

COLLECTIONS SUPPORTING WOMEN'S STUDIES MAJORS IN
THE UNITED STATES

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Women's studies, because it is highly interdisciplinary and because its materials are often published by small, lesser-known presses, is a notoriously difficult field for which to collect. However, this complexity of collection does nothing to diminish the responsibility of an academic library to support a women's studies program. This study provides an overview of the quality of collection of women's studies materials at ten academic libraries through the list-checking method, sampling from three distinct bibliographies. A comparison of these results to the size of the women's studies programs at those institutions, determined by the number of courses offered by those programs, is used to see whether or not there is a correlation between the size of a women's studies program and the collection relevant to the field.

Headings:

Women/Women's Studies

Evaluation/Collection Development

College and University Libraries

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INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

“If women’s studies is both academic and activist, experiential as well as experimental, collection development programs must reflect that diversity, and selectors must search out materials without regard to artificial boundaries of subject or discipline” (Searing and Ariel 266).

Women’s studies, a relatively new discipline, has only existed at the university level for 32 years (Mack 131). It is an outgrowth of the women’s movement and is sometimes referred to the movement’s “academic wing” (Shaw 3). Many would put the beginning of the women’s movement around the end of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th century, marked particularly by the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792 or the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Others, such as Sheila Ruth, see its development as a more organic and gradual process “that has been happening through the centuries, often for individuals, sometimes collectively....From this perspective, no discernible ‘beginning’ to the women’s movement exists” (483).

The women’s movement can be divided into several major stages, or waves. Although a number of authors composed works previous to 1776 on the need to improve the lot of women (Christine de Pisan of the 15th century and Modesta di Poozo di Forzi of the 16th century, to name only two), the first wave of what is referred to as the women’s movement stretched approximately from 1776 to 1929 (Schneir xii). The first wave was characterized by a focus on the rights of women – a response to the human

rights issues of the Enlightenment, which often excluded women (Ruth 488). Woman's suffrage was an important point, as was the repression of women associated with the institution of marriage and the economic dependence of women on men (Schneir xv).

The period from around 1930-1960 involved a decline of feminist activism. Scholars have ascribed this to a number of possible causes, including the economic downturn that came after the First World War, the increasing popularity of the antifeminist attitudes found in the writings of Freud, and the resolution of the issue of woman's suffrage. Some believe that the women's movement became so focused on woman's suffrage that, when suffrage was achieved, the momentum of the movement died (Schneir xii). It has also been suggested that feminism (like other political movements of this time) was centered in socialism and Marxism rather than existing as a separate movement. It was not that feminists were not present and active in society during this time (openness to female sexuality and the planned parenthood movement were on the stage, for example), but they were not remarkably active compared to the tumultuous periods that came before the 1930s and after 1960 (Ruth 489).

The second period of heightened feminist activity, called the second wave, started in the 1960s and continued through the 1970s (or the 1980s, depending on the source consulted). This wave shared some themes with the first wave, such as equality among women and men and women's rights, but it also brought new issues into the forum such as motherhood and treating the personal as political (Buhle xix). Feminism was one of a number of movements at a height of activity during this period (the Civil Rights and New Left movements in particular) and because of this it absorbed causes of those movements, such as the issues of racism and class. The second wave, in contrast to the first wave, put

an emphasis on cultural diversity (and the plight of all women) and added the issue of gender, or how femininity and masculinity are defined and what these qualities mean (Buhle xxvi). The second wave also involved a self-examination of the movement relating to its prejudices. Feminism and the women's movement were accused of having "white, Western, privileged, and heterosexual biases," and still are to some extent (de Groot and Maynard 4).

It was during the second wave of the women's movement that women's studies was established as a program of study at the university level. After the establishment of the first women's studies program at San Diego State University in 1970, the number of programs increased quickly and dramatically. A survey done by Florence Howe in 1976 revealed a count of more than 270 women's studies programs and 15,000 courses offered at 1,500 academic institutions, and a 1981 study by Howe revealed an increase in the number of programs to 350 (de Groot and Maynard xv).

Women's studies programs, from the beginning, involved two major strategies. On the one hand, the experiences, concerns, and achievements of women were brought into the curricula, and courses that were entirely about women were created. On the other hand, feminists applied their perspective to existing knowledge and disciplines (Shaw and Lee 2). This dual approach has continued into the present, as evidenced by the solidly interdisciplinary women's studies programs of today. The broad effects of women's studies programs on the various disciplines can be seen in *Transforming the Disciplines* (MacNabb, et al.), which details the effects of feminism and women's studies on a wide variety of fields, including mathematics, psychology, education, law, and architecture, among 21 others.

