

Chapter VI

Universe of Publication and Selection

There is a similarity in acquisitions patterns by subject across the nine-year time period as analyzed in chapters III and IV. The lack of significant shifts in variables of percentage of unique titles and the mean number of holding libraries seems to indicate that there are influences other than funding which assist in setting the acquisitions patterns. The single, most powerful influence in determining acquisitions patterns may be the available universe of publication by subject. There are only a few possible datasets to pose as a universe of publication for comparison with the peer group data by subject. One of these is contained within the study itself, that is Peer Group 14. Since PG14 contains data for bibliographic records and holdings of 2,646 libraries of all sizes and types, might not number of titles per subject field in PG14 form a universe of publications for those fields? The other data which may assist in setting an external context aside from the CACD data are WorldCAT and the North American Title Count. Vendor approval plan data can be used to construct an annual universe of academic books. This chapter further examines the collecting patterns found in chapters III and IV by comparing the totals from the CACD data with other comparable datasets, each representing a “universe of publication.” Data from the complete data tables for the study which are at <http://ala.org/acrl/> are also utilized in the interpretations in this chapter.

Table VI-1

PG14 as a Universe of Publication

Postulating PG14 as a universe of publication, a selected number of subject fields or disciplines can be examined to explore the proportions of acquisitions among the four peer

groups. Table VI-1 displays the total number of titles with the percentage each of the three academic library peer groups comprise of the totals for PG14. If we look first at areas in which English language publications would be predominant, we can see that the same pattern of proportions obtains among the peer groups. In English literature (PR) the three academic library peer groups' proportions of the whole are highest in 1990 and decline in the next few years. Although the number of titles in PG14 increases up through 1993, the other three peer groups do not have a proportionate increase in number of titles. The proportion for the ARL (PG1), declines by 5 percentage points between 1990 and 1994. PG4 has a decrease over the 5 years of 4 percentage points and PG7 decreases by 9 percentage points in relation to the totals for PG14. For 1990-1994, all three academic library peer groups have declining percentages of the "universe" of PG14.

In English literature, the proportions for each of the three academic library peer groups do not overlap and each remains in the same relationship to the other. The total number of titles for peer groups 4 and 7 are relatively close despite the difference in the number of libraries in each peer group. The number of titles and proportions between PG14 and the ARL group show more divergence in 1992 and 1993. For the three academic library peer groups, there is a decrease in proportion of titles to the PG14 universe after 1990 in English literature which can be an indication that the other libraries in PG14 are contributing bibliographic records for titles not owned within the three academic library peer groups. The numbers for the three peer groups added together exceed the total for PG14, but this does not take into consideration the overlap between peer groups. If the universe of PG14 is representing total publication in English literature, then the academic libraries in the aggregate appear to be acquiring a declining proportion of that universe.

Another subject area with primarily English language materials is the "E" classification,

North American history. The proportions for the academic library peer groups of the PG14 universe are lower in this area than in English literature. There is not a decline in the proportions, but a slight increase in all three academic peer groups from 1990-1994 as a portion of the whole. In all three academic library peer groups the proportions are consistent across the five years. The number of titles in PG14 is also very consistent with the exception of an increase in 1992, dropping back to the prior levels in 1993 and 1994. The same pattern of increase and decrease obtains for the three academic library peer groups. The universe represented by PG14 contains a much larger number of titles than any one of the three academic library peer groups. Regional and local history, and possibly genealogical works, not acquired by the academic libraries may be one factor accounting for the much higher totals in PG14. If the similar collecting levels in PG4 and PG7 represent a core universe, the higher numbers in PG1, the ARL libraries, can presumably represent a more intense level of collecting. But the ARL libraries are still, in most years, approximately 2,000 titles short of the PG14 totals. The gap between the number of titles in PG14 and PG1 is considerably larger in North American history than in English literature. Unlike English literature, the percentage of holdings in the ARL increases over the five years. History is a field with a large universe of monographic publication and it appears that a considerable portion of the universe of PG14 is not being acquired by the academic libraries.

In Education, peer groups 4 and 7 have almost identical proportions of the universe of PG14. PG1 has a lower proportion of the universe in education than in either English literature or North American history. Again, the number of titles in PG14 remains in a narrow range across the years as do the yearly totals for the three academic library peer groups. In English literature and history, there can be many local or regional titles which would increase the overall total number of titles, but education would seem to be an academic discipline in which all libraries

would be buying the same core of titles. Indeed this does seem to be the case with peer groups 4 and 7. While PG1, the ARL libraries, has considerably more titles than the other two academic library peer groups, it is still approximately 2,000 titles lower than PG14. Textbooks make up a considerable portion of the publication universe in professional fields. In education the textbooks can be those used in the state public school systems as well as textbooks for education students in colleges. Without examining individual titles, it is not possible to ascertain or account for the large difference in numbers of titles between PG14 and the three academic library peer groups. There would seem to be a portion of the “universe” in education materials which is not being covered by the academic libraries.

The subject area with the largest number of titles is business and economics which is comprised of the H-HJ classifications. As with Education, this is professional field with large numbers of textbook publication. The acquisitions patterns are again the same. PG1 consistently has 86-87% of the universe formed by PG14. The proportion for PG7 is very consistent; PG4 has slightly more fluctuation than seen in the other subject fields just analyzed. Peer groups 4 and 7 have a lower percentage of the universe than with the other subject areas. The large difference in the total number of titles in peer groups 1 and 14 with peer groups 4 and 7, may in part be accounted for by the area studies collecting in the research libraries. While the two smaller peer groups may be collecting English language materials almost exclusively, the research libraries are collecting more internationally for area studies programs. It appears that the larger the universe, the less the academic libraries which are smaller in size are able to afford the same proportion of the universe as in subject fields with fewer titles overall.

In business and economics in PG14, foreign language titles comprise one third of the total number of titles. (Master Table Series One, English and Non-English) This is approximately 8,000 titles in most years leaving the universe of English language titles in the neighborhood of

15,000 to 16,000 titles. The ARL group is 3,000 titles lower than PG14, but the two other peer groups are only approaching the 50% mark in respect to English language titles. It is clear that the size of the universe in business and economics even in English language materials is much beyond the budgetary capabilities of the academic libraries in peer groups 4 and 7.

In the sciences the totals for all four peer groups are much closer as the universe of monographic publication in the sciences is lower in volume than in the humanities and social sciences. In computer science, the three academic library peer groups have more than 2,000, but less than 3,000 titles each year. PG14 only has in the neighborhood of 3,500 titles. The ARL library group's proportion ranges from 77-83%. The large research libraries in PG4 have only a few titles more than the medium-sized libraries in PG7. The difference in proportion of the universe of titles between PG4 and PG7 is 7 percentage points or less with only a 3 percentage point difference in 1992. Thus it does appear, when the universe of publication is not large and a subject is of current importance, academic libraries of all sizes seem to be acquiring the same core of materials.

Although a larger universe of publication than computer science, in the health sciences (R), the proportions for the three academic library peer groups are closer together than in any of the other subject fields analyzed in Table VI-1. PG1 consistently hovers right under three quarters as a proportion of the total number of titles in PG14. PG7 consistently hovers near half of the total number of titles. The difference in the number of titles in PG14 and PG1 may be that there are separate health science libraries included in PG14 which are not included in PG1. The health sciences libraries would have larger collections with more unique titles. The titles in the three academic library peer groups would seem to approach a core of materials for the health sciences.

