

Collaborative Collecting Pilots for Print Books from Mexico and Brazil

Barbara Alvarez^a, Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros^b, Lisa Gardinier^c and David Woken^d

^aUniversity of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; ^bThe Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; ^cUniversity of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; ^dUniversity of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

ABSTRACT

In spring 2017 five research libraries planned out two pilot initiatives to test the feasibility of vendor-supported cooperative collection development for print publications supplied on approval plans from Mexico and Brazil. Approval title duplication was reduced by 10–27% for Mexico and for Brazil from the overall 21.5% to less than 1% with no titles sent to all three libraries. The results illuminated several issues to be considered: the size and intensity of collecting by partner libraries, the size of publishing markets, the methods used to analyze data, their scalability for larger consortial groups, and their applicability to other international collections.

KEYWORDS

Area studies collections; collaborative collections; international collections; librarians and vendors; Latin American and Caribbean Studies collections

Introduction

Academic library discourse increasingly emphasizes multi-institutional cooperation, including collaborative collection development and lending practices, to respond to the simultaneous explosion of information and the ongoing austerity in libraries' budgets, a reflection of broader trends in research and higher education. By leveraging our improved consortial relationships and interlibrary loan services, the logic goes, libraries can provide patrons access to a more comprehensive corpus of materials than any one institution can provide alone. As libraries seek to maximize their limited resources and leverage their resource sharing capacity among consortia and/or regional partners (Dempsey, Malpas, and Lavoie 2014, 396), this shift creates an opportunity to improve access to distinctive circulating collections among partner institutions. For area and global studies librarians, this change creates an opportunity to consider ways in which a

CONTACT Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros  Espinosadelosmonteros.1@osu.edu  University Libraries, The Ohio State University, 305H Thompson Library, 1858 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43210.

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collaborative approach to collection development can better serve their specialized collections.

Large-scale initiatives like the Big Ten Academic Alliance's (BTAA) BIG Collection or the Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation have begun to explore how member libraries can focus on their institutions' research and teaching strengths, and collectively build larger collections that can fill all of their member libraries' patron needs. However, much of this exploratory work has been in the abstract or focused on bird's eye views, concentrating on the large vendors and publishers like EBSCO, Wiley, Sage, etc., where the largest impacts might be expected. Less discussed is how these kinds of collective collections arrangements might affect smaller fields, particularly international and area studies. International collections budgets and specialist personnel have been dwindling even as calls for "global" and "diverse" perspectives become ubiquitous, so shared collection development could be a crucial prop for those areas. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the library community has yet to recognize the viability and strengths area studies and international collections offer in diversifying library collections, or the existing infrastructure these collections have already created to support inclusive and equitable library and information practices. Area and international collecting require thinking outside of the bounds of standard North American academic collections, as regions outside of anglophone countries, Western Europe, and portions of East Asia are not represented by the offerings provided by large mainstream vendors. Successful acquisition of materials from the Global South requires careful attention to the context of local publishing markets and solid partnerships with local distributors to ensure a steady supply of a wide range of materials, unavailable through the major distribution networks of the Global North.

This article will review two novel projects within the BTAA to develop a cooperative collections pilot for materials from two Latin American countries, Mexico and Brazil. Between January 2018 and December 2019 libraries at the University of Iowa, the University of Minnesota, and the University of Chicago partnered with Mexican vendor Books from Mexico to increase the diversity of Mexican print materials by reducing the duplication supplied through approval plans to all three institutions. A few months later, from July 2018 to June 2020, The Ohio State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Michigan partnered with Brazilian vendor Susan Bach Books on a similar pilot project, with the same goals and model. While both pilots were successful in diversifying and capturing a larger output of scholarly materials through the reduction of duplicates, the process revealed some of the complications that pursuing shared collections from Latin America can entail. The pilot programs have shown that collective collection development for area studies

materials is feasible, but that it requires significant input from subject specialist librarians, acquisitions staff, and especially the international vendors who are often libraries' best partners in identifying and acquiring new material. It is our hope that this paper will offer some guidance to other librarians who find themselves considering how they might build shared area studies collections and point to potential pitfalls and challenges that they might face along the way. We also hope that library administrators and collection strategists will review this model and consider the importance of including subject librarians in the development of cooperative collection programs.

