



**Library Area Studies Organizations and Multidisciplinary
Collection and Research: The Latin American Experience**

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**International Federation of Library Associations, Social Science Libraries
Section, Satellite Conference**

**Disappearing disciplinary borders in the social science library - global studies or
sea change?**

**University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada
6-7 August 2008**

Sponsored by:

**CQ Press
Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)
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Introduction

Area studies librarians are the subject specialists in research libraries who probably have the most symphonies with multidisciplinary research because they have responsibility not for one discipline but a variety of subjects within a specific geographic region. That pattern carries over to area studies library organizations because they mirror the geographic approach. Different from most academic library organizations these area studies groups are advocates of multi-subject approaches to research and actively support cooperation across disciplines.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly examine the evolution of area studies in the university and link that evolution to the development of area studies library organizations. I will then look at a case study of multidisciplinary activity by examining three different cooperative programs in support of academic research of the Latin American area studies library organization, the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). I will show that the ability of this organization to support cooperative projects is an important factor in the evolution of multidisciplinary library research in Latin American studies.

Areas Studies in Research Universities

Essential to understanding the evolution of interdisciplinary studies is an appreciation of the general history of disciplines in the academic context. That history is often not one of harmony or cooperation but competition related to the preservation of traditional boundaries. There are few organizations in the world that cling to tradition as do universities. Rather than support the expansion of knowledge to better understand

the world through new approaches, there is often a protective reaction to change that often leads to a climate of contention and rivalry. Tony Becher noted this tendency in his study of academic disciplines, "Resistance to new ideas is inborn among academic communities, as can be clearly shown by the length of time it often takes for a major insight or discovery to gain general acceptance."¹

Frequently those reactions are related to rivalry for financial support, student numbers, and desires for academic preeminence which overshadows the lofty goals of knowledge expansion that might be expected in academia. In this climate when interdisciplinary approaches are suggested, the negative reactions related to discipline preservation often rises to the fore front. It has been suggested by several authors that the anthropological definition of "tribes," best fits the academic world. This description by F. G Bailey of segments of the university is revealing. "Each tribe has a name and a territory, settles its own affairs, goes to war with the others, has a distinct language or at least a distinct dialect, and a variety of symbolic ways of demonstrating its apartness from others."² The consequence of this type of environment is the creation of a conservative climate in which boundaries are jealously protected and guarded.

¹Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (Bristol, PA: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, 1989), 71.

²F. G. Bailey, *Morality and Expediency: The Folklore of Academic Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 212.

Interdisciplinary approaches initially are often suspect and rejected and change such as the birth of new disciplines, is slow and painful.³

Changes do occur, however, and new disciplines do develop for various reasons. In the twentieth century non academic catastrophic events such as war and global conflict had the effect of shaking the foundation of some traditions and practices in academia. The two world conflicts particularly World War II demonstrated the necessity for cooperation between disciplines because of a need to better understand distant non western cultures. As a direct result of the war, Americans came into contact with numerous cultures in the Pacific region and Asia as well as in the Soviet Union that were not particularly familiar to government officials and its advisors, many of whom were academics. It became apparent that the academic tradition of focusing almost exclusively on the western European world did not adequately prepare students in an understanding of the world. That realization was connected to a more utilitarian focus of the U. S. government as its policies changed from a general isolationism to the development of a role as policeman to the world.

These two focuses converged to encourage universities to develop broad extensive international programs and academic centers of research and learning based on geographic parameters. Large quantities of governmental funding were made available and the focus of the funding eventually centered on supporting a few large university centers which provided language and cultural training by geographic regions. The funding was eventually consolidated into two programs, the first which is commonly

³Two books dealing with the concepts are Hazard Adams, *The Academic Tribes*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), and Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines*.

know now as Title IV programs of the Higher Education Act and the second, the scholarship and research assistance from the Fulbright-Hays Act. The overriding goal of these programs in providing financial support to universities was to guarantee that never again would the United States encounter cultures and political systems about which our scholars and diplomats had little knowledge or understanding. These university centers brought together students and faculty interested in specific geographic areas from all disciplines and encouraged curriculum development and research.