The last two fields to be analyzed are religion and the arts classifications. In both of these

areas, there is considerable international publication which greatly enlarges the universe of publication. The total number of titles in PG14 for both of these areas is very similar. But the proportions and patterns for the three academic library groups are not the same in both areas. In religion, the ARL group is consistently 10 percentage points lower as a proportion of the total than in the arts. PG4 is consistently near 40% of the PG14 universe in religion, but higher in the arts at 47%. PG7 is consistently near 34% in religion, and in the 34-36% range in the arts with the exception of 1993 in which the proportion is much higher at 41%. The collecting in the arts in PG4 is much stronger than the collecting in religion. As with the other areas with large numbers of titles overall, PG7 has a lower collecting level proportionately. The lower level of funding can be seen in the collecting intensity for PG7.

In religion the proportion of English to non-English language titles is near 50/50 with English slightly more than non-English. As in the business and economics fields, the much lower numbers for PG4 and PG7 can be explained by the predominance of English language collecting in those two peer groups. PG4 with totals in the 5,000 titles range is within 90% of the number of English language titles in PG14. It is doubtful that either peer groups 4 or 7 are contributing many titles to PG14 that are not also owned by ARL libraries. One possibility for the difference in totals between PG1 and PG14 in religion is the number of smaller denominational colleges in PG14 which are probably contributing unique records to the database.

Using PG14 as a universe of publication shows that the academic library peer groups, even the ARL, are not collecting all of the titles in that universe. The ARL libraries by virtue of their larger size and budgets are in the range of 75-85% of the universe of PG14. The other two academic library peer groups appear to be within the same range of collecting intensity for English language publications. Those fields in which the publication universe is voluminous and

international, necessitating collecting in both English and foreign languages, the large and medium-sized academic libraries do not seem able to cope with the volume. Or the nature of the curricular and research interests in those institutions do not necessitate foreign language collecting. The research institutions “collect”, that is, rake in a larger proportion of materials, while the large and medium-size institutions must “select” more carefully to fit lower levels of funding.

While PG14 is comprised of 2,246 libraries, it is only a subset of the WorldCAT database which would form another possible universe of publication for comparison with the CACD data. The next section uses data extracted from WorldCAT to further explore the universe of publication.

OCLC WorldCAT as a Universe of Publication

The OCLC/AMIGOS CACD database is a subset of the OCLC WorldCAT union database. Data on monographic bibliographic records from WorldCAT were obtained from the OCLC Office of Research in January, 1999. Three datasets by NATC subject divisions and imprint decades were provided: one dataset contained overall totals; one contained totals for English language imprints and one for non-English language imprints. Table VI-2 displays the totals from the WorldCAT datasets according to the broad knowledge groupings utilized for the present study.

Table VI-2

WorldCAT Monographic Bibliographic Records

From Table VI-2 the growth in numbers of monographs from 1950 to the end of the 1990s can be

seen. The increase in the 1980s in overall totals from the 1970s was 3.7% for the humanities, 10.4% for the social sciences, and 16.5% for the sciences. Even though the 1990s had not ended when the data were extracted by imprint year decades, it is easy to see that the 1990s will have lower numbers of monographs than the 1980s. In the humanities, the total for the 1990s is 20% less than the total for the 1980s. Similarly, the social sciences are 21% lower in the 1990s and the sciences 23% lower. The social sciences have the largest gap in absolute number of titles, 206,702 less than the 1980s total. It is difficult to predict what the totals for the 1990s will be after allowing a few years for the majority of bibliographic records to be added to the WorldCAT database. Even if the 1990 totals were to increase by 20%, the overall totals for the 1990s would still be in the range of 5% lower than the totals for the 1980s. It would appear that the number of English language monographic records for most subject fields in WorldCAT will be lower for the 1990s than the 1980s and quite possibly lower than the totals for the 1970s.

Table VI-2 also displays totals from the WorldCAT dataset for non-English language titles. It is interesting that in the pre-1900 totals, the humanities have a larger number of non-English language bibliographic records than English language records. But the social sciences and sciences each have much lower totals in non-English than in English language titles, pre-1900. The humanities have a larger total in non-English than in English language records for all decades 1950-1998. The increase in humanities titles from the 1960s to the 1970s is 33%. From 1970s to 1980s the increase is 11% and from the 1980s through 1998, there is a 25% decrease. Again with an incomplete decade in the 1990s, it is difficult to draw any final conclusions. The difference between the decrease in English language records and non-English records in the 1990s is 5 percentage points, that is English decreased 20% and for non-English records the decrease is 25 percent.

In the social sciences the increase between the 1960s and the 1970s in non-English

language records is 62%, nearly twice the increase for the humanities. From the 1970s to the 1980s, the increase in non-English language records in the social sciences is 31%, more than double the humanities increase of 11%. But in the 1990s, the humanities and social sciences have almost the same rate of decrease, 25% for the humanities and 26% for the social sciences.

The sciences have the same rate of increase from the 1960s to 1970s in non-English language records as the social sciences, 62%. But the rate of increase in non-English language records slows dramatically in the sciences after the 1970s, only an 18.5% increase in the 1980s. The total for the 1990s plummets 46% in the sciences. These trends were seen in the CACD data analyzed in chapter III and IV. It must be borne in mind that WorldCAT contains bibliographic records contributed by libraries all over the world, whereas the CACD contains records from U.S. libraries exclusively. WorldCAT also contains records submitted by national libraries and pre-publication cataloging. The decreases in the number of non-English records in the 1990s would appear to be real in that libraries abroad could be contributing foreign language records and thus it would seem that cataloging lag would not be as large a factor in WorldCAT as in the CACD database of U.S. library bibliographic records.

A number of analyses can also be performed on more specific subject fields or classification divisions utilizing the WorldCAT datasets. Table VI-3 shows overall totals for selected LC subject ranges by imprint decades.

Table VI-3
WorldCAT Rate of Increase/Decrease by Decade for
Monographic Bibliographic Records

Beginning with the general & reference category, the Table VI-3 displays the increase/decreases

for the A and Z classifications. The A's show a decrease of 14,600 titles for the nine years 1990-1998 from the decade of the 1980s. The decline in A-AZ is 10% between the 1970s and the 1980s, but 20% in the 1990s. The difference is even larger for the Z's, less 31,890 titles, a decrease of 45% for the decade of the 1990s from the 1980s. Cataloging lag would probably make the decrease somewhat less, but the indications are that acquisition of bibliographies declined dramatically. In library science the decrease was 37%; in subject and personal bibliography the decrease was 58%. These data reflect the same accelerated decline in the 1990s shown for the general and reference category in the 1987-1995 CACD dataset.

In the humanities, for the religion classifications, BL-BX, there is a 33% increase in the 1970s, a 21% increase in the 1980s. The incomplete decade of the 1990s shows a 25% decrease. With collecting in this area being on an international scale, it can be assumed that the total for the 1990s will adjust upward, but it would seem that the total for the 1990s will not represent an increase in the number of records over the 1980s.

The arts (N-NZ) increase 53% from the 1960s through the 1970s, 21% in the 1980s, but decrease 26% in the 1990s. While the decline in religions, the arts and English literature are all in the 25% range, American literature (PS) only has a 5% decrease in the 1990s showing support for a very major subject in all universities. The number of titles in Germanic literatures begins to decrease in the 1980s by 9%, a considerable decline over the increase of 34% in the 1970s. Although the data are not for the complete decade in the 1990s, the decrease of 29% in Germanic literatures is an indication of a continued decline in the collecting of foreign language materials. While Spanish literature continued to increase in the 1980s by 9%, a much slower rate than the 25% increase in the 1970s, it also declines by over 20% in the 1990s.