Background

Collaborative collecting in area studies is not a new or unique undertaking. Cooperative collection development efforts in various configurations and levels of institutional formalization have been with us since at least the 1940s. They first emerged in the form of agreements between institutions in relatively close geographic proximity that provided reciprocal borrowing privileges and divided collecting responsibilities by geographic areas, languages, or subjects. In the area of Latin American Studies, the oldest program of this kind was initiated between Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the 1940s (Dominguez and Swindler 1993, 476; Ackerman and Chapa 2019) while the 1950s saw the development of similar collaborations in the area of Slavic, Eurasian & East European Studies (Giullian and Monroe-Gulick 2017, 60–61) and Commonwealth Studies (Dominguez and Swindler 1993, 478). The 1960s brought a significant growth of area studies programs across the country aided by the creation of Title VI funding by the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and later incorporated into the Higher Education Act of 1965. Alongside those programs and the establishment of the first three field offices of the Library of Congress, cooperative collecting agreements for many world regions were launched (Dominguez and Swindler 1993, 479; Filstrup, Scepanski, and Stewart 2000, 94; Thacker, 2015, 72).

The current landscape of collaborative collection development is varied and teeming with activity. Libraries big and small strive to extend their limited resources and take advantage of their collective lending infrastructure among partner institutions to achieve efficiencies and redirect resources to collect more deeply and to collect more unique materials (Dempsey, Malpas, and Lavoie 2014, 396; Thacker et al. 2019). While detailed data on these agreements is not readily available, their broad contours have been described by participating librarians throughout the academic literature. On one end of the spectrum, we have highly formalized institutional

agreements such as the 2CUL agreement of Columbia and Cornell Universities, which have consolidated material acquisitions and research services under one subject librarian, and shared technical services functions for both Latin American and Iberian Studies and Slavic and East European Studies (Knowlton and Silva 2019; Giullian and Monroe-Gulick 2017, 61). On the other end of that spectrum, we have small-scale collaborations that are dependent on informal commitments between partnering subject librarians, such as the one between Emory University and the University of Georgia described by MacLeod and Shedenhelm (2019). Consortia of various sizes and profiles also play an important role in facilitating and coordinating collective acquisitions. The Research Collections and Preservation Consortium (ReCAP) of Columbia, Cornell, Princeton and Harvard Universities together with the New York Public Library evolved from the joint operation of a shared storage facility to cooperative stewardship of one of the largest managed shared collections in the United States. The many Global Resources Partnerships and Programs of the Center for Research Libraries are designed to strengthen the collective coverage of resources produced around the globe, with focus on newspapers, dissertations and ephemeral materials. Region-focused library organizations, such as the Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation (CONSALD), the Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA) or the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), also play an important role in creating an interconnected network of collections that complement one another and enhance coverage, especially of non-core materials from each region.

The significant experience accumulated so far in these collaborations indicates that it is not easy to achieve long-lasting and fruitful partnerships. Successful cooperative collection efforts rely on more than a well-functioning interlibrary loan system and an appropriate budget allocation. They rely heavily on institutional commitments and mutual trust among participants, vendors, and institutional leadership, who work together to uphold the terms agreed upon by all parties and communicate regularly, especially when facing challenges, adjustments, or personnel changes. In reviewing three collaborative collection programs spanning from the 1970s to the 2010s, Jakubs identified the essential factors that are important to generate success: “the dedication of individuals working together to craft agreements, the approval and commitment of university administrators, and the mobilization of the collective will. And, of course, trust.” (2015, 662). To cultivate the sense of commitment and trust, institutions often employ a strategy of signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) as a way to formalize their agreements and to ensure administrative

support (Krentz 2019). The MOU helps to formalize the interdependent relationship entered into by all parties seeking to establish synergistic working relationships that achieve mutually beneficial results. This relationship thrives only when there is trust, where each party acts not only in their own interest but also in the interests of the other participants, recognizing their actions impact one another and their participation is essential to achieving the shared outcome. From our perspective, in international collecting, one cannot underestimate the role of trust embedded in long-term partnerships with international vendors who play a crucial role in shaping our collections and are in a unique position of combining a deep understanding of the publishing landscape in a particular region with an excellent grasp of the evolving interests and budgets of each research library they have been working with, often for many, many years. Vendors play a crucial role as key stakeholders on the ground, and it is through a sustained investment in these relationships—encompassing both the business viability of the vendors and the understanding they develop of academic programs and campus needs—that many area studies librarians are able to acquire and maintain access to global publications that effectively meet the diverse needs of their users.

Pilot proposal

The pilot programs described here were developed as an initiative of the Midwest Organization of Libraries for Latin American Studies (MOLLAS), a regional affiliate of SALALM. The group consists of member libraries with Latin American and Caribbean Studies collections primarily in the Midwest and has as an organizational goal to identify and develop strategies and projects that enhance members' collaborations in the areas of collection development, preservation and access. While regional groups in SALALM are not perfectly aligned with the consortia in which MOLLAS member libraries operate, they have a long history of creating networks among regional peer institutions. Most MOLLAS libraries form part of the BTAA consortium, while others are members of the Great Western Library Alliance (GWLA). Understanding that consortia function as primary resource sharing networks, especially for international materials (Thompson et al. 2019), pilot participants recognized the advantage of working within their consortium and leveraging their existing infrastructure and resources.