One of the results of bringing faculty together from different disciplines was to encourage interdisciplinary education, cooperation, research, and publication. Information on all aspects of a country or region was needed and not just an analysis from one discipline. Historians were encouraged to use social scientific methods and social science research was motivated to go beyond traditional approaches. The traditional and conventional way of examining countries was not sufficient and new approaches and techniques were advocated to better understand the world. In combination with major private foundations such as Ford and Rockefeller, the government provided significant financial support for new and innovative research beyond the segmented treatments grounded in disciplinary lines.⁴

These changes were not always appreciated. The regional focus was not particularly different for the historians and some in the humanities since they were traditionally organized by geography or culture, but it did create challenges for social

⁴For a study of these programs see Mary Ellen O'Connell and Janet L. Norwood, eds, *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2002), 13-82. For a legislative history of the programs, see pages 267-83.

scientists whose focus was on theoretical analysis regardless of geographical boundaries. These disciplines struggled to adapt to the new ideas. There was some resistance to the development of area studies programs and approaches that hampered the evolution of these programs. As Tony Becher observed about general disciplinary issues of change, “Boundaries, after all, do not exist merely as lines on a map: they denote territorial possessions that can be encroached upon, colonized and reallocated. Some are so strongly defended as to be virtually impenetrable; others are weakly guarded and open to incoming and outgoing traffic.”⁵ The availability of large amounts of financial support, however, was an incentive to change.

Area Studies and Libraries

The development and evolution of academic programs related to international studies in the university was mirrored with changes and adjustments in research library organizations. The primary administrative change that occurred was the development of new positions of area studies bibliographers.⁶ Although they took on a variety of forms, the primary responsibilities of these positions were similar. This was a position responsible primarily for collection development with subject-related reference duties. Most worked heavily with acquisition departments or had separate responsibility for purchasing. The position had primary collection responsibility for all subjects in the humanities and social sciences for the geographic region. The bibliographer had heavy

⁵Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, 37.

⁶For a history, see Malgorzata M. Hueckel, “The Duties, Educational Backgrounds, and Intellectual Profiles of Slavic Bibliographers in Academic Libraries in the United States.” (Master’s thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1990), 10-43.

liaison activities with not only the language faculty but faculty scattered throughout the university who had curriculum or research in the geographic region. There was also required work and negotiation with discipline subject librarians. The primary qualifications for the positions were a language expertise and a discipline Ph.D. or a second Master's degree in a topic related to the geographic region.⁷

The importance of these types of positions to the library was emphasized in 1966 by C. K. Bird, the University Librarian at Indiana University.

The subject librarians are regarded as highly skilled coordinators, apologists, and elucidators as well, between the library and academic departments . . . Their daily contacts with faculty members has done much to create a positive image of the library. In their mind the library has changed from a highly institutionalized, impersonal service unit to one that is essentially sensitive.⁸

Many of the same issues related to area studies faculty presented challenges and conflicts in the library. When area studies positions were created to support interdisciplinary geographic collection development, resentment and conflict often accompanied these positions. The higher degree requirements for bibliographers often led to better salaries and treatment which engendered jealousy and envy among other librarians. Government and foundation money created large collection development

⁷See an early study of bibliographers, Robert D. Stueart, *The Area Specialist Bibliographer: An Inquiry into His Role* (Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1972). See also Fred J. Hay, "The Subject Specialist in the Academic Library: A Review Article," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 16(March 1990): 11-17.

⁸C. K. Bird, "Subject Specialists in a University Library," *College & Research Libraries* 27(May 1966): 191. Indiana University and several other large libraries adopted the area studies model for disciplines and created a large group of subject bibliographers.

budgets which in turn resulted in some resentment. The administrative separation of the bibliographers from reference librarians was also problematic.⁹

An important event in the evolution of the area studies bibliographer was the establishment of the Association of Research Libraries' Farmington Plan. The plan was a nationwide program whose purpose was to ensure that somewhere in libraries in North America at least one copy of every academic publication published anywhere in the world was found. Large research libraries received specific country designations which required significant emphasis and work in order to accomplish the goals of the program. That task was often difficult because of the nature of publishing and book distribution in many countries. With the combination of strong developing area studies programs and participation in the Farmington Plan, library administrators and area studies librarians became frustrated with the challenges of acquisition expectations. They needed a national organization which had a similar area and multidisciplinary focus.¹⁰

The specific assistance needed by area studies librarians was not forthcoming from traditional large library organizations. In fact early on the guidelines of the American Library Association (ALA) did not allow for this type of selective or restrictive organization to be part of the structure of the organization. Consequently these early organizations were organized on their own or connected to academic area studies organizations. The oldest of these associations, SALALM, is completely independent of

⁹Marie Angela Bastlampillai and Peter Havard-Williams, "Subject Specializations Re-Examined," *Libri: International Library Review* 37(September 1987):198-200.