The North American history classification (E) shows a considerable decrease in the 1980s of 16% with only a 4% decline in the 1990s. Given that the data for the 1990s are not complete,

it would appear that American history will not end up with a decrease, and may even increase slightly. As with American literature, this core subject appears to be sustained while other areas were not.

In English literature (PR) there is an increase of 16% in the 1980s and a decrease of 25% in the 1990s. American literature (PS) has a 26% increase in the 1980s and only a 5% decrease in the 1990s, whereas Germanic literatures (PT) declined 9% in the 1980s and nearly 30% in the 1990s. The differences in the rate of increase/decrease in these subjects indicate that collecting in major curricula and “close to home” subject areas continued to be supported in the 1990s. Both American history and American literature had slight increases in the 1990s even though the data are for an incomplete decade. The very large decreases in the English literature and Germanic literature classifications appear to indicate that non-U.S. oriented materials are continuing a decline in collecting.

The business and economics sections of the H classification (H-HJ) have almost 100% increase in the 1970s. The increase slows to 23% in the 1980s. But the totals for the 1990s show a 26% decrease. The other half of the H classification(HM-HZ) contains materials in sociology and those areas of societal problems in which there is a great deal of research. These subject areas grew at the same rate as the health sciences (R) in the 1970s at 135%. The 1980s show only a 5% increase in the sociology materials, decreasing by 23 percentage points in the 1990s. The sociology classifications have a much larger proportion of English language materials than the business and economics classifications which support area studies programs.

The field of education has an increase in total number of records in the 1980s over the 1970s of 6% which is a low rate of increase compared with the other subject areas in Table VI-3. The decrease in education in the 1990s is 28%, second only to Germanic literature in Table VI-3. The decrease is large enough to indicate that the total for the 1990s will be well below that of

the 1980s.

In the sciences, computer science, as gauged by QA75-76, had an explosive 240% increase in the 1970s and a 171% increase in the 1980s. The decrease is less than 1% in the 1990s which could result in a very slight increase when the majority of the records for 1990s imprints have appeared in the WorldCAT database. There does seem to have been a considerable slowdown in publication in the 1990s as compared with the 1980s in computer sciences. It is also possible that more applied publications were in other LC classifications.

As with computer science, the health sciences (R) show substantial growth in the 1970s of 135% and another nearly one-third increase in the 1980s. But with the decade of the 1990s, almost complete, the health sciences were showing a 13% decline by 1999. The total could possibly adjust upward so that the 1990s will have an overall total close to that of the 1980s in the health sciences, but it looks doubtful that there will be an increase in number of titles for the 1990s over the 1980s.

In the technology classification, the T's, the increase is 108% in the 1970s and 13% in the 1980s. There is a 31% decrease in the number of records in the 1990s over the 1980s. The declines in number of titles in the health sciences and technology here are in agreement with the CACD data in which the findings are that the number of monographs being acquired in the sciences has been declining since the last half of the 1980s.

In summary, data from WorldCAT reflect the same collecting patterns as found in the nine-year dataset from the CACD. The larger universe of publication represented by the WorldCAT totals by subject area seem to confirm that collecting of monographs was decreasing in all but major subjects and core curricula areas. The "close to home" for the U.S. subjects of American history and American literature were being sustained in the 1990s, as were professional fields such as business and economics. The collecting of computer science and

health sciences classifications were not decreasing at the rate of the social sciences and the humanities/arts. Those scholarly disciplines which are the most oriented toward the monograph as the primary vehicle for the dissemination of research do appear to be losing ground if the totals from the CACD and WorldCAT are accurately reflecting trends in monograph collecting. The overall picture is that of an increasing emphasis on professional and technological curricula and on those areas focused on dealing with the human condition -- social, family, health and urban problems. The present is taking precedence over the past and the short term over the long view.

There is another dataset which can be utilized to construct comparisons with the CACD and WorldCAT datasets and that is the North American Title Count.

North American Title Count

The North American Title Count is the only published data series for individual library collections by subject (LC and NLM classifications). All libraries with over one million volumes are invited to participate. The number of participating libraries is not large, but it is the only comparative time series data of its kind. The NATC methodology allows for counting all unique titles, combining monograph and serial titles, using manual and automated data gathering techniques, and converting Dewey to LC call number categories. For those institutions which have participated over the years, it provides collection profiles by subject and data on changes in collection proportions by subject. As described by Dannelly, the "National Shelflist Count is the earliest, and simplest, of the tools developed to provide objective, comparative information about subject collections at specific institutions."ⁱ

The origination of the National Shelflist Count Project dates to the shelflist counts performed by LeRoy Ortopan in the late 1960s at the University of Wisconsin-Madison library

and then in the early 1970s at the University of California Berkeley. In 1973, the Chief Collection Development Officers of Large Research Libraries Discussion Group of the Resources and Technical Services Division (now ALCTS) adopted the shelflist methodology as a means of gathering comparative data about the collections of the member libraries. The first publication of data was in 1973 as Titles Classified by the Library of Congress Classification: Seventeen University Librariesⁱⁱ The number of participating libraries grew to twenty-six in 1975 and twenty-seven in 1977.ⁱⁱⁱ

After 1977 libraries continued to perform the shelflist counts, but the data had become unwieldy. In 1985 a solution was found when the office of the ALA Resources and Technical Services Division agreed to take over the management of the project, with the Center for Library Research at the University of Illinois contracted to perform the data manipulation. Forty-eight libraries participated in the 1985 count.^{iv} In 1989 sixty libraries participated including the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, the National Agricultural Library and the Smithsonian.^v In 1989 the name was changed from “National Shelflist Count” to the “North American Title Count.”

Prior to 1989 the data gathering was manual through shelflist measurement. By 1993, 20 of the 57 institutions (51%) participating were using automated methods to gather the data. The number of participants has varied, but increased over the years making comparison of data between counts problematic. While the shelflist count is limited to the classified cataloged holdings of the libraries, the data do represent the bulk of the collections. A more complete account of the history and methodology is in the “Introduction” to the 1993 published tables.^{vi} The 1993 count was the last to be published in print format. Beginning in 1997 the count is available only in electronic format. Fifty-five libraries participated in the 1997 count.

The NATC CD-ROM product displays the data in tables with each table the equivalent to

one page in the older print format. The data are organized according to three hierarchies or levels of subject specificity. The first table, entitled A-Z: North American Title Count Totals, summarizes the grand totals from the number of titles reported by each participating institution. There are 23 tables which display the “summed main class ranges,” that is, each table is an LC classification division by primary alphabetic letter. Again, each institution’s total for that category is shown. The third and most detailed subject breakdown is a table for each of 583 LC classification ranges.

Within each subject breakdown a number of different data elements are displayed. The percentage change from the previous count is calculated for the most recent count. Another calculation shows the percentage by subject that each library collection comprises of the national collection as composed by the NATC. The percentage of each institution’s holdings which fall into the same subject category is also given. From these proportionate calculations an institution can see its standing with respect to the group and to the Library of Congress.

The data from the NATC have been employed mainly in the local context by libraries for use in collection assessments, accreditation reports, and budget requests. The data have not been utilized in a national research context and the number of participating libraries is not sufficient to represent the “national collection.” Although users are cautioned against regarding the totals as reflecting the “universe of titles” for a given subject category, the NATC counts are the only available data by subject and are sufficient to use as comparative data for the purposes of the present study.

