

ACQUISITION TRIP REPORT: 14 MARCH - 15 APRIL 1998 Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru Peter T. Johnson, Princeton University

The trip's purpose was to: (1) locate and assess for possible acquisition manuscript collections; (2) evaluate new developments pertaining to restructured economies as revealed in documentation issued by official agencies responsible for privatization and regulation; (3) discuss research agendas with selected Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and establish contacts for selective acquisition of imprints; (4) review with bookdealers their capacity to handle non-commercial publications, especially NGO and government imprints and materials issued by social movements; (5) discuss with a range of scholars and practitioners our list of currently received serials in order to identify significant titles not received and others that we have but which no longer carry importance; (6) acquire topographic and thematic maps, especially of cities, for the map collection; and (7) establish contact with the Social Investment Funds of each country for their publications.

The trip covered these topics with varied emphases depending on the country and need. For the purposes of this report, generalized observations will prevail, with reference to specific countries and agencies or individuals as necessary. Prior to the trip extensive preparation occurred and whenever possible, individuals were contacted in advance about my visit. In Peru and Bolivia alumni proved useful in establishing contacts.

Manuscripts

A major Brazilian literary collection was reviewed in Rio de Janeiro. In Argentina a variety of different collections came to my attention and several appear to be worthwhile acquisitions. In Peru the final segments of the Mario Vargas Llosa collection were assessed.

Independent Academic Centers

During the dictatorships these centers evolved into the primary centers for scholarly work. Funded by a combination of grants from foreign foundations and governments, the Centers engaged in long-term research projects, often collective efforts with an interdisciplinary focus, and generally maintained intellectual life in ways that foreign funding and prestige permitted. With the advent of democratic regimes, many IACs experienced a sharp reduction in funding and were forced to consolidate operations; personnel left--often for government or private sector work--and research increasingly became associated with short-term projects connected to the needs of government or the private sector. In most countries the IAC lost its position of intellectual predominance as the new private universities gain in stature and state ones attempt to recapture positions of past importance. In terms of publishing, increasingly what research is published deals with topics of a short-term, applied nature, with little, or no theoretical writing. The result is a considerable array of micro-level, empirical studies, generally without any connecting theoretical or overall theme. Such publications may be accessible from the

sponsoring agency, the IAC itself, or sometimes available on the WWW. Bookdealers attempt to list the production of the principal IACs and of the subjects most likely to sell.

Our acquisition of these publications must continue to be highly selective, with emphasis on gathering those works that go beyond the narrowly defined specifications of a sponsoring agency. Topical coverage, especially on demographic issues, social policy, environmental concerns, and matters of civil rights should be top priorities.

Non-governmental Organizations

As with the IACs, democratic regimes altered the conditions under which many NGOs developed prominence. Projects for some vary considerably from the 1970s and 1980s, and for others the need for collaboration with other NGOs altered objectives. Many NGOs now must engage in a range of contractual work for government agencies, thereby producing more micro-level studies and less engagement with advocacy. The big shifts occur in human rights: focus on abuses by dictatorships is increasingly redirected to daily civil rights concerns and especially the problems arising from the lack of an independent judiciary in many countries and at many levels of society. The publications devoted to these themes reveal much about what is not working in these new democracies and what measures are required to correct existing inadequacies. A sharply increased awareness of environment degradation spurs the environmental movement NGOs, often with collaboration from human rights, indigenous peoples and women's groups. Women's organizations continue to address a range of topics, now somewhat expanded to include children and the aged, equal protection before the law, and employment issues.

Collecting efforts of these types of publications can only succeed with a combination of forces: the NGOs, an astute bookdealer and the bibliographer supplying information and on-going critiques of what is being supplied. The scale of NGO operations and the similarity of many suggest the need for selectivity based upon a vetting process that includes evaluation of the NGO's importance, history of service, staff affiliated with research and operation, external funding sources, and substance of publications as records of work with society. Such details were discussed with bookdealers in Argentina, Chile and Peru to better focus their efforts for identifying and acquiring such materials for Princeton. The head of the Ford Foundation office in Chile also provided valuable insights.

Government Agencies

Governments appear to publish less, distribute fewer titles free, and increasingly depend upon the WWW for access to statistics and policy information. Privatization of state enterprises and the emphasis on efficiency in government have changed many aspects of government. Of interest to Princeton is the record of privatization, regulatory agencies created to oversee privatized enterprises, a range of statistics useful for economic and demographic research, social investment funds, and work by agencies devoted to social and environmental questions.

The WWW presence of increasing amounts of information heretofore published creates for libraries a serious problem, especially in light of most WWW sites not maintaining an archive, and in fact, to simply disappear when a new regime enters office and changes personnel. Until that instability is resolved, collecting printed data annually is basic, and depending on the country, biannual and monthly time series may also be justified.