In spring 2017, MOLLAS members drafted a proposal (see [Appendix A](#)) outlining the goals and rationale for the pilot programs and responded to a survey to indicate which vendors they used to collect materials for each country in Latin America. The proposal outlined a test model in which groups of libraries using the same vendor would work together to

expand the diversity of their collections and to reduce duplication of new titles received through their approval plans. The program also continued to emphasize the value of using multiple vendors by different library groups within the same consortium. In our experience, supporting multiple vendors with different strengths, geographic reach, and business relationships results in a greater variety of material for clients and encourages vendors to provide better service and selection to libraries. Following the draft proposal, MOLLAS libraries were asked to respond to a survey documenting their approval plans by country and priorities for collaborative collections. Survey responses were an expression of interest in potential participation. Results were analyzed to identify partner libraries and vendors for potential pilots.

Unlike other cooperative agreements for international print materials, the proposed model did not divide collection responsibilities by geography, language, or subject, and did not require a fixed financial commitment. Instead, the pilot program allowed flexibility to account for institutional interests and fluctuating budgets. Based on the expression of interest and existing relationships between both libraries and vendors, two-year pilots were formed for Mexico and Brazil. The Mexico pilot was undertaken by the University of Iowa, the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago with the vendor Books from Mexico for the period 1 January 2018 through 31 December 2019, while the Brazil pilot was undertaken by the University of Iowa, The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan with the vendor Susan Bach Books for the period 1 July 2018 through 30 June 2020. The two countries were selected given their geographic size and high scholarly output. Unique to this group was the positionality of the participating librarians. For the most part, the librarians in this pilot are liaison librarians and/or middle managers with collection development duties. This perspective informed the terms of the project, leveraging the librarians' knowledge of the regional information landscape, the institution's academic programs, and their existing relationships with partnering vendors. The inclusion of these perspectives in the formation of the collection model proved a critical factor in its success.

Approval plans and MOUs

In both pilots, participating libraries independently established their collection budget allocation and subject profile for their individual approval plans. The approval plans were shared among the participating librarians, but no formal input was expected or required from the other institutions. From there, the partnering vendors were provided the final approval profiles and asked to consider the three clients as a group. Each vendor was

tasked to reduce the duplication of titles under specified thresholds set by each institution.

The pilot organizers created a generic memorandum of understanding to dictate and formalize the terms of the collection program. Each pilot group received this template to customize and sign among the members (see [Appendix B](#)). Each institution experienced different policies and workflow requirements to implement the MOU. In some institutions the process required minimal approval and implementation. In others, like The Ohio State University, the MOU required formal review and edits by university counsel, formal approval across a chain of command, and several meetings with different rotating department heads. This process delayed the start of the Brazil pilot by months.

To help determine the duplication thresholds, pre-pilot data was gathered through WorldCat to benchmark existing duplication among participants at the start of the pilot. This data was limited as there was no way to distinguish between material acquired on approval, firm order, or by other means.

The pilot program focused on new titles included in approval plans and the post-pilot assessment did not include any material acquired outside of those plans. To assess the results of the pilots more accurately, we also asked the vendors to provide data on titles sent on approval for the two years prior to the pilot. While both pilots aimed to do a mid-pilot assessment, neither completed one because of the labor involved for both librarians and vendors, as well as the limited data available. This reporting limitation highlights the hidden labor involved in these types of efforts, and should be accounted for by institutions and vendors participating in similar agreements.

Mexico pilot

Pre-pilot data and implementation

Pre-pilot data about the collection was gathered in July 2017 from WorldCat holdings for all three libraries and examined by select Library of Congress classification ranges: F (history), H (social sciences), J (politics), and P (literature; and specifically PQ, literatures of Romance languages). In addition, we reviewed books published in Mexico from 2006 to 2016. Each library's duplication rate was calculated, as well as how many titles were held among the three libraries and the number held by two of three and that held by only one.

Based on this analysis, Chicago had collected almost twice as much (13,250 titles) as Iowa and Minnesota combined (3,871 and 2,769 titles respectively). As a result, Chicago had the lowest duplication rate of 26.1% entering the pilot. While Chicago has an overall outstanding collection from Mexico, its strength is in history. The University of Chicago has a

Table 1. Mexico pre-pilot analysis, by volume.

	F	H	J	PQ	all P
CGU total	2592	2431	820	3265	4053
MNU total	721	779	291	314	432
NUI total	606	341	96	2081	2363

CGU: University of Chicago, MNU: University of Minnesota, NUI: University of Iowa

Table 2. Mexico pre-pilot analysis, duplication.