Table VI-4

North American Title Count

Subjects as Percent of Total

Table V-4 displays the percentage of total for the major divisions of General/Reference,

Humanities and Arts, Social Sciences, and Science and Technology calculated using the same LC divisions as in the present study. As was found in the data analysis in chapter III and the WorldCAT data in this chapter, there is a pronounced decline in collecting in the general/reference category. From a 4% share in 1985, it sinks to a 2.29% share in 1997 in the NATC data. The humanities and arts maintain almost the exact percentage of share for the first three intervals, gaining by nearly one percentage point from 1993 to 1997. The social sciences also remain constant for the first three intervals and then gain 1.4 percentage points in 1997. The gains in the humanities and social sciences came at the expense of general and reference and the sciences which lose in percentage share from 1985 to 1997. When it is considered that these figures represent entire collections, the shifts are quite dramatic. They do show that there have been shifts in collecting patterns since the mid-1980s.

Table VI-5

North American Title Count Comparison with OCLC/AMIGOS CACD Data

It must be remembered that the NATC data are measurements by LC divisions for the total number of titles owned by the participating libraries while the CACD data are for number of titles for one imprint year. Table VI-5 displays the NATC percent of collection figures from Table VI-4 with the CACD annual percentages for 1989 and 1993. If we compare the percentage shares for both datasets in the same imprint years, 1989 and 1993, we can see the difference between current collecting (CACD) and total collections (NATC). The NATC are for all titles in the collection by subject whereas the CACD database contains monographic records for ten imprint years only. The differences in the percentages of total may indicate current collecting trends as opposed to the total collections which include the “weight of the past.” It can be seen

that there is a close match between the NATC total collection figures and the CACD data by imprint year. The percentage of share for the general and reference area is much lower in the CACD data than in the NATC data. The humanities have the same percentage of share in both. The social sciences have a larger share by nearly 4 percentage points in the CACD data. The sciences have a lower percentage share by almost one percentage point in the CACD data. The social sciences also seem to be gaining over time. Both the sciences and the general/reference areas are declining in percentage share of total collections.

Thus it appears from this analysis that collecting patterns have been shifting from the mid-1980s. The patterns found in the CACD 9-year dataset will presumably begin showing up in the NATC data as the shifts continue.

There remains one other category of data which can be utilized as a “universe of publication” and that is annual academic vendor approval plan data by subject.

Book Publication Output and Approval Plan Comparison

Increasing “collection convergence” or the homogenization of collections means that more and more, academic libraries are purchasing the same core of titles with fewer unique titles adding to the diversity of resources. If there is a trend toward fewer unique titles, approval plans have often been mentioned as a factor in this trend.^{vii} While the OCLC and NATC datasets show total numbers of titles for a universe of publication, the only possibility for establishing a universe of publication for comparison on an annual imprint basis is approval plan data. The *Bowker Annual* contains a table of aggregated approval plan data from the major academic book vendors entitled “North American Academic Books: Average Prices and Price Indexes.” In the 1990s, that table shows totals by broad LC division and average prices for a three-year-time-span with 1989 as the baseline. The definition of monographs to be used for inclusion in the totals by

imprint year from the approval plan data was changed in 1994, so that the totals for that year and subsequent years do not correspond closely to those pre-1994. Table IV-6 shows the totals by peer group for English language monographs with the Bowker approval plan totals.

It has been reported that as of 1996, *Choice* had an inflow of 22,500 titles a year from U.S. publishers to review. This total represented at that time nearly half of the annual U.S. book output.^{viii} There are approximately 100,000 books published in English per year of which 30,000-40,000 account for 80% of the total revenue.^{ix} Approval plan vendor annual reports give totals of from 30,000 to 100,000 books treated on approval. *Choice* contains reviews for approximately 6,000 titles a year. The annual total for English language monographs from the CACD data by academic library peer group can be compared with these approval plan data for English language of titles as an annual universe of publication.

Table VI-6

Total English Language Titles by Peer Group
Compared with *Bowker Annual* Academic Titles

It can easily be seen from Table VI-6 that the number of English language titles in the CACD exceed the number of titles from the *Bowker Annual* approval plan totals. This could be due to international publication in English, regional titles not reported as part of the mainstream, and translations which are not reflected in the Bowker totals. The number of titles from the *Bowker Annual* do come close to the approximation of 100,000 new English language titles a year. The number of titles for peer group 1, the ARL libraries, is in the 95% range of the approval plan totals for most years. The two non-ARL peer groups, however, show considerable difference from the approval plan totals, in the range of 68-73%. The totals for those two peer

groups, however, do not differ from each other more than 5,000 titles in any one year. Thus, the ARL libraries are collectively acquiring very close to 100% of the number of titles published in English annually, but the two non-ARL peer groups collectively are not acquiring more than 75% of that same universe. The size range in the non-ARL libraries varies considerably from 300,000 volumes to one million volumes but, on an aggregated basis, the non-ARL libraries are acquiring very close to the same number of English language monographs annually.

Previous research by this author compared the number of titles per year using data extracted from the 1996 edition of the CACD with numbers taken from the same imprint year by subject for titles treated on approval.^x It was found that for certain fields, mainly in the sciences, the number of titles in the CACD corresponded closely to the number of titles treated on approval for the same imprint year. For computer science, mathematics, and health sciences, the pattern of acquisitions for the same four peer groups as utilized in this study, were very similar. As seen in the data analyzed in chapters III and Table VI-1, in all four peer groups, the proportions by subject for English language imprints are very similar. The absolute numbers are in direct proportion to the size of the institutions, that is, overall funding dictates acquisitions volume or overall size of collections. But the proportions by subject would appear to be determined by factors not related to funding. The absolute numbers are proportionate to the total number of titles for the peer groups, but the proportions for each imprint year are nearly identical. And although the average price per book varies considerably by subject field, it would not seem to be as strong an influence as the volume of publication by field. The variable of universe of publication seems to set the proportions among fields. As seen in Table VI-1 by selected subject fields, the non-ARL libraries appear to be collecting a high proportion of the universe of publication as represented by PG14.

Table VI-7

Acquisition of English Language Imprints

Those subject groupings which most directly correspond in both the *Bowker Annual* and the CACD study data are shown in Table VI-7. Since the approval plans supply English language materials, the approval plan totals are compared with the data on English language titles from the CACD. In the subject areas with the largest universe of publication, the CACD database actually has more titles than those which were selected for the approval plans. The only areas in which the CACD has significantly fewer titles are in medicine, political science, sociology, mathematics and computer science. Both anthropology and psychology have fewer titles in the CACD, but the totals from both datasets are very close in those subjects. If the CACD database is considered to be a universe of publication, it is surpassing the universe set by the approval plans for academic library purchases. The next table uses these same approval plan data for comparison with the totals in three subject areas for the academic library peer groups.

Table VI-8

Academic Approval Plan Data Comparison English Language Titles

Approval plan data for numbers of titles treated are shown in Table VI-8, along with the numbers of titles in the peer groups for the same imprint years. The three fields of education (L), business and economics (H) and health sciences (R) can be compared with the CACD data for the English language totals for those subjects. The data for the peer groups are the same as in Table VI-1. The patterns in the approval plan totals by year are similar to those of the collecting patterns in

A

the four peer groups in that the number of titles is fairly consistent across the time span. In the approval plan data in all three subject fields, there is an increase in the number of titles in the last year, 1994, whereas the number of titles decreases in 1994 in the peer group data.