The women's movement, after the end of the second wave, experienced another dip in feminist activity, reflected also in the area of women's studies. As de Groot and Maynard state, "After two successful decades of second-wave feminist research and scholarship, the 1990s have emerged as a moment of self-reflection of doubt. We sense something of a *loss of confidence* in the viability of the Women's Studies project." "Women" are not as homogenous as early feminists believed, and the more diversity that was brought into the women's movement, the more disparity there was among ideas of what feminism is or should be. According to de Groot and Maynard, some scholars even believe that feminism is dead and that women do now have the opportunity to be equal to men. (deGroot and Maynard 149).

Therefore, the women's movement faces questions of what the movement might mean and what it should be attempting rather than how it should achieve particular goals. Some have even suggested that the movement does not have enough momentum or reason to continue. That does not mean, however, that all are convinced of the death of feminism or the need for it. Far from it. Sheila Ruth, for example, cites the continuing need for feminist activism. Writing in 1998, Ruth said,

"Women's studies is faced with a vast responsibility. Women still constitute two-thirds of all the adult poor; more than 80 percent of full-time working women earn less than \$20,000; and, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 'the average working woman's salary lags as far behind the average man's as it did 20 years ago. American women face the worst gender pay gap in the developed world.' Violence of all kinds against women, including homophobic and other hate crimes, is increasing, and women are ever more the targets for media and industry assaults on our appearance and health" (xi).

Although it did not start with the beginnings of the organized women's movement, the collection of women's studies materials did predate the formation of the

women's studies discipline. The patterns of collection, according to Suzanne Hildenbrand, can be classified into three main phases (1). Some collections of materials focused on women were compiled between the late 1930s through the early 1970s, the time period of the first phase. Two of special significance are the Sophia Smith Collection of Smith College (a collection opened in 1942) and the Women's Rights Collection of Radcliffe College, which opened in 1943 and which was later renamed the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. This first phase of collection was characterized by preservation (Hildenbrand 3).

The second phase, which began in the 1970s, was marked by increased attention to women's studies, and corresponded with an increase in the action of the women's movement. New collections were established, existing collections grew, and numerous bibliographies of women's studies were published (Hildenbrand 4).

The 1980s brought a third phase to women's studies collecting practices. This phase involved librarians and archivists stepping into a more active and partisan role, attempting to steer collections as well as scholarship in a feminist direction (Hildenbrand 5).

Many would likely argue that women's studies collection development has gone through phases since the publication of Hildenbrand's article in 1986. One of the major differences is the increased emphasis on gender studies, which involves a study of both males and females, as opposed to the women-centered focus of the third phase of Hildenbrand's classification. There is also an increased emphasis on international affairs and the perceptions of gender in foreign countries. This international focus of women's studies is easily seen in the courses offered by women's studies programs.

Whatever phase women's studies collection practices are in (and it is likely that the characteristics of all of the previous phases continue to some degree, depending on the collection developer), collection development of women's studies materials is a recent practice both in general and in the academic context, just as the concept of women's studies as a discipline has only recently been translated into an academic program. Therefore, collection for an established women's studies program is likely to have been done fairly recently at any given academic institution, and it is unlikely that extensive collections of women's studies materials predated the establishment of the program.

Problem Statement:

The question at hand is how well women's studies programs are supported by their academic libraries. Buying decisions at academic libraries are often based on which programs and courses the academic institution offers, but that does not mean all programs at all academic institutions are equally supported by their libraries, especially when the collection developers are faced with the dilemma of how to collect for a problematic subject area like women's studies.

A glance at the women's studies collection policies of various academic institutions gathered together in the volume *Women's Studies Collection Development Policies*, compiled by the Women's Studies Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, reveals the interdisciplinary complexity of women's studies. The draft of Ohio State University's statement, for example, says, "The collection contains materials in all LC classification areas" (OSU 3). Princeton University's statement

makes it clear that the interest in women's studies materials extends beyond that of the women's studies program:

“Particular concern about this area rests with the inter-departmental Women's Studies Program, but the materials are also of interest to the faculty and students in History, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Politics, Psychology, American Studies, Classics, Literature, Biology, Art, Music, Theatre and Industrial Relations” (PU 1).