	F	H	J	PQ	all P
CGU % dup	31.1%	30.0%	31.5%	30.7%	29.4%
MNU % dup	83.8%	82.4%	81.4%	86.6%	84.3%
NUI % dup	70.8%	74.2%	77.1%	45.3%	45.8%

CGU: University of Chicago, MNU: University of Minnesota, NUI: University of Iowa

Table 3. Mexico pilot duplication targets.

Subject	Duplication %
Anthropology	50
Business	10
General	10
Geography	0
Law	10
Linguistics	0
Literature	15
Music	10
Politics	10
Psychology	0
Religion	0
Social work	0

long-established reputation as a top school for the study of Mexican history, and is host to a dedicated Mexican studies center, the Katz Center for Mexican Studies, in addition to a more general Center for Latin American Studies, giving it a focus on Mexican history that operates on an entirely different scale from its partners. This complicated the pilot for the University of Minnesota, as their collection focuses on history and social sciences. As such, Minnesota began the pilot with a nearly 80% duplication rate. The University of Iowa's collection is heavily concentrated on literature, and so started the pilot with a 55.2% duplication rate overall, but only 45.8% duplication in the P-class (Tables 1 and 2).

Upon review of the benchmark data, and in consultation with Books from Mexico, we set duplication targets by discipline, matching the respective academic programs (Table 3). Because of Chicago's existing depth in history, we agreed to ignore that field for the purpose of reducing duplication in the pilot. Otherwise, duplication targets were set as follows:

Mexico pilot results

Prior to the pilot, in 2016, Minnesota's approval titles were 94% duplicated and Chicago and Iowa were, respectively, at 56% and 60%.

Table 4. Mexico results, overall.

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total vol	1648	1868	2069	1747
Total titles	1052	1337	1569	1374
Dup % title	44.0%	33.2%	26.4%	23.0%

Table 5. Mexico results, overall duplication and unique titles by library.

	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	% dup	unique titles	% dup	unique titles	% dup	unique titles	% dup	unique titles
CGU	55.6%	338	41.8%	582	31.8%	876	30.0%	737
MNU	94.3%	17	88.1%	34	85.2%	36	84.4%	41
NUI	59.9%	235	52.0%	279	55.9%	237	32.9%	310

In the two years of the pilot, Books from Mexico sent 2,338 books to Chicago, 999 to Iowa, and 507 to Minnesota, for a total of 3,844 books, including material classed as history (F). Though we asked Books from Mexico not to consider history for reducing duplication, we will analyze it further to understand whether it was affected by the rest of the pilot. Books from Mexico reported all titles sent on approval to the three libraries in calendar years 2016–2019, including their ISBN and LC classification information.

In 2019, the last year of the pilot, Minnesota had 84% duplication while Chicago and Iowa had respective duplication rates of 30% and 33%. The final duplication rate declined a bit further when excluding history: Chicago stood at 28%, Minnesota at 81%, and Iowa at 29%. Though improved, Minnesota's continued high rate of duplication will be examined in depth in a later discussion of the impact of scale (Tables 4 and 5).

The more complete story is found upon examining the discipline-level results. When analyzing material by LC classification, it is difficult to isolate broad social science disciplines. For example, materials relevant to anthropology can be easily classed into almost every LC class. The H and J classes are most solidly social sciences and constituted a significant portion of material sent on our approvals, totaling 941 volumes sent during the pilot period. In 2016, collective approvals were 46% duplicated, which decreased to 33% by 2019. Taking into account that anthropology was set at a 50% desired duplication rate and all other social sciences were set at 0–10%, we consider the reduction to the current rate of duplication satisfactory. The adjustment in literature (P) was even more successful, dropping from a collective duplication rate of 41% to the exact target of 15%. Each library saw a marked reduction of duplication in literature. Even though history (F) was excluded from consideration, it too saw a reduction in duplication, from 30% to 25%, while also allowing for an increase in the number of titles added to our collections (Tables 6–8).

Table 6. Mexico results, H- and J-class duplication.

H+J	Total vol	Total titles	% dup-title
2016	470	292	45.9%
2017	536	361	37.4%
2018	525	388	28.6%
2019	416	297	33.3%

Table 7. Mexico results, P-class duplication.

P	Total vol	Total titles	% dup-title
2016	647	444	40.5%
2017	765	569	32.2%
2018	748	558	31.0%
2019	620	532	15.0%

Table 8. Mexico results, F-class duplication.

F	Total vol	Total titles	% dup-title
2016	302	164	30.1%
2017	307	206	26.4%
2018	338	248	20.1%
2019	345	236	24.6%

Table 9. Brazil pre-pilot analysis, by volume.