¹⁰Ralph D. Wagner, *A History of the Farmington Plan* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002).

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any other organization. The African, Middle Eastern, and two Asian library groups are connected to their specific area studies organizations. The two European groups were eventually formed under the umbrella of the ALA's, Association of College and Research Libraries. These seven organizations are strong advocates for multi-disciplinary and area studies support in research libraries.¹¹

Seminary on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM)

The library organization that serves the Latin American academic community in the United States is the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). SALALM was the creation of Marietta Daniels (Shepard) of the then Pan-American Union (later the OAS) and Stanley West, head of the library at the University of Florida at Gainesville. Even since becoming library director in the late 1940s West had focused significant time and effort in creating a strong Caribbean collection in his library. The geographic location of the university made this collecting effort logical. His aspiration was strengthened by the assignment of collecting responsibility for the Caribbean to Florida by the Farmington Plan. The challenges of identifying and obtaining these materials so frustrated West that in 1955 he expressed his concerns to a former Columbia University student colleague, Marietta Daniels. He suggested they invite selected librarians from across the country to attend a seminar to explore ways to improve U.S. librarian's abilities to obtain research materials from Latin America and the

¹¹The groups are, The Africana Librarians Council (ALC), The Middle East Library Association (MELA), The Western European Studies Section (WESS), The Slavic and East European Section (SEES), The Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL), and The Committee on Research Materials on Southeast Asia (CORMOSEA).

Caribbean. The first meeting was held in June of 1956 at Chinsegut Hill, a large plantation home near the town of Brooksville Florida and owned by the University of Florida. The sixteen working papers presented at the Seminar suggested the need for further discussion, so a second meeting was held at the University of Texas at Austin the following year and within a short time a permanent organization was formed and annual meetings have been held since.¹²

SALALM and LACAP

As was suggested in the name of the organization, the primary concern of SALALM was the acquisition of library materials. In several early seminars the challenges in research material acquisition from Latin America were examined in great depth and a variety of plans discussed to improve the process. Most suggested the necessity of cooperative efforts to purchase materials for U.S. libraries. The primary challenge librarians faced was that the Latin American book trade was focused internally and the ability of librarians in the United States to obtain recently published materials was problematic. For librarians in the United States just determining what was being published was a difficulty that was exacerbated by the challenge finding a dealer or bookstore willing to supply those materials. During a social gathering at the fourth SALALM meeting held in Washington, D.C. in 1959 an outline to work together was discussed and a specific plan suggested. As the head of the New York Public Library

¹²SALALM is an international organization with participants from around the world, but most members are from the United States. For a description of the first meeting see, Mark L. Grover, "The Beginning of SALALM," in *Latin American Studies Research and Bibliography: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Pamela F. Howard-Reguindin (New Orleans: SALALM, 2007), 16-42.

stated to Nettie Lee Benson, Latin American Studies Librarian at the University of Texas, "We have talked about it for four years but we haven't made any progress."¹³

The plan was simple, a private book company, Stechert-Hafner centered in New York City, would have traveling agents throughout Latin America who identified recent academic publications and purchased multiple copies of those materials. Librarians would provide to Stechert-Hafner general subject outlines of their collection needs and agree to purchase the item selected for them on what is described as a "blanket order" agreement. Knowing the collecting needs of each library, traveling agents would determine which books to purchase based on the profile provided. Stechert-Hafner agreed to initially finance the venture with the goal of breaking even within three years. By the fifth SALALM held at the New York Public Library in 1960, a formal proposal for a cooperative project was made and accepted.¹⁴

The plan was under the direction of Dominick Coppola. In 1960 Nettie Lee Benson of the University of Texas and Coppola visited several countries of Latin America. Ms. Benson was given an initial six months unpaid leave of absence from the University of Texas and became the primary traveling agent for the program. Between January and May, Dr. Benson traveled to Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Bolivia. Her adventures are recorded and described in typical Dr. Benson fashion highlighting the joys, challenges, and intrigue of buying books in Latin America.

Between March and May Coppola visited Central America and Mexico. Books selected

¹³Nettie Lee Benson, interviewed by William Jackson, n.d., Austin, Texas. Original in the possession of William Jackson.