In all three subject areas, the two non-ARL library peer groups have totals which correspond to the approval plan totals. The closest match is in the health sciences in which PG4, PG7 and the approval plan figures all have a difference of less than 1,000 titles. In fact, PG7 is within just a few hundred titles of being exactly the same as the approval plan totals. It would seem that the predominantly English language nature of the universe in the health sciences and the basic nature of the majority of the publications for training in the health sciences, the non-ARL libraries are acquiring the same set of titles. Even the ARL libraries average only 1,000 to 1,500 titles difference from the approval plan totals. PG14 has on the average about 40% more titles each year than the approval plan totals. Again, this could be due to separate health sciences libraries in PG14 which are not combined with the academic library peer groups. Given the prominence of the health sciences in the curricula of many universities, it appears from the approval plan data that the academic libraries are acquiring a large proportion of the universe of English language monographic publication in the health sciences.

The approval plan data show what would seem to be a very selective number of titles in education compared with the totals for English language monographs in the four peer groups. In education, there appears to be a universe of materials outside of the academic titles supplied by approval plans. This was seen in the much larger number of titles in PG14 than in the three academic library peer groups. All three peer groups of academic libraries, then, appear to be acquiring beyond a tightly selected core of titles in education. It is possible that the numbers in education are swelled by the addition of textbooks which would receive limited treatment in the approval plans.

In business and economics the totals for the peer groups are much higher than the approval plan totals. Again PG14 has the same patterns. The lower totals for the approval plan data reflect the selectivity of the book vendors in selecting from the universe of publication. As with history, there could be numbers of local, state, and municipal publications which would not be distributed through national approval plans. As these would be acquired at the local level they could also contribute to the ranks of unique titles. And again, there is a large amount of textbook publication in the business fields which could contribute to the higher numbers. It is also possible that a larger proportion of international English language publications are present in the ARL group and PG14 than are being supplied through approval plans.

The pattern of the approval plan data is almost identical to the patterns for the peer groups of libraries. Approval plan data, data on publication by subject field from the Bowker annual, and the subject data by imprint year from the 1997 CACD all demonstrate the same pattern. The most likely influence in these patterns is the universe of publication by field. Obviously, monographs can only be acquired in the numbers in which they are published. Even though an academic department would seem to merit a large acquisitions budget because of size of enrollment and curricular emphases or research, only those subject fields in which the universe of monographic publication is extremely large necessitate discriminating selection. In those fields in which the universe is relatively easy to cover, it matters less that the budget allocation is not large because it covers a larger proportion of the universe of publication. This does not factor in the purchase of retrospective materials, another acquisitions priority in many humanities and historical fields. Nor does it take into consideration non-printed resources and serials.

This analysis of approval plan data with the aggregated academic peer group data would seem to reinforce the view that academic library collections are contracting to a core of English language titles which could be obtained through vendor approval plans. This is seen, especially

in peer groups 4 and 7 which consistently have similar collecting levels which correspond to approval plan totals. But these data just reveal aggregated collecting patterns. The similar totals could still represent different titles. Further examination of approval plan data may contribute to a greater understanding of the role of approval plans in the shaping of academic library collections.

Wagner studied the titles purchased through Academic Book Center compared to the titles profiled for the approval plans. The areas with the highest sales were political sciences (all the J's) with 97% of profiled titles purchased and education (all the L's) with 91% purchased. A further more specific list of subjects in which over 90% of the titles profiled were purchased included Buddhism, anthropology, general social science, social history, urban studies and race relations, public administration, U.S. political science, educational theory, general visual arts, philology and linguistics, Germanic literature (in English), astronomy, chemistry, and zoology.^{xi}

The LC classes P-PZ, H-HZ and Q -QZ account for more than half of all new academic monographs. These LC classes contain the subjects which are most collected according to Wagner's approval plan study.

Contrasted to the categories with the highest acquisitions percentages, the unsold titles in descending order of "unsoldness," were in computer science, business, law, fiction, home economics, military and naval science, and library science.

Wagner continued to explore the idea of whether or not approval plans were fostering more homogeneous collecting and constructed a table to analyze how many of the titles purchased on approval were bought by only one library, two libraries, etc. Approximately 20% of the titles profiled were not billed to any customer libraries. One third of all approval titles sold went to either one or two libraries. And the one or two libraries were not the same libraries every time; they varied from title to title.^{xii} While 97% of university press output is purchased, 37%

of trade publishers' output was not purchased by even one library. Wagner concludes:

The myth that Approval plans cause library collections to become more and more homogeneous is just that : a myth...If libraries do purchase the same books, it isn't because Approval plans are forcing them to do so. Approval plan vendors would dearly love it if every Approval customer bought a copy of every book. But they don't.

Wagner observes that the findings are not surprising in that approval plans are tailored to individual libraries, and that librarians use a variety of sources to identify titles to purchase including more than one book vendor, review tools and "best" lists. If the sales for all approval plan vendors were correlated in one database, undoubtedly the number of single copy sales would be lower and multiple copy sales higher. Wagner maintains that approval plans alone do not cause libraries to buy the same titles. Her studies show that "approval plans are not best-seller lists, although vendors may wish that they were."^{xiii}

A study of the source of acquisitions in the Triangle Research Libraries in North Carolina had findings similar to those of Wagner. In four subject areas, approval plan shipments for the three libraries showed only a 14% overlap. Of 525 titles only 140 were shipped to all three libraries. The highest degree of overlap was in the PN literature classification in which 50% of the titles were shipped to only one library. But when all sources of acquisitions were added together, the titles held by all three libraries rose to 64%. QD, chemistry, showed the lowest amount of overlap, with 41% of the titles in all 3 libraries. The researchers point out that the "opinion held by some librarians, that is, that approval plans homogenize library collections," is not borne out by the study. "In the case of the TRLN libraries, the relative uniqueness resulting from approval plan shipments in fact was largely erased by discretionary purchases."^{xiv}

After the formation of OhioLINK, several studies were conducted to provide data for coordinated cooperative collection development planning. The percent of items held by number

of libraries in OHIO LINK was tracked between 1996 and 1999. For all four years, the percent of items with only one library location decreased slightly from 57.1% in 1996 to 55.9% in 1999 as more libraries joined the network. The number of items owned by 5 or more libraries increased by more than three percentage points from 11.1% in 1996 to 14.3% in 1999. This is still a very low percentage of overlap. During the four years, more libraries contributed their holdings to the database, thus accounting for most of the decrease in unique items. The Database Management and Standards Committee of OhioLINK estimated that 5% of records were duplicates and not unique. This puts the rate of unique titles at approximately 50% which is still a relatively high proportion of unique titles. The higher level of uniqueness within OhioLINK would undoubtedly become lower when those libraries are subsumed within the larger number of libraries in the CACD database. Findings from the CACD study are that uniqueness is in the 23-33% range depending upon the peer group.

Other studies of approval plan acquisitions were conducted by OhioLINK. Circulation studies and interlibrary loan requests through OhioLINK revealed that for 10% of requests, no copy was available within OhioLINK. But for 30% of requests there were 5 copies or more held within the consortium. The growth in the number of copies on recent publications was attributed to the homogeneity of approval plans. It was decided that OhioLINK would attempt to improve resource sharing through a consortium approval plan.^{xv} The approval plan goal is to purchase consortially at least 70% of the English language books distributed in the United States. Ideally, the goal would be met by the consortium but would not be possible for any single library alone. By engaging in a joint development agenda with the vendor, the expectation was “to develop a system which will result in reducing the level of current duplication within the consortium and to also collect that material not currently being made available.” (No cite here because this is in a forthcoming Collection management issue which should be out soon.)