	F	H	J	PQ	All P
EYM total	638	575	76	1153	1316
OSU total	819	682	120	1357	1656
NUI total	182	111	15	896	1017

EYM: University of Michigan, OSU: Ohio State University, NUI: University of Iowa

Brazil pilot

Pre-pilot data and implementation

Pre-pilot data was gathered in February 2018 from WorldCat holdings for the three libraries for books published in Brazil, 2006–2016, and was further examined by select Library of Congress classification ranges: F (history), H (social sciences), J (politics), and P (literature; and more specifically PQ, literatures of Romance languages). Participants calculated each library's duplication rate, as well as how many titles total were held among the three libraries and the number held by two of three and by only one (Table 9).

Despite Brazil having a much larger publishing output than Mexico and Ohio State having an excellent collection on Brazil, the three libraries collected notably less than the Mexico group in the pre-pilot decade: 4,209 titles by Ohio State, 3,397 by Michigan, and 1,583 by Iowa, for a total of 9,189 books. With fewer books representing a substantially larger publishing market, the Brazil pilot started from lower duplication benchmarks. Overall, 21.5% of the combined collection was duplicated among members,

Table 10. Brazil pre-pilot analysis, duplication.

	Overall	F	H	J	PQ	All P
EYM % dup	39.3%	42.9%	35.5%	46.1%	51.1%	49.0%
OSU % dup	31.4%	34.1%	30.8%	29.2%	42.2%	37.5%
NUI % dup	51.3%	63.7%	71.2%	66.7%	53.8%	51.5%

EYM: University of Michigan, OSU: Ohio State University, NUI: University of Iowa

ranging from 31.4% duplication of Ohio State's collection to 51.3% of Iowa's collection. There was less of a range of duplication rates between subjects, likely due to the thinner representation of Brazilian publications in this group (Table 10).

Based on the benchmark analysis and in consultation with our vendor, we set the duplication target at 15% for literature and 10% for all other disciplines.

Brazil pilot results

As our collective Brazil collections were smaller than the Mexico group's collections, and Brazil has more than twice the publishing output as Mexico, the Brazil pilot nearly eliminated duplication. Where Books from Mexico struggled to reduce duplication while working with a higher level of collection intensity, Susan Bach Books was able to reduce duplication to 1%. In the first year of the pilot, the three libraries received 1,187 volumes, with just 13 titles duplicated and no titles sent to all three libraries. This success can also be attributed to the limited capture of Brazil's scholarly publishing output prior to the pilot. In the second year of the pilot, there were 6 titles duplicated. As we remarked when first reviewing the results: it worked too well. Because duplication was virtually eliminated, we did not analyze duplication by classification range.

Observations

While the pilots arguably achieved their goals in both cases, the results were very different and illuminated several collection development issues to be considered.

Dynamics of size and discipline strengths: libraries

The size difference of collections and discipline strengths between partner libraries impacted the ability to reduce duplication. This issue was most obvious in the Mexico pilot, particularly because the smallest collection, Minnesota, shared strengths with the largest collection, Chicago, and it was especially difficult to reduce duplication and to diversify materials between these two institutions.

The collections' discipline strengths also made a difference. As an example, Iowa's primary strength in literature allowed the collection to contribute additional diversity through the pilot. Though Chicago has an excellent collection of Mexican literature, it was stronger in secondary sources, with a more conservative approach than Iowa. If we were to replicate and expand this program, it may be advisable to consider the size of the participating collections when possible.

Dynamics of size: publishing markets and collecting intensity

In 2018, Brazil published 46,289 titles in trade and educational sectors, compared to 18,577 titles published in the same sectors in Mexico in 2017 (WIPO 2020, 14). In calendar year 2018, when many 2017 imprints would be sent to US libraries, the Mexico pilot group acquired 1,568 titles, or the equivalent of 8.4% of the 2017 output. The Brazil pilot group has likewise collected less than 3% of Brazil's output, as based on the WIPO figures. The overall production in both countries may include many areas not actively collected by US research libraries – reprinted titles, books in translation, technical manuals, self-help books, etc. In addition, there are fewer academic programs focused on the Portuguese language or literature. As a result, materials from Brazil are collected with a far lower intensity than those from Mexico.

Notable in both pilots, history and social sciences are often collected from a smaller group of publishers, and in fewer titles, than literature and the humanities. History and social sciences are most often collected from university presses, prominent and established commercial presses with a reputation for scholarly production, and independent research organizations. Publications with a regional focus or from smaller organizations are not collected as actively, but also represent an area for unique contributions to a shared collection. While the large mainstream publishers, sometimes multinational publishing conglomerates, have the highest profile in literature, many Latin American publishing markets have a vibrant independent publishing sector, offering what is often the cutting edge of literary production. Such collection practices also show where material diversity is collected and best represented.