¹⁴M. J. Savary, *The Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Program: An Imaginative Venture* (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1968), 54-7.

and purchased by Benson and Coppola were in U.S. libraries by summer. Dr. Benson was to take two additional trips, January to July 1961 to the rest of the Spanish speaking countries of South America and April-July, 1962 to Central America and a return visit to four of the countries she visited in 1960.¹⁵

Brazil was the last major country added to the program. The hesitancy about going into Brazil was related to the size and complexity of the book trade. It was deemed advisable to gain experience in the smaller countries of Latin America before going to Brazil. By May of 1963 they were ready and Dr. A. W. Bork of Southern Illinois University, visited Brazil. He immediately recognized the geographical challenges that made the acquisition of books from Brazil difficult. In most countries of Latin America the size of the country was such that by working out of the capital city LACAP could obtain most of the desired academic material. The vastness of Brazil and strong regionalism made that impossible. Bork was able to obtain a number of books for U.S. libraries from Brazil and the decision was made to establish a permanent office for LACAP in Rio de Janeiro administered by a Brazilian academic, Vicente Barretto.¹⁶

¹⁵For a description of her trips see, Nettie Lee Benson, "Report of the Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Project," in Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, V, New York City, June 14-16, 1960 *Final Report and Working Papers*. (Washington, D.C.: Pan American Union, 1965), 263-84, and Nettie Lee Benson, "LACAP Report Number Two," Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, VI, Southern Illinois, Carbondale, Illinois, July 6-8, 1961. Working Papers (Unpublished). Copy found in the SALALM Archives, Benson Library, University of Texas at Austin. See also letters written from South America found in her papers at the University of Texas, Benson Latin American Library Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Collection, Box NLB Office Files-BLAC info.

¹⁶See his report, Albert William Bork, "LACAP Survey in Brazil" in Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, VIII, Madison, Wisconsin, July 11-12, 1963. *Final Report and Working Papers*. 2 vols. (Washington D.C.: Pan American Union, 1964), 136-50.

Unfortunately by the time the office in Brazil was established the future of LACAP was in doubt.¹⁷ The success of LACAP in the end became the reason for its failure. The need for agents in Latin America was because Latin American publishers and bookstores were not responding to the market in the United States. It was obvious, however, that a single company headquartered in the United States with the necessity of having representatives regularly traveling throughout the region was an expensive proposition and the cost was passed on to libraries through increased cost of the books. What LACAP did by purchasing large quantities of library materials in Latin America was to impress upon a few dealers, bookstores, and publishers that there was a market in the United States for library materials from Latin America. The potential was great because eventually more than forty libraries joined LACAP though at different levels of participation. By the mid 1960s dealers from most of the major countries had begun competing with LACAP. They were able to provide better service at a cheaper price primarily because they were in country. That initial small number of Latin American book dealers expanded to the present time when more than thirty Latin American companies who work with the international market primarily in the United States and regularly attend the meetings of SALALM. They function similarly to the way LACAP did; they determine new books and periodicals that are available in the country, make lists, send those lists to libraries in the North America and Europe, and sell the identified books at the cost of the book plus a fee which is incorporated into the price of the book. They prefer to work with blanket or approval programs which means that the books are in

¹⁷For a pessimistic evaluation of LACAP see, "Resources for Research in Latin American Literature in Southern Libraries," in Lawrence S. Thompson, *Essays in Hispanic Bibliography* (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, 1970), 100-1.

North American libraries shortly after publication.¹⁸ Because they are in country they are able to rapidly identify and provide to libraries publications, many of which have limited distribution. Their fees are high but the service provided well worth the expense.¹⁹

SALALM and LAMP

A second cooperative activity emanating from SALALM was the acquisition and/or preservation of primary source research materials from Latin America. A valuable service libraries provide is to make available research materials to as many scholars as possible in an accessible format. That need is so great that there exists a lucrative industry connected to libraries in the creation and sale of collections of microfilm or more recently digitized scarce and/or non published primary source material. An important activity of SALALM has been the identification and preservation of these materials.

Collecting these types of materials from Latin American was a challenge for libraries. Because the number of research libraries with strong interest in Latin America was comparatively small, the microfilming of research materials of interest to Latin American scholars was not economically viable for many private companies. Also since

¹⁸The speed at which books are cataloged and made available to U.S. scholars was noted by the Mexican scholar Federico Patán in an article suggesting that Mexican books were processed faster in United States libraries than in Mexican libraries. Federico Patán, "Mexicanos en una computadora," *Uno mas uno, suplemento sabado*. 17 June 1995, 10.