The studies by consortia provide some evidence to indicate that the selections and collecting of academic libraries are not governed solely by approval plans. The TRLN study found that holdings became less diversified after staff selections were added to titles supplied through approval plans. The OhioLINK studies found about the same percentage overlap as the TRLN study, although the sources for obtaining the acquisitions were not tracked. These studies are in agreement with vendor studies. While the approval plan data can be used to represent a universe of academic publication in English, there is evidence to support the assertion that approval plans are not a factor in “collection convergence.”

In ARL approval plan surveys, 85% of the libraries reported having approval plans in 1982, 94% in 1988, and 93% in 1996. One focus of the 1996 study was to determine if the use of approval plans for foreign or specialized material had decreased during the fiscal turmoil of the 1985-1995 time period. This did not seem to be the case as 55% of libraries reported higher spending on both foreign and domestic plans in 1996. Of a reported 847 approval plans, 76% were for foreign materials. Of those plans, 378 were for specialized formats and subjects. Comments in the survey indicate that many libraries tried to protect their approval plans in the face of funding shortfall and, in fact, used the plans to make their funding stretch further.^{xvi}

Data from foreign approval plans can be used to represent similarly a universe of publication for foreign language materials. The next section examines the universe of publication for German language materials.

Foreign Language Collecting

It is more difficult to compare the totals by imprint year from the CACD with a universe of publication for foreign languages. The language grouping with the largest totals by imprint year for the 1987-1995 time span is German. The *Bowker Annual* does include totals by subject for German language monographs supplied by Harrasowitz, the major vendor for German

language publications. Using the 1997 OCLC/AMIGOS dataset and book production or approval plan figures an approximation of the percentage of coverage for German language materials can be arrived at.

Table VI-9
Comparison of German Language Approval Plan Totals
With CACD German Imprint Totals

The subjects which have the largest number of titles in the CACD database are the literature and language areas, history, philosophy and religion, and business and economics. In 1989 the totals from both the approval plan and the CACD in the literature and language category are very close together. Moving forward toward the present, the gap between the two datasets widens with the CACD reporting an almost static number of titles across the time span. But the German language titles reported in the *Bowker Annual* increase each year until 1994, at which point the CACD actually has more titles. In 1995, there is a slight decrease in the number of CACD titles, but the approval plan totals increase from the previous year. If the approval plan totals are taken as the universe of German language imprints, for that language grouping the number of titles owned by the libraries in the CACD database in literature and languages cover from 78-94% of that universe. In philosophy and religion, the CACD totals actually exceed the number of approval plan titles for German language monographs in those subjects. The only other fields in which the CACD libraries have a considerable number of titles is business and economics. In those fields, also, the CACD totals exceed the approval plan numbers. The CACD totals also exceed the approval plan numbers in the smaller field of anthropology.

In education, psychology, engineering and technology the number of approval plan titles and the totals from the CACD are relatively close. The subject fields in which the CACD totals are much lower than the approval plan numbers are social science and scientific fields in which foreign language materials are not in demand – political science, mathematics and computer science, medicine, geography, and sociology. The totals from the CACD for sociology are 54%-61% of the numbers for the approval plan.

From this comparison of numbers of German language monographs by imprint year, it appears that in those disciplines in which foreign language materials are important, the research libraries are acquiring a significant portion of the universe of publication deemed suitable for academic libraries. The patterns match those found in the analysis of the nine years of acquisitions from the 1997 CACD. The collecting of foreign language material is only extensive in the humanities and social sciences in which those materials are integral to the study of the disciplines.

For German language imprints, the ARL libraries have approximately 14,000-15,000 titles per year. From approval plan figures for German academic books, the number of books judged suitable for academic libraries hovered around 22,000.^{xvii} The ARL libraries collectively acquired approximately 68% of the German academic books. This percentage would seem to be a respectable rate of coverage, although not insuring at least one copy of every German academic book in some U.S. library.

There is one non- U.S. study which pursued the question of the coverage of books by language. The National Library of the Netherlands sponsored a study to assess the current state of collection development in the Netherlands. The research project aimed to assess the coverage of the aggregate collection of Dutch libraries. The collections of foreign publications of an academic nature published in the 1990s in some 20 subject areas were compared with the

collections of several authoritative German libraries. For German language publications, on the average, the coverage in Dutch libraries was around 50% with some disciplines in the humanities even lower. After subject specialists examined the lists of German publications not held by any Dutch library, those eliminated as not necessary raised the coverage to 70% which was still considered to be low. The same study found that the German libraries were adequately covering German language publications. The researcher makes the point that probably neither the Dutch nor German libraries are adequately covering major U.S. publications.^{xviii}

From the two studies, the present CACD study and the Netherlands research, it seems that both the U.S. and the Netherlands research libraries are covering about 70%, the same percentage of German language materials considered suitable for academic libraries.

Data are not as readily available for other language groupings. Similar comparisons for other language groupings might find the collecting intensity for other languages, which are lower by the CACD findings, covering a smaller portion of the universe.

The universe of publication does seem to be the major influence in the volume of acquisitions by subject in that the proportion by subject in each peer group closely follows the volume by subject of the universe of publication. Another kind of analysis of the data compares the acquisitions of the four peer groups, not to a universe of publication, but to selective or “best” lists. The next section examines selection patterns according to highly selective “best” lists.

“Best” Lists

While not a universe of publication, the prevalence of titles in a group of library acquisitions from “best lists” can be another way of exploring selection patterns. Wagner mentions that her findings indicate that approval plans do not seem to function as “best lists.” There have been a number of studies which have attempted to ascertain the influence of “best

lists” and review tools such as *Choice* in the formation of core collections

Although not a study of academic library collections in the aggregate, a survey by Sweetland and Christensen of selection practices for language and literature collections in 33 Wisconsin academic libraries used OCLC data to ascertain the number of holding libraries for *Choice* titles.^{xix} The researchers used *Choice* 1993 “Outstanding” titles in languages and literature. The list was published in January 1993. The data were extracted from the OCLC Online Catalog in March, 1995, two years later. Findings were that, on the average, about 10 libraries held each title with the range being from 4 to 23 libraries per title. The authors observe, “...considering that these titles are supposedly the most outstanding of all those recommended by *Choice* for four-year college libraries, the small number of holdings is curious, to say the least.” Part of the problem is that from the study data it appeared that “a substantial number of libraries did not add books to their collection until sometime in 1994 (or very late in 1993).”^{xx} The researchers give as a possible explanation for the delay in adding material the almost total reliance upon faculty recommendations, with faculty using scholarly reviews to identify new titles. The researchers conclude that “faculty still control selection in most [college] libraries;” “the libraries in the study still consider current, immediate needs, and rarely consider other library holdings in selecting material to purchase;” “even though libraries feel they are buying current material, their definition of ‘current’ means within the last couple of years;” and “respondents are currently buying very little outside the English language.”^{xxi}