Data collection and analysis: whose job is it?

Latin American vendor systems are not nearly as integrated as those for US research libraries. As a result, Latin American vendors often rely on separate platforms for inventory, invoicing, and cataloging, much of which is still done at the sole proprietor level by a limited number of staff. Consequently, it is very labor-intensive to combine data from multiple

sources to assess these pilots. Much of the data needed for analysis of these cooperative collecting programs is more easily collected on the library side. In our case, it was relatively easy for the vendors to run a report of material sent on approval, firm order, standing orders, and subscriptions. More in-depth analysis was run by the libraries and it should remain the libraries' responsibility to pull other necessary data for their desired assessment.

Recommendations

We advise the following recommendations for individuals seeking to create a similar initiative.

Recommendations for vendors: controlled duplication as a service

Libraries and their users benefit from a greater diversity of titles achieved by a reduction of duplication within a consortium of libraries. Vendors benefit from a single title in quantity: the more copies of a single title they sell, the higher their return on the investment made for acquisition and cataloging of that title. Under cooperative arrangements like those described here, the vendor may sell the same number of books to consortial clients but they will need to invest more effort into acquiring more unique titles and will make less money because fewer copies of each title will be acquired by libraries. However, coordinating acquisitions for a shared collection is a new type of service provided by the vendor that goes beyond supplying materials with their bibliographic records. We advise that vendors consider how to make these types of services to consortial clients economically viable. Libraries considering consortial purchases or shared collections across campuses should collaborate with vendors to maximize title selections while also accounting for equitable service fees associated with this type of acquisition.

The value of vendor competition

For both Brazil and Mexico, but also for many other Latin American countries, libraries can choose between several vendors. That is to our benefit. Different vendors may each adequately fulfill the same approval profile with different material, based on their networks and knowledge of the market. While consortial partners working with different vendors may not be reducing duplication, they may still be increasing the diversity of the collective collection. Further, the existing competition often encourages vendors to offer more extensive services and to participate in experimental projects, where vendors in other areas with little-to-no

competition may not have the motivation to do so. While the pilots were successful, we would not advise libraries to change vendors based on the pilot results. We would advise interested libraries to pursue options with their existing vendor networks to ensure a healthy diversity of suppliers on the market.

Scalability: can collecting groups be larger?

As discussed in our observations, the collection size of participating libraries and their overall disciplinary strengths matter in developing a cooperative collection project. These factors will affect how librarians set a desirable rate of duplication across a larger group. For example, should all libraries receive a copy of a book that wins a national award? For the average academic press publication, how many copies are needed for the consortium? For independent literature or small local histories, is 1–2 copies adequate for the shared collection?

For countries that require high collecting intensity, like Mexico, small collecting groups may work best for this particular cooperative collection model. In addition, the group would need to consider the best way that this can be arranged: divided geographically or thematically? Or divided along other criteria and interests?

For Brazil, the low capture of publication output and the relatively small size of Brazilian collections made this cooperative model fairly easy to scale. If new institutions were added, we would need to address issues of acceptable duplication and equitable compensation for the vendor(s) involved on a larger scale.

Applicability to other international collections

Not all geographic areas have the same level of competition among vendors, which does not encourage vendors to provide as many services. Librarians managing other international collections will need to consider and create models that better apply to their collecting practices and vendor circumstances. South Asian Studies librarians have worked on a nationwide scale to coordinate their profiles for the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisitions Program from the New Delhi field office, a model that could not be replicated in Latin America, or at least not anywhere close to the same scale. Even within Latin American Studies, there are examples of libraries agreeing to collect based on place of publication, such as the Ivy Plus project to collect material from the states of Brazil, and other smaller groups of libraries that have cooperated, usually in pairs: Duke and North Carolina, Berkeley and Stanford, Columbia and Cornell, or Yale and Harvard.

Other areas of concern: cataloging, retention

The Mexico partners discussed several issues such as cataloging and retention agreements at the beginning of the pilot. Ultimately no such agreements were developed in part because of the pilot nature of the project, so the scope remained limited to the central question: can we reduce duplication through approval plans with the same vendor? If implementing a similar model for a long-term arrangement, we advise considering cataloging, retention, and other adjacent issues. As the BTAA develops the BIG Collection project, it will likely address these questions at a much larger scale.