This study, while emphasizing the interdisciplinary center of women's studies, will examine the level of collection strength for women's studies through a comparison of the number of items a library has out of a core collection (determined through consultation of bibliographies and other sources) and the relative size of that college or university's women's studies program. It will reveal whether there is a significant difference between the general comprehensiveness of women's studies collections at different levels of need, those levels of need corresponding to the size of the program the library is meant to support.

Because the levels of need do vary so widely, from a program offering doctoral, master's, and undergraduate degrees compared to a program offering only an undergraduate minor, a selected group was isolated for study: institutions having a women's studies undergraduate major but no graduate women's studies programs. Variation in the sizes of these programs is still present, but it is not so extreme. Collection development intended to support doctoral research is inevitably of a different nature than that intended to support only a few undergraduate classes, and it seemed that a balance could be found by considering those schools only offering an undergraduate major.

Collection policies for different sizes and types of academic institutions also vary widely. A research-level university has the budget to make broad purchases, such as buying all the books published by university presses, while a small community college is forced to be more selective about which books, serials, and electronic resources it purchases. It was important, then, to compare academic institutions of somewhat similar size and type. Only those institutions with an emphasis on baccalaureate-level liberal arts were included in this study.

The primary interest of this study is the relationship between women's studies programs and the collections meant to support them, but it will also provide insight into the larger question of how much programs and curricula actually affect collection development at academic libraries in general, especially in the context of an interdisciplinary subject. Because women's studies is a fairly recent addition to the academic world, it seems that collection of relevant materials would be easier to evaluate for women's studies than for a traditional subject area such as literature or history. It is believed, then, that this subject will be especially revealing in the area of academic collection development in relation to the programs the library is intended to support.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Part of the problem in determining the span and quality of a women's studies collection is that the definition of what women's studies is varies widely, as do opinions on what a women's studies collection should contain. As stated by Conway et al., "The only aspects that women's studies scholars seem to agree on are that the field is women-centered, and that it is interdisciplinary in nature" (70), but even these assumptions come into question as women's studies heads in the direction of gender studies, which includes men and women (Loeb et al. xi). Some have emphasized the need both for scholarship and feminist activism in even a basic collection, as well as the need for an international perspective (Searing and Ariel 251), some the need for both professional and personal interest materials (Conway et al. 74), and some the collection of women's popular culture magazines as important primary sources (Down). Further, sometimes what is called a "feminist collection" includes only those materials that fit with a personal concept of feminism. In the introduction to Julia Atkinson's *Eleven Out of Twelve*, a bibliography of a feminist collection of fiction, non-fiction, and children's books, the policy is cited as follows: "Rejected has been any book which portrays in either word or picture a stereotypical female character, whether she be human, animal, or machine. I also rejected those books in which the male character was portrayed as authoritarian, uncaring, uncooperative" (Atkinson v).

For the purposes of this study, a broad definition of women's studies, borrowed from the *Introduction to Library Research in Women's Studies*, will be used so as not to exclude the particularities of any program included in the study: "Women's studies is distinguished by its focus on women, women's experiences, and the nature of relationships between the sexes" (Searing 1).

In collection development literature, much is made of women's studies' interdisciplinary nature (see, for example, Conway et al. 2, Mack 132). Thura Mack, in a citation analysis of women's studies literature, determined that 11 subjects (including psychology, sociology, and law) were consistently linked to women's studies in the period between 1976 and 1986 (134). It is a common fear that since many materials for women's studies are drawn out of other disciplines and many materials come from small presses, without a distinct budget for women's studies materials and without a person expressly assigned to collecting women's studies materials it would be easy for the library to miss out on creating a high quality, comprehensive collection (see, for example, Emery 90).

This wide diversity leads to the temptation to base the core collection used in this study only on materials specifically originating in the field of women's studies. Women's studies draws from such a large number of other disciplines that it is difficult to be confident about having a fair representation of its many aspects.¹ This diversity of subject areas also has the potential for heightening the already present (and inevitable) bias of the choice of certain books. However, since women's studies is so centered in its interdisciplinary nature, the core collection used in this study will attempt to represent this as much as possible.

Monographs, such as those that found in two of the bibliographies used in this study, should not be the only determining factor in evaluating a women's studies collection. A solid collection of serials is also necessary if a collection is to be up-to-date and comprehensive. As Emery writes, "If one wants to understand the current emphasis and goals of the women's movement and of women's studies, the journals, magazines and newspapers of the feminist press should be examined....A strong women's collection will hold as many women's serials as financially possible" (91). Because of this, serials will be included in the core collection used in this study.