¹⁹For a list of most of the companies working with U.S. libraries see the SALALM home page, <http://library.lib.binghamton.edu/salalm/booksellers/libreros.html>.

most of the research materials were housed in Latin America the cost of microfilming or digitizing on site was often seen as prohibitive for these companies. SALALM in its first meeting in 1956 discussed issues of primary source materials preservation, suggesting the need for projects that would increase availability while at the same preserve these valuable resources. Large research collections such as the University of Texas, Harvard, and the University of Florida were already involved in projects, primarily newspaper microfilming.²⁰

The impetus for SALALM's organizational involvement in these types of projects was the existence of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL).²¹ Founded in 1949 (first named Midwest Inter-library Center) the Center ultimately became a depository library for important but lesser used research materials of the Chicago area, primarily newspapers in any form. It was a subscription based service that acquired and then held research materials which would be lent to participating institutions. Participating institutions were encouraged to transfer to the Center their materials that fit the Center's collection criteria.

After several years of discussion and evaluation in SALALM, the Latin American Microform Project (LAMP) was officially organized in 1974 with sixteen libraries as founding members.²² The organization was a completely independent organization

²⁰For a description of the Texas program see, Adán Benavides, "Benson Latin American Collection," *Discovery* 16(2002): 20-23. For the Florida microfilming program, see <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/digital/collections/cnip/eng/index.htm>.

²¹For a history of CRL see, Bernard F. Reilly, "The Center for Research Libraries: An Overview," *World Libraries*, 15(Spring, 2005):10-19.

²²Carl W. Deal, "The Latin American Microform Project: The First Decade," *Microform Review* 15(Winter, 1986): 22-27.

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through associated with both CRL and SALALM. Each participating member pays an annual fee and the collected amount is used to finance a microfilming project in Latin America. Representative members from each institution meet at the annual meeting of SALALM to discuss and vote on potential projects for microfilming. LAMP is unusually effective in encouraging cooperative projects in which they pay for part in conjunction with a Latin American organization. The final microfilm products are placed in the CRL collection in Illinois and participating members are allowed to use the research materials. The number of LAMP members has increased to 47 libraries in 2008.²³ The value of these SALALM and CRL projects is inestimable.²⁴

SALALM and HAPI

Having Latin American publications and research materials available in North American libraries is important in supporting the research of faculty and students. The value of those materials, however, is significantly diminished if there is no access to the information through a subject index. This is particularly relevant for information in periodical and serials literature where the subject content often varies according to article. Latin American periodicals are particularly important to North American scholars because they carry the latest research of Latin American scholars.

Providing indexes of Latin American serials has historically been a challenge.

The Handbook of Latin American Studies which began in 1936 was an important

²³James Simon, "Area Studies Microform Projects at the Center for Research Libraries," *World Libraries* 15(Spring, 2005): 29-47.

²⁴For a complete list of the Latin American materials filmed by LAMP including current projects see, <http://crl.edu/areastudies/LAMP/collections/lampguide.htm>.

subject index but too limited in its coverage of periodical literature and not a comprehensive index which is important in periodical literature. A few individual libraries developed their own index of serials, the most extensive being the Pan American Union Library (OAS). Beginning in 1929 the Union began a subject card index to the periodicals received by the library. Their index was published as a set in 1960 with two additional supplements bringing the collection up to 1969 when the index was discontinued.²⁵

In 1973 Arizona State University hired Barbara Valk as their Latin American reference specialist, a recently graduated library science student. Encouraged by the university tenure requirements to publish, Barbara began searching for a project. She recognized the void left by the cessation of the Pan American Union guide and the need for a comprehensive periodical index for Latin America. A proposal for funding was accepted by the Arizona State Latin American Studies Center to create a finding aid by indexing 125 periodicals from the ASU collection. The index was published in 1974 in four quarterly cumulative issues. Barbara was pleasantly surprised when more than 100 copies of her guide were sold to other libraries. The SALALM Committee on Bibliography under Margarita Anderson-Imbert of Harvard University invited Valk to describe her project at a 1975 meeting in Bogota, Colombia. She received enthusiastic support and encouragement to expand the project and offers of help with the indexing. At that meeting she met Larry Lauerhass, Associate Director of the UCLA Latin

²⁵The index was published in three different sets, *Index to Latin American Periodicals Literature, 1929-1960* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1962), 8 vols., *Index to Latin American Periodicals Literature, Supplement, 1961-1965* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1968), 2 vols., and *Index to Latin American Periodicals Literature, 1966-1970* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 2 vols.