Budd and Craven^{xxii} investigated the holdings for four peer groups of academic libraries for the intervals 1984/85, 1990, and 1995. Data were extracted from two editions of the OCLC/AMIGOS CACD. The researchers took a purposive sample of titles from the *Choice* “Outstanding Academic Books” lists for those years. Titles were chosen for major academic disciplines representing the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Means for the holdings by

peer group correspond closely to data in the present study. The same pattern of means by group were found in that the ARL libraries (PG1) had the highest mean holdings and the means decrease according to library size. The peer group of the smallest libraries has the lowest mean for all three knowledge groupings. Overall, the ARL libraries held between 68-89% of the *Choice* titles, except for the last interval in which means were much lower. As was found in the present study, the subjects of English and American literature, North American history and sociology were sustained in collecting with high means. The science areas of biology and chemistry had lower means in all peer groups in the middle and last intervals. Findings demonstrated that “across all subjects and for broad subject areas, there have been significant declines in holdings over time and for all groupings of libraries.”^{xxiii} The findings of Budd and Craven are in agreement with the findings of Sweetland and Christensen. In both studies of library holdings of *Choice* “Outstanding Books” titles, the results are that medium to smaller sized academic libraries are not buying those titles at the same level as the large research libraries. It appears that libraries are, at least in some subject areas, acquiring fewer titles that are judged to be of high quality.^{xxiv}

In light of the findings from studies which analyzed the holdings of libraries for the prevalence, or lack thereof, of *Choice* outstanding titles, it might be interesting to look at the titles which emerge as the most widely held from the CACD database. As with the analysis for universe of publication utilizing Peer Group 14 as a comparison universe, the CACD can be utilized to construct “Top Ten Lists” by number of holding libraries. It can be seen from the following analysis of the top holding titles from the 1996 edition of the CACD that the most widely owned titles form somewhat unpredictable “best” lists.

The CACD Top Ten Lists

The Top Ten each year are the ten titles with the highest number of library location symbols. Table VI-10 utilizes data extracted from the 1996 CACD, and thus is from a different dataset than the nine years of data used for the analyses in chapters III and IV. The Top Ten lists were constructed for four imprint years within the same time period as the present study. The entire lists for each year are not printed in the text in this study, but commentary is provided on selected titles.

Table VI-10
The 1996 CACD Top Ten Lists^{xxv}

	No. of lib.	Mean number of holding libraries for the 10 Titles			
		1986	1989	1992	1995
Peer Group 14	2,497	1,508 (60%)	1,443 (58%)	1,409 (56%)	1,288 (52%)
Peer Group 1	87	71 (82%)		76 (87%)	80 (92%) 76 (87%)
Peer Group 4	120	109 (91%)		98 (82%)	101 (84%) 97 (81%)
Peer Group 7	226	200 (88%)	156 (69%)	179 (79%)	163 (72%)

The number of libraries in each peer group in the 1996 CACD are shown along with the mean number of libraries owning the top ten titles and the percentage that mean represents of the peer group for each of the four years. As of 1996, the year in which the database was constructed, not all libraries in the peer groups owned the top ten titles. The means do fluctuate, although the ranges within peer groups and years are fairly narrow. The means are lower in all peer groups for the last year in the database which was 1995. While it would seem that cataloging lag would not be operative for popular or essential, mainstream titles, it is one explanation for the number of holding libraries for the Top Ten List being lower in the last imprint year. Sweetland and

Christensen found “selection lag” in their study of the *Choice* best lists. The other possible explanation is, of course, that acquisitions were actually lower in 1995.

It is interesting to take a look at specific titles to get an idea what constitutes a “best seller” for the academic library peer groups. Keeping in mind that libraries of all types are included in the CACD, what are a few of the titles which had the largest number of holding libraries? For 1986 the number one title was the ALA published *Guide to Reference Books*, with 1,674 library locations. For peer groups 1 and 7, the number one title was an Oxford University Press book, *The Life of Langston Hughes*. For PG4 it was *The Triumph of Politics: How the Reagan Revolution Failed* by David Stockman.

In 1989 the best seller was *The New York Public Library Desk Reference*. The top vote getter in all three academic library peer groups was *Citizens: a Chronicle of the French Revolution*, by Simon Schama, published by Knopf. In 1992, the best seller was *Forge of Union, Anvil of Liberty: a Correspondent's Report* by Jeffrey St. John. In PG1, the most locations belong to *Truman*, by David McCullough, published by Simon and Schuster. The tenth ranked book, *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, was owned by the most libraries in both PG4 and PG7.

In 1995, the *MLA Handbook for Writers* had the most locations and was first in both PG4 and PG7. The ARL had the most locations for *Rabbit at Rest* by John Updike.

That a number of reference works and style guides had the most location symbols in several years is not surprising. But in all of the years in Table VI-10, the ARL libraries do not have the same number one as PG14 and the other academic library peer groups. And in three of the five years, the ARL number one was not even a university press book.

A few other observations from looking at the Top Ten for each year from 1986-1995 are that the majority of the works are suitable for academic library collections but they are also suitable for public libraries. There are not many which are strictly in the popular realm. The

only book in 1986 which seems strange for the Top Ten List is in the number 4 spot – *The Star and the Laurel: the Centennial History of Daimler, Mercedes, and Benz*, published by Mercedes Benz of North America. A gift, perhaps?

There are several years with no books on the list in the “P” language and literature classifications at all. For those years in which there is one, the titles include a children’s book (*A Red Riding Hood Story From China*), two dictionaries, and *The Columbia Literary History of the United States*. In the ten years of lists, only Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and John Updike represent literature.

There are not many titles on the lists about which an educated person would not have some familiarity. It is surprising that in all ten years there are only nine works out of the total of 100 that were published by university presses. Oxford University Press has five of them with Columbia (2), Chicago, and Harvard rounding out the lot. But then this may show that the university presses are indeed publishing works not aimed at popularity contests.

The categories of history, education, sociology, and medicine have the largest numbers of Top Ten titles. Other than historical subjects, current societal topics seem to have the largest representation. In fact, one of the most unusual aspects of the Top Ten Lists is that there are no titles in which every library in a peer group owned a copy. Libraries could have added a copy of any of the books at any time up until the database was constructed in 1996. The ARL, with the lowest number of libraries, does come close to 100% with the mean being 80 libraries out of 87 (92%) in 1992. The only other instance of over 91% is in PG4 in 1986, meaning that over 90% of the libraries in that peer group, on the average, owned all ten titles.

Also interesting is the fact that very popular, New York Times fiction, self-help, etc., bestsellers do not appear in the CACD Top Ten Lists. The academic nature of the majority of the 2,646 libraries in the CACD database is reflected in the titles in the lists. Reference books are

more apt to be “popular” acquisitions as well as those focused on societal problems. It is naturally easier for the peer groups with smaller numbers of libraries to achieve consensus on the top ten titles than for the aggregated database of the CACD, the peer group 14 libraries, to be in agreement. All three academic library peer groups have similar holdings percentages. The same titles are widely owned, but just not in the same order of preference. There is a very small number of titles showing low ownership in one peer group and high ownership in the others.

Selectors may be saying about best lists and approval plan offerings: “These may be high quality books, but they are not a fit for my clientele and my institution.” Thus the narrow scholarly topics of university press books may not be the foremost selections in smaller universities, and selection is locally focused beyond the approval plan which brings in obvious selections. As the studies for one vendor by Wagner show, libraries do not seem to be buying the same titles on approval, nor do they seem to be buying according to recommended “Best” lists, according to a number of studies.

The universe of publication and the amount of funding have emerged as the two dominant factors in library acquisitions. A third factor which seems to have greater influence in the medium to smaller sized institutions is that of faculty recommendations. Several studies have shown that, in many institutions, titles are only purchased if a faculty member recommends them.