In other studies, a great number of methods have been used to try to measure the strength of existing collections. Some, like the RLG Conspectus² and ARL's National Collection Inventory Project, have been done at a national level (Sandler 12). Occasionally, as in Elzy and Lancaster's study of the Teaching Materials Center at Illinois State University, two methods are compared against one another.

The technique of list-checking, as is used in this study, is one that is commonly employed as a method of collection evaluation. In fact, according to Gabriel, "[C]hecking lists, catalogs, and bibliographies...is the most widely reported technique of acquiring qualitative data" (80). As Lundin points out, there are some assumptions built into this method: that there is "a literature common to and at the core of a discipline as well as a newly emerging body of work that deserves inclusion in that elite core" and that the list produced came from "authorities who possess superior knowledge in the world of books" (105). Every list is inevitably tainted to some degree by bias, and the smaller the list or the fewer the number of people who work on it, the more the risk for bias increases.

There are always questions of whether or not the list is out of date, whether it is appropriate for the collection that is being evaluated, and whether it is a true and fair representation of the needs of the users. As Richard Heinzkill writes, “Despite all the talk about bibliographies that are useful in collection evaluation and building, local interest must remain a major influence in selection decisions” (64). Further, bibliographies can only account for exactly the works they have listed. If there is a book in the library being evaluated that is of similar quality and coverage to a book in the bibliography, there is no way, with only the bibliography in hand, of finding this book and using it in the other book’s stead. As Cynthia Comer writes, “Lists usually do not help identify any outdated or superceded material the library has...[and they provide] no means for evaluating [all the] materials the library *does* have” (30). In the case of academic libraries in particular, lists are in danger of missing the “esoteric materials held by an academic collection that make that library unique” (Lundin 109).

But even with its limitations, list-checking has often been relied upon as a way of understanding the strength of a particular collection or the relative strengths of a group of collections, even if it was only one method used among others or if it was merely the first step in the process of updating and refining a collection. As said by Lundin, “Lists are such a basic form of communication among libraries and among scholars that their viability remains constant” (111).

Of course, list-checking is more appropriate in some situations and less appropriate in others. Comer suggests that standard lists are less suitable for the evaluation of large, research collections than they are for the evaluation of collections that are smaller or more recently created. She also suggests that if the goal is to focus on

a particular area of a larger collection, standard lists would be more suitable (108). The nature of these limitations indicates that list-checking would be an appropriate method to examine women's studies collections. These collections are usually fairly new, since the discipline itself is fairly new, the academic institutions studied were purposefully chosen to be at the smaller end of the size-scale, and the study centers on women's studies, not the entire collection of each academic library. Further, in the case of evaluating a subject collection of larger libraries, Comer advocates the use of "[a]uthoritative and appropriate subject bibliographies" (28), as have been used in this study.

The issue of how up-to-date a particular list is also varies in importance, depending on the subject at hand. As Lundin writes,

"The time factor is less crucial in the humanities, with many old sources still held in high repute. . . . Private scholarship in the humanities is not rooted in research and scholarship of the moment; its emphasis on older primary material is better suited to the bibliographic control of lists" (108).

Although women's studies is at times "rooted in research and scholarship of the moment," it also shares the above qualities with the humanities. A knowledge of the history of women's studies is essential to understanding its present-day form, and primary and old sources are highly valued. Therefore, in the case of women's studies, both new and old sources are necessary for a comprehensive collection; at the very least, primary and old sources are certainly of value. As Emery writes, "If no one has yet been made responsible for a women's collection, it may be necessary to acquire a number of seminal works, even if out of print, along with back runs of particular serials" (90).

This is true not only in theory, but in practice. Princeton University's 1989 collection statement for women's studies reads, "Because Women's Studies is a new field of study at Princeton, considerable retrospective buying, especially of original source

material, is necessary to compensate for previous inactivity in this area” (PU 2). SUNY College at Oswego’s statement from 1992 reads, “A substantive amount of the collection is twentieth century, but due to a strong historical perspective in Women’s Studies, all periods are covered” (Osborne SUNYO 2).

