those from mail order. An example of these savings is provided by our trip to ten Brazilian cities in December 1974. During that trip, some 3,000 volumes were acquired at an average cost of $2.30 per unit (This low average cost was the result of the fact that some books were donated free of charge while others were purchased at a reduced price.) This average cost is approximately one third of what it would have been if the materials had been purchased through normal channels in the United States. A second important advantage is that with this method of purchasing, the processing is simplified, eliminating purchase orders, claims, and delays in delivery and billing, etc. From an administrative standpoint, the sale is accounted for and processed in one global operation with selection, ordering, billing, shipment, reception control, etc. being accomplished more effectively in one single process without affecting the entire mechanism of the Purchasing Department over a long period of time. A third
advantage is that visits to governmental agencies, research institutions, and universities lead to establishment of extremely useful contacts, initiation of exchange agreements, and acquisitions (often free of charge) of many publications which would ordinarily be very difficult to obtain or even be aware of.

b) Since 1967 the University of Pittsburgh has had an extensive exchange program with institutions in Latin America, the United States, and Europe which has proven to be an efficient means of acquiring materials which are sometimes impossible to obtain through commercial channels. The most successful case has been that of Cuba since a great deal of the material we have has been obtained through exchanges. It is difficult to imagine any other way we could have acquired it. This exchange method has also been used in completing collections of periodicals. Though checking duplicate lists involves a great deal of time and frustration, the results have been quite satisfying.

Our exchange operation is presently based on the coordinated activities of the central University Library, the Center for Latin American Studies, the journals Revista Iberoamericana and Cuban Studies. Each of these units negotiates publication exchanges with the common objective of augmenting the Latin American collection in the central library. In spite of the economic and administrative effort exerted in this process, it has been our experience that it is an irreplaceable tool for acquisition.

4. Cooperative Efforts in Microfilming, Acquisition, and Dissemination of Information

Microfilming programs through cooperative efforts of Latin American libraries have three potential advantages: reduction of costs, making rare materials available, and completing series of periodicals.

Lists of desiderata could be prepared for the purpose of informing businesses and universities about the items for which microfilming would
be most advantageous or urgent so that these institutions would have an 
advance picture of the potential market.

Library specialization should result in fairly complete periodical 
which in turn would be the basis for a cooperative microfilming 
project. For example, Pitt Cuban collection contains the only complete 
series of statistical materials in the country. If there were a cooperative 
microfilm program, this series could be made available at a reasonable 
price or in exchange for a different series from another university.

Another advantage of cooperative microfilming would be the completion 
of periodical series which do not presently exist in complete form in any 
one library (this occurs with material which is either old or currently 
difficult to acquire). Libraries in the cooperative program would make a 
selection of the periodicals that they want to complete; then determine 
what issues they have and which are missing, and finally, a complete set 
would be assembled, microfilmed and distributed to all the participants.

Cooperative acquisition of valuable but scarce materials in demand by a 
majority of the collections should also result in easier acquisitions and 
savings. This could be done through the acquisition of multiple copies 
with subsequent distribution to interested parties. For the publisher, 
this procedure would assure production of a sufficient number of copies of 
the publication and ease distribution, and could be tested appropriately 
with basic official publications such as censuses, statistical yearbooks, 
banking reports, etc. A library consortium could be established to pursue 
with the governments or departments the printing of sufficient copies of 
publications which could be shipped to a designated place in the U.S. for 
subsequent redistribution among participating institutions.

There should be greater dissemination and exchange of information 
pertaining to library holdings by means of bibliographies, checklists, 
resource guides, and general or partial catalogues of the collection.
An objective of a productive exchange would be lists of subscriptions to periodicals. Up to a certain point it is presently possible to be aware of holdings in other libraries but when it is time to decide whether or not to subscribe to a journal it is impossible to know which libraries have an up-to-date subscription. Lists such as the ones described above would lead to the rationalization of subscriptions, which are more expensive all the time and more difficult to confront with reduced budgets.