All of the collection management theory of the last 30 years does not seem to have impressed upon most selectors that they are accountable for acquisitions and that it is their job to develop the collection. It seems incongruous that librarians who are so pressed for time will eschew the labor-saving of approval plans which can automatically supply obvious selections rather than wait for faculty to possibly recommend the same books two or three years after publication. Can it be that the demand and use patterns in these institutions are for the most part, for professional, textbooks, and non-academic titles? This is a question that needs further exploration. With the

increasing emphasis on degrees which qualify graduates for identifiable professions or job markets linked to the degree, perhaps none but the largest and most research oriented of academic institutions can justify buying a collection of scholarly academic and research monographs.

Summary

Establishing the universe of publication for printed monographs has been difficult for collection development librarians. “Whatever the format, libraries have historically selected items from a discrete and finite universe of professionally edited and published materials.”^{xxvi} Now with electronic materials the universe is no longer finite, and we have no idea how large it is or what discrete items it contains. “This has led from a situation in which librarians could comfortably be aware of all appropriate items published in their subject area each year to one in which we are certain that we are no longer covering the territory.”^{xxvii}

The reduced purchasing power if not actual funding reductions resulted in a “living for the moment,” attitude in collection building. Access not ownership and decreased purchasing power combined to confine purchasing to a few years after publication. Acquisitions began to contract into a shorter and more current time span.

“With an inadequate budget, devoted mostly to immediate course needs and responding primarily to existing faculty requests, the typical academic library is not necessarily building a strong collection representative of current publishing. And, with no money for retrospective buying, there is little chance that the library will catch up in the future.”^{xxviii}

In terms of resources sharing, “selection lag” and cataloging lag are significant barriers to speedy access. It appears that the percentage coverage of the monographic universe of publication will not ever reach 100% even through cooperative collective endeavors. It is

obvious that resource sharing is necessary from the findings of this study.

So isn't it a "good" to have a large proportion of unique titles? Yes, because that makes available a larger universe of materials. The downside of a high proportion of unique titles is that there is the possibility that there are titles which are not owned by any library. Approval vendors admit that only 20-30% of the titles they profile are purchased. The low mean number of holding libraries in all but core, mainstream materials and even in those materials, means that the safety net is very thin. The findings and analyses in this study have led to a number of questions with regard to the selection and acquisition of monographic resources for academic and research libraries. These questions are posed in the next section.

Recommendations for Further Research

The aggregated nature of the data in this study and the short time period analyzed do not allow the exploration of a number of questions which arise from the findings. These questions are suggested for further research.

- Retrospective collecting -- Findings from this study suggest that in the 1990s acquisitions contracted into a shorter period of publication with "current" being the last few years. The logical assumption in this finding is that retrospective purchasing had diminished in volume even in the disciplines in which retrospective materials are most important, history and the humanities/arts. The issue of retrospective purchasing needs further research to ascertain if it has indeed diminished, a large impact on long-term research in those disciplines.
- Currency of collections – While academic and research collections still need to build collections for future research, the sciences, technology, and many data intensive social

science fields need current and not outdated resources. The boom times of the 1960s and 1970s in academic library collection building have resulted in large numbers of monographic resources which are now dangerously outdated. With reduced purchasing power in the 1990s many medium-sized to smaller academic libraries may be circulating materials which should be withdrawn. More research is needed on the age of scientific, technological, and professional materials in all types of library collections.

- Selection decisions – Research heretofore has not contributed to a feeling of confidence that academic librarians are able to maximize the available funding for their library collections. If focused more on usage, are the right materials being purchased? More research needs to be done on the selection decision process. Perhaps more professional education in collection management would be one solution here.
- Differences among collections – The aggregated nature of the data in this study is more suited to finding similarities within peer groups rather than differences among library collections. While the findings of this study provide indications, a large part of the picture cannot be provided by aggregated data. Regional consortia are conducting studies which are helping to show similarities and differences in collections. These studies can flesh out the profiles provided in this study and provide data on collection dispersion or convergence. More research is needed on differences in academic library collections.
- Resource sharing data -- Consortia and the bibliographic utilities are sources of data for resource sharing studies. These studies can indicate whether selection in the aggregate is providing those titles that users are seeking. More research needs to target resource sharing to assess the efficacy of access as a substitute for ownership.

The implications of the finding of the study for resources sharing are considered in the

next chapter.

Notes for Chapter VI

-
- i. Gay N. Dannelly, "The National Shelflist Count: A Tool for Collection Management," Library Acquisitions Practice & Theory 13 (1989): 243.
 - ii. Titles Classified by the Library of Congress Classification: Seventeen University Libraries, prelim ed. (Berkeley: General Library, University of California, 1973).
 - iii. Joseph J. Branin, David Farrell, and Mariann Triblin, "The National Shelflist Count Project: Its History, Limitations, and Usefulness," Library Resources and Technical Services 29 (October-December 1985): 333-342.
 - iv. Titles Classified by the Library of Congress Classification: National Shelflist Count, 1985 ed. (Chicago: Resources and Technical Services Division, American Library Association, 1986).
 - v. National Shelflist Count: Titles Classified by Library of Congress and National Library of Medicine Classifications, 1989 ed. (Chicago: Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, American Library Association, 1990).
 - vi. National Title Count 1993 (Chicago: Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, 1995).
 - vii. Brian Quinn, "The McDonaldization of Academic Libraries?" *College & Research Libraries* 61(May 2000): 248-261.
 - viii. Irving R. Rockwood, "Inside *Choice*," *Against the Grain* 9 (April 1997): 57.
 - ix. Andrew Richard Albanese, "The E-Book Enterprise: netLibrary's Digital Mission," *Library Journal* 125 (February 15, 2000): 128.
 - x. Perrault, "National Collecting Trends," 59-65.
 - xi. Celia Scher Wagner, "Academic Book Trends – The Books Libraries Don't Buy," *Against the Grain* 10 (September 1998): 63.
 - xii. Celia Scher Wagner, "Academic Book Trends: Approval Plans and Library Collections: Do They All Look Alike?" *Against the Grain* 10 (November 1998): 73, 76.

xiii. Ibid.

xiv. Armstrong, Kim and Bob Nardini, "Making the Common Uncommon? Examining Consortial Approval Plan Cooperation," Haworth press

xv. Carol Pitts Diedrichs, "Designing and Implementing a Consortial Approval Plan: The OhioLINK Experience," Haworth

xvi. Susan Flood. "SPEC Flyer 221: Evolution and Status of Approval Plans." <<http://www.arl.org/spec/221fly.html>> p.1.

xvii. Bowker annual, 1998/1999: 514.

xviii. Henk Voorbij, "Are Dutch academic libraries keeping up with research material? The coverage of foreign academic publications in Dutch libraries," *Alexandria* 8(1996):189-204.

xix. James H. Sweetland and Peter G. Christensen, "Developing language and Literature Collections in Academic Libraries: a Survey, *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 23, no.2 (March 1997):119-125.

xx. Ibid., 122.

xxi. Ibid., 123.

xxii. John M. Budd and Catherine K. Craven, "Academic Library Monographic Acquisitions: Selection of *Choice's* Outstanding Academic Books," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 23, no.1(1999): 15-26.

xxiii. Ibid., 15.

xxiv. Ibid., 25.

xxv. The researcher is indebted to Rhonda Smith who constructed the Top Ten Lists while she was a graduate assistant.

xxvi. Roy Tennant, "Determining Our Digital Destiny," *American Libraries* 31, no. 1 (January 2000): 54.

xxvii. Tennant, 54.

xxviii. Sweetland and Christensen, 124.