A study done by Hur-Li Lee on the collection development for women’s studies at Rutgers University also makes this historical emphasis of women’s studies clear. The main focus of Lee’s study was a comparison of the theory and practice of collection development in general, and it examined the documents and memories of the individuals involved in the collecting process rather than the collection itself. However, women’s studies collection practices are central to the study, and Lee makes it clear that women’s studies collection practices are strongly centered in the history of the women’s movement. For example, the necessity of preserving women’s studies archival materials weaves throughout the narrative of collecting practices at Rutgers.

Just as Lee used women’s studies collection practices as the means to understanding collection development in general, this study can be extended beyond the subject area of women’s studies into a broader examination of the relationship between existing subject-united programs at academic institutions and their related collections. Further, the sources selected for this study, which are meant to serve as a core collection in combination with each other, could be used as collection building tools for new collections or to correct revealed weaknesses in existing collections.

As evidenced by the literature about women’s studies and collection for this subject area, no research has been done to date that attempts to evaluate existing

academic collections that support women's studies programs. This research hopes to begin filling this gap.

METHODOLOGY

This study evaluates existing collections of women's studies materials at academic institutions that offer majors in this discipline, taking into account the size of the women's studies programs at those institutions. This has been done by comparing women's studies bibliographies to the holdings at the libraries of a sample of those academic institutions. There are three main components to this study: the bibliographies from which the samples are drawn, the academic institutions that are studied, and a determination of the size of the women's studies programs at those academic institutions.

List-checking was the method chosen to evaluate the existing collections of women's studies materials at the selected universities, and it was decided that both monographs and serials should be included. Also, the interdisciplinary nature of women's studies was viewed as essential rather than avoidable, and the historical focus of women's studies was determined to be a vital part of the subject area, so older works were included along with ones of more recent publication.

Selection of the Lists Used:

There is no single bibliography to date that covers the past and present of the field of women's studies to the degree of comprehensiveness required for this study. In fact, the majority of quality women's studies bibliographies were compiled during the late 1970s and into the 1980s, when there was a corresponding growth in the then rapidly

expanding field of women's studies. The period of the late 1970s and 1980s was a very important time of growth and exploration for women's studies, and the materials written in this time are essential literature to the field, especially when the historical focus of women's studies is taken into account. Even though there are relatively few women's studies bibliographies published in recent years, the 90s up to the present day should also be included. Women's studies, with its political roots, is a dynamic field and one that has already had a great impact in a number of other fields.

Two bibliographies, then, were chosen to represent the monograph core collection used for this study: one to represent the field during its period of rapid expansion in the late 1970s and through the 1980s, and one to represent the field in its more recent years. The earlier bibliography is one that, to the present day, has earned extensive praise and recommendation: Loeb, Searing, and Stineman's *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography 1980-1985*. This is the update to Stineman and Loeb's earlier work published in 1979: *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography*.

The bibliography chosen to represent the more recent publications in the field was Eleanor Amico's *Reader's Guide to Women's Studies*, published in 1998. A review of this book in *Library Journal* states, "Comparable sources, such as...Catherine Loeb and others' *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core of Bibliography 1980-85* (1987)...are in need of updating, and this work meets that need" (Mulac 79). Both bibliographies have a broad view of women's studies and draw their recommended books from a wide range of subject areas.

Monographs alone are not enough to make a comprehensive women's studies collection. Serials are also essential items. There are a number of serials important to

women's studies, and there are a number of lists that attempt to define a core group of women's studies journals. Two that stand out are the periodicals section of Loeb, Searing, and Stineman's *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography 1980-1985*, which has since become out-of-date due to the highly dynamic nature of serials,³ and Thura Mack's list based on a citation analysis of the journal *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, which is also in danger of being out of date.

Since an updated list was needed for this study, the list of core serials that was chosen was the "Core List of Journals for Women's Studies," compiled by the ACRL Women's Studies Section. This list is not based on citation analysis as is Thura Mack's, but it is from a reputable source, and, since it is reviewed annually, it is up-to-date.

Creation of the Samples and the List-Checking Process:

After the three lists were chosen, there was the need to create a randomized sample from the monographic bibliographies. There are over 1,200 items listed in *Women's Studies*, the bibliography by Loeb, Searing, and Stineman, and approximately 3,000 items in the *Reader's Guide to Women's Studies*, the bibliography by Amico. A systematical sample was derived from the two monograph bibliographies, resulting in a sample of 57 books from the Loeb bibliography and 66 books from the Amico bibliography. The serials list, because it contained only 40 items, was included in its entirety. These three samples combined created a total sample of 163 books and serials.