Conclusions

The cooperative collecting model provides one approach for area studies librarians seeking to leverage existing consortial relationships, interlibrary loan services across institutions, and their relationships with existing vendors to reduce duplication and increase collection diversity. The model showed several distinct features, including 1) the ability to customize and individualize the cooperative model per institution; 2) better stewardship of funds, which by working together made a greater variety of materials available to the consortia; 3) an agreement that valued and actively used the expertise of each subject librarian. This last point is especially important to note as the effectiveness of this model was because it took into account the needs and goals of each individual participant, including the vendor. In this case the cooperative model did not diminish the decision-making power of any participating librarian and instead leveraged their knowledge of their collections as well as academic programs. Finally, the pilot reinforces the importance of trust in establishing interdependent relationships between librarians, their institutions, and vendors. Interdependent relationships require setting terms that address and sustainably act in the best interest of the cooperative, including partners and vendors. It also underscores the significance of these relationships in curating high-quality area studies collections.

However successful, the pilot did leave lingering questions, including whether the model is viable for vendors, the model's applicability to large collections with extensive collecting in specific disciplines and/or geographic areas, and its applicability outside of Latin American Studies. Future considerations for a program of this kind should experiment with expanding the number of participating institutions and address the question of economic viability for the vendors.

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Appendix A. BTAA Latin American cooperative collection proposal

Context and rationale

Latin American collections represent the intellectual, creative, and political production of over two dozen nations. Published primarily in languages other than English, these collections see lower circulation than English-language material but support research and teaching across our universities. It is unfeasible to aim for a comprehensive collection, even in a cooperative arrangement across the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). It is however, possible to reduce duplication, allowing us to collect more deeply in areas of specialty and creating a more diversified collection for the BTAA.

BTAA libraries have considerable Latin American collections across multiple institutions of varying scales, scopes, and strengths. Most of the librarians maintaining these collections are already connected through the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), which includes a robust network of vendors.

Latin American collections are sourced, in its majority, from a robust network of vendors, each providing materials from specific countries or regions. Frequently, libraries have a choice of 2–4 vendors for any given country. Where possible, it is in our interest as a group to support multiple vendors. Our support recognizes their different strengths and business relationships, which results in a greater variety of material for clients. Further, avoiding monopolies amongst Latin American vendors encourages them to provide better service and selection. Several Latin American vendors already have experience working with cooperative arrangements, such as Columbia–Cornell (2CUL), the Ivy Plus Brazil initiative, Duke–UNC, Emory–UGA, and Stanford–Berkeley.

UBorrow is the mechanism by which the BTAA collections become a collective collection across a distributed network. Delivery times *via* UBorrow are frequently under one week, which in some cases is little more than the time required to retrieve an item from a university’s own off-site storage facility. Further, analysis of interlibrary lending of Spanish-language material from the University of Iowa and Penn State University over a five-year period, 2011–2015, showed that approximately 50% of outbound loans, out of nearly 3,000 loans analyzed, stayed within the BTAA. (Ostos and Gardinier 2018).

A proposed model

We propose to pursue a cooperative collection development model focused on reducing duplication rather than dividing collections by geographic or thematic focus. While individual institutions have unique strengths in academic programs and their supporting collections, it is not in our interest for an institution to take primary responsibility for a specific collecting area, which has the potential to become a "weak link" in the system, should that library's academic programs and budget priorities change. Current budget situations also call for a more flexible approach than other models in which a library commits a specific dollar amount or percentage of their allocation to a specific collecting area in a collaborative model. This model will focus on reducing duplication which will, in turn, expand coverage through more efficient expenditures, but without aiming to achieve a comprehensive coverage.

Based on an initial survey of BTAA Latin American studies librarians about the vendors supplying Latin American materials, conducted in April and May 2017, we will select and pursue 1–2 pilot projects in 2017. Vendors are focused primarily on a given country or region, such as Brazil or Central America. For the purposes of this proposal, we will use Argentina as an example, and its two primary vendors, Librería García Cambeiro (LGC) and Libros Argentinos para Todo el Mundo (the Rossis). There are 15 libraries participating in the Big Ten, which we will refer to as Library 1–15. For the purpose of this example, Libraries 1–7 are established customers of LGC, Libraries 8–11 work with the Rossis. Libraries 12–15 either work with a third vendor or are not interested in participating in the pilot. Participation in the cooperative collection project is voluntary. It is not in our interest to ask participants to switch vendors; as such Libraries 1–7 will continue to work with LGC and Libraries 8–11 with the Rossis. This proposal assumes that both vendors would be willing to participate in the pilot project.

Libraries 1–7 can choose to either work together as one larger group or divide into two groups, perhaps by geographic proximity (ex. east-west) or by thematic strengths (ex. intentionally grouping or separating literature-heavy collections). We will continue to describe the proposal for a group of four libraries, though it can be scaled larger.