American Center who was particularly supportive of the project. Through a series of events connected to obtaining funding, Barbara was offered a position at UCLA and the project was transferred to California. She received a significant three-year NEH grant of \$400,000 to produce quarterly publications and an annual accumulation and the *Hispanic American Periodical Index* (HAPI) began publication in April 1977.²⁶

HAPI began as a private funded project supported financially by UCLA and foundational support until it became self-supporting. It was developed and sustained almost single-handedly by its committed and talented creator, Barbara Valk until her retirement in 2005. Like LAMP, HAPI's connection with SALALM was important and vital. The backbone of the project was and continues to be the support and work of SALALM members. Most of the indexing is done by SALALM members and annual reports continue to be an important part of SALALM meetings. HAPI is an "affinity group" in SALALM which allows for meetings to discuss changes and challenges to be held in conjunction with the annual meetings. Advice and assistance came from SALALM committees and members. This relationship was particularly important in the beginning and then during the recent evolution to a digitized platform.²⁷

In the first volume there were 214 total serials indexed. In the most recent publication for the year 2005 the number increased to 399 periodicals indexed. Important runs of serials such as are completely indexed. HAPI is an important and

²⁶Barbara, Valk, "HAPI and SALALM: Thirty Years of Close Cooperation," in *Latin American Studies Research and Bibliography: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Pamela F. Howard-Reguindin (New Orleans: SALALM, 2007), 9-15.

²⁷HAPI continues to publish an annual paper copy but it is also an important database available to libraries. See <http://hapi.ucla.edu>.

valuable research tool for Latin Americanists throughout the world that has benefitted significantly from the activities of SALALM.²⁸

Conclusion

National and international organizations are important in the academic community. They provide a place where those of similar interests and/or responsibilities can come together to talk, interact, and network. For academic organizations they provide a venue where the latest research of its members can be presented. For professionals like librarians the primary activities of the organizations are more practical, discussing new methods and ideas that improve the ability of its members to function in their jobs. All of the organizations become important political voices that support the profession and often the political views of their members.

An additional important function of organizations is to serve as a clearinghouse for ideas and projects deemed valuable to the profession. In this way the objectives of the profession are periodically evaluated and a determination made as to the needs of the field as a whole. With library groups those activities tend to be support of practical projects that cannot be done at the local level but require the coordination and activities of several librarians or organizations. As such these national organizations sponsor or support projects to ensure that the desired goal is accomplished. These projects are often multidisciplinary in nature.

The three examples discussed demonstrate different approaches to multidisciplinary cooperative projects by a library organization. SALALM has never perceived

²⁸*HAPI: Hispanic American Periodicals Index* (Los Angeles: HAPI, 1975), 3-15.

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itself as an organization to actually do the projects. The organization has always been in the role of a facilitator and/or coordinator. In the first example of LACAP, SALALM provided the mechanism through which the project was discussed and organized but insisted it be owned and operated by a private book company. In the second example SALALM again facilitated the organization and functioning of the project that would be connected to another organization. In the third example a personal project in the beginning stages and directed by a member of SALALM was supported by the organization and members encouraged to participate in the project. In all three examples SALALM as an organization was not responsible for the project but the support and help of SALALM was essential in the success of the undertakings.

In 1964 Richard Morse, the eminent Latin American studies scholar, published a scathing reaction to the then recent production of research by United States scholars on Latin America. He has little to say that was positive but did recognize as an important U. S. contribution, the work of libraries and librarians. "I venture that till now the most important American contribution to Latin American historiography has been in the realm of 'services': bibliographic compilation, devising of research aids, and enhancement of library collections."²⁹ Much of what he recognized was the work of librarians and the cooperative activities of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library

²⁹Richard M. Morse, "The Strange Career of Latin American Studies," in *New World Soundings: Culture and Ideology in the Americas* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 173. The article was originally published in the *American Academy of Political and Social Science, Annals* 365 (1964), 106-12.

Culture and Ideology in the Americas (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 173. The article was originally published in the *American Academy of Political and Social Science, Annals* 365 (1964), 106-12.

Materials. These activities are important enterprises that encourage and support multidisciplinary research.