Serials

A standard practice before such trips is a review of our currently received serial subscriptions as to consistency of receipt and responsiveness of the vendor. Most serials no longer are purchased from the issuing agency; rather, for the convenience of the Order Division, most subscriptions are placed with a bookdealer, and unfortunately (in my opinion) when a country has two or more equally capable bookdealers, our subscriptions nevertheless are concentrated with one dealer. This over reliance upon one dealer, especially for non-commercial imprints, often makes for difficulties with maintaining consistent receipts. For Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru many dozens of titles were not arriving. In most cases these were discussed with dealers, and it became evident with some titles that the dealer simply does not have the ability to supply a subscription. This is true not only for provincial publications, but also for ones issued in capital cities from NGOs and government agencies.

I also had the serial lists reviewed by scholars, social activists, technocrats, NGO researchers, and bookdealers for omissions, titles of less current importance, and ceased titles.

Cartographic Materials

These items, ranging from topographic maps to thematic and city maps, often fall outside the normal acquisition channels. With increased environmental concerns and more students travelling to Latin America, we need to improve our holdings of urban mapping and areas of environmental interest, such as national parks, nature preserves, sensitive ecological areas, and river systems. In Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru the official mapping agency (usually operated by the military) was visited, as well as other government agencies producing cartographic materials. Private publishing accounts for most city maps. Several hundred maps were acquired for the Geosciences library.

Assessment

In a number of respects Latin American states are experiencing a revolution in this era of globalization and regionalization. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that the nation state still holds substantial importance, not only in issues of borders and resources, but also in limiting between states the free movement of peoples as immigrants. The increased importance of regional groups, such as the Comunidad Andina and MERCOSUR, and of regional issues, especially environmental, transportation networks, natural resources, pollution, and transnational investments, point to the necessity for rethinking the collection development policy. Currently based upon countries and

traditional disciplines, the trends in research point to interdisciplinary approaches to the problems and issues confronting contemporary Latin America. To ensure adequate coverage of topics and approaches taken by public and private sector agencies, I believe it becomes necessary to approach collections more thematically than in the past, while not losing sight of the importance of the nation-state experience.

Manuscripts: the development of this collection relies heavily upon identifying in a timely manner holdings of importance. Most such collections pre-date 1980, and most likely 1965.

Independent Academic Centers: Publications of these organizations are experiencing significant changes, often with the sharply diminished role of scholarship and funding of long-term projects. Selective acquisition should continue, with attention to dropping coverage for those centers that fail to maintain academic standards.

Non-governmental Organizations: These remain important for various types and levels of research, albeit many are increasingly dependent upon contractual work for survival. For those that maintain engagement with the popular sectors of society, and issue publications reflective of work there, systematic collection by Princeton is important. We need to shape bookdealers' efforts more closely and seek qualitative assessments from funding agencies in order to identify those most critical for the development of civil society. Flexibility is essential in the selecting and processing of materials; some should remain as part of our collection-level record project and within collections that are microfilmed. The volume and formats of materials are such that individual cataloging is impossible and unnecessary for gaining adequate access.

The systematic collecting of imprints from major NGOs remains a daunting task, but one that with careful coordination and informational assistance, can be accomplished by dedicated bookdealers. While the cost is not insignificant, the absence of these materials, especially those of research level and others reflective of social movement activity, deserve a place in a Latin American research collection. We will endeavor to improve our coverage of such materials for Argentina, Chile and Peru.

Government Publications: We need to incorporate more documentation on the privatization process and regulatory agencies overseeing a wide range of activities now within the private sector. Social Investment Funds also are new and significant. On a national level (SALALM, LANE, and other regional groups) we need to discuss how documentation heretofore in print and now on the WWW should be handled. Various WWW sites identify these Latin American government pages, but the stability of the information is far from settled.

Serials: Far too many serials from government agencies and NGOs are not arriving systematically because vendors are not able to devote time to obtaining such non-commercial imprints. If our collections are to have a reasonable chance of being complete and timely, more direct ordering should be attempted. With the exception of newspapers, now available on the WWW, our serial lists appeared to those reviewing them as largely

complete given the levels of detail we seek. In most cases new titles suggested come from NGOs and a few IAC, as well as some regional economic organizations and government agencies.

Maps: Given the high degree of judgment required to select amidst an array of offerings, I suspect that basic topographic sheets can be obtained through agents or on occasion directly from the issuing agency; for all other types of maps, on-site visits and personal inspection is necessary. Various specialized atlases surfaced in this process that bookdealers were unaware of because of the technical mission of the issuing agency.

Overall, the 30 days were extremely compressed, many individuals provided valuable insights into research trends or activities of current importance, a wide range of non-commercially available publications were acquired, and useful contacts were made for future manuscript acquisition.