In setting up the pilot, Libraries 1–4 will share their approval profiles amongst themselves. They may or may not choose to make adjustments in light of each other's strengths. Libraries may share specific interests. The vendor will receive the approval profiles, plus an additional document instructing the vendor to fulfill according to the interests of the participating libraries while avoiding duplication above a set percentage of the combined allocation. For example, Library 1 has a budget of \$3,000, Library 2 has \$6,000, Library 3 has \$9,000, and Library 4 has \$12,000, for a combined budget of \$30,000. The vendor should not spend more than 20% of the combined budget (\$6,000) on duplicated material, and no more than 5% (\$1,500) on material duplicated to 3–4 of the libraries. This allows for a core collection in common, such as a new novel by Luisa Valenzuela or a new history of peronismo, for example. While all four libraries will have at least a general interest in the humanities and the social sciences, let's say that Libraries 2 and 3 have especially strong interests in literature. In their combined budget of \$15,000, perhaps \$10,000 will be spent on literature, of which at least \$8,000 will be material unique to their library within this arrangement. Further, they can list specific local interests outside of literature (ex., history of medicine or television broadcasting) that are unlikely to duplicate with specific interests at Libraries 1 and 4. This arrangement could be replicated between Libraries 5–7 with the same vendor and Libraries 8–11 with the competing vendor, and could be scaled larger to include Libraries 1–7 in a single group.

We are proposing that this pilot focus on percentage of duplication rather than fixed budget numbers to avoid unsustainable commitments. If, for example, Library 3 is facing budget cuts and needs to reduce their allocation for Argentina to \$4,000, the same instructions to the vendor still continue, but with a combined budget of \$25,000. Further, without a firm commitment to a specific subject or geographic area, the plan remains flexible. Depending on the capacity of the vendor, we may be able to implement variable duplication rates for different disciplines for a country. For example, we may set a 15% duplication rate for literature, but prefer a 10% duplication rate for history.

Finally, we need to assess the results of the pilot. We propose the participating libraries contribute a list of their acquisitions for 1–2 fiscal years prior to the pilot and then continue to contribute the same information for 1–2 years of the cooperative arrangement. Duplication will be measured and compared.

Initial draft: Lisa Gardinier, April 2017; Revisions: Lisa Gardinier, Pamela Espinosa de los Monteros, André G. Wenzel, Mary Jo Zeter, 21 June 2017.

Appendix B. Memorandum of understanding

1. This MOU or any revised version which has been mutually agreed to in writing by the Parties hereto constitutes the entire understanding of the parties as it relates to the cooperative collection development project. The Parties agree that there are no other understandings, oral or otherwise, regarding the subject matter of this MOU unless revisions have been mutually adopted as previously noted. The scope of collaborative collecting in this document can be modified if the Parties agree to material changes in their collaboration.
2. The Parties may terminate or withdraw from this relationship and agreement in whole or any revision of this agreement which has been duly adopted at any time by providing 30 days written notice to the others. The agreement and/or the components and benefits herein may not be assigned to another person, group, and organization except as provided for herein without written approval of the other Parties.
3. Each of the Parties represents and warrants that all necessary approvals for this agreement have been obtained, and the persons whose signatures appear below have the authority necessary to execute this agreement on behalf of the Parties indicated.

The Parties agree to the following:

- Pursue a cooperative collection development model focused on reducing duplication rather than dividing collections by geographic or thematic focus. While individual institutions have unique strengths in academic programs and their supporting collections, it is not in our interest for an institution to take primary responsibility for a specific collecting area, which has the potential to become a "weak link" in the system, should that library's academic programs and budget priorities change. Current budget situations also call for a more flexible approach than other models in which a library commits a specific dollar amount or percentage of their allocation to a specific collecting area in a collaborative model. By reducing duplication we will, in turn, expand coverage through more efficient expenditures but without aiming to achieve a comprehensive coverage.

- Libraries will each send profiles to our common vendor, [Vendor's Name]. In the context of each library's strengths and areas of interest, subject-specific duplication rates will be determined by the appropriate librarians. [Vendor] has discretion over approvals selection, including duplicate titles within the set limits.

Scope of the collaboration:

- Time period: This agreement covers the collecting of academic monographs published from [Year] forward.
- Geography: The geographic areas in this proposal cover all areas of [Country].
- Subjects: This agreement covers the collecting of academic monograph publications in the humanities and social sciences as described in the subject profiles supplied by subject librarians from all participating libraries.
- Information sharing and evaluation: Subject librarians from participating institutions will meet periodically either in person or through web conferencing to share expertise and information about all relevant aspects of the implementation and functioning of the agreement. These include acquisition strategies and challenges, vendor performance, budgetary needs, etc. We will also evaluate the effect of the agreement on the relevant collections on an annual basis, measuring and comparing duplication, using data from WorldCat, invoices, locally generated reports, and any other tools as they are developed.
- Publication formats: As a general rule, this agreement covers published monographs in print format.

By signing this agreement, the Parties acknowledge they will actively abide by its terms.

[Signatures]