The presence of an item on an online library catalog does not necessarily mean that the book is available to the library patron; there is actually a great deal of complexity involved in the ownership of a book. Sandler makes the point that issues arise with

editions, translations, microform copies, items on order but not received, and whether or not the item is actually accessible and in usable condition (15). For the purposes of this study, if a book is listed in the online catalog of the library in question, the book will be presumed to be available and in good condition for the user.

Creation of the Sample of Academic Institutions:

The sample of academic institutions was created by consulting three sources: *Peterson's Guide to Graduate Programs in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences*, *Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges*, and the *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*. The academic institutions from which the sample was drawn were defined by the following qualifications: they are located in the United States, they have an undergraduate major in women's studies, they do not have a graduate program in women's studies, and they are in the Baccalaureate Colleges – Liberal Arts division of the Carnegie Classification system.

Of the 64 academic institutions that met the above criteria, twenty institutions were originally chosen for study. In the process of selecting the sample, ten institutions were eliminated for various reasons. Some had no comprehensive course listings for women's studies available online, some had self-designed curricula and therefore no set course listing, some had emphases in women's studies rather than majors, and some had such extensive connections to the library of a larger academic institution that their own holdings could not be determined. The final sample consisted of the following academic institutions: Allegheny College (PA), Bucknell University (PA), Colorado College (CO), Connecticut College (CT), Hobart and William Smith Colleges (NY), Hollins University

(VA), Middlebury College (VT), Mount Holyoke College (MA), Oberlin College (OH), and Wells College (NY).

The Accumulation of Data:

In order to determine whether or not a library was in possession of the books and serials on the compiled sample, each book was searched for in each library catalog using a search that corresponded with the format of the catalog interface. This was most often a title search, and confirmation of the correct book was done through verification of the author's name. The searches of each catalog took place in October of 2002.

This study deals not only with how many items an academic library has out of the core collection, but also how this number relates to the level of need, or the size of the program. It can be difficult to gauge the size of a program, especially in the case of women's studies. Faculty members are often associated primarily with other departments and many students might take women's studies courses but not be part of the department. For the purposes of this study, the number of classes offered by the women's studies department was used as a proxy for the size of the program.

This number was determined by consulting the online listings of courses for the women's studies programs. Many of the departments had a full listing of courses, both of courses offered by the department directly and those offered by other departments but which were used in the women's studies major. Both kinds were counted in the total. When the number of courses was determined, certain courses were not counted: independent studies and internships are courses that certainly might require the library's collection, but they are also usually representative of only a few students' participation.

Two students in an internship are not comparable to a course offered to a class full of students. In the cases where a full listing of the courses was not available but a listing of courses over a number of years (for at least three full years, or six semesters) was, the courses in these available years were counted and duplicates were discarded.

FINDINGS

For each academic institution considered, there are two main components to the findings of this study: the number of courses in the women's studies program and the number of books and serials from the bibliography samples that the institution's library had in its holdings. The results for the academic institutions are first reported separately, then as a group. All of the information provided about the individual institutions was gathered from the respective institution's website except for the total book and serials expenditure, which was obtained from the Library Statistics Program portion of the National Center for Education Statistics website. This expenditure amount is based on data gathered by the American Library Survey. It represents the sum of money spent on books (paper and microform) and money spent on serial subscriptions (paper and microform) during the 2000 fiscal year.⁴

The Individual Academic Institutions:

Allegheny College, located in Meadville, PA, was founded in 1815. It is a private academic institution with 1,900 undergraduate students. As determined through an examination of the women's studies program's web pages, the program offers 39 courses, slightly less than the average of 45 courses among the ten schools in the sample.

Allegheny was also in the average range of books and serials it had from the sample: it had 49 percent of the books from the Loeb bibliography, 68 percent from the Amico

bibliography, and 53 percent from the serials list, making a total holdings percentage of 58 percent. In FY 2000, Allegheny's library spent a total of \$473,000 on print and microform books and serials.

Founded in 1846 in Lewisburg, PA, Bucknell University is principally an undergraduate institution, with 3,350 undergraduate students and only approximately 200 graduate students. Bucknell's Bertrand Library has almost 685,000 volumes and almost 2,300 current periodical subscriptions. Bertrand Library spent \$1,373,691 in FY 2000 on books and serials. The Women's and Gender Studies program offers 50 courses, more than the average number in the sample, and Bucknell's library was one of the most successful in the evaluation in the number of books and serials it had in its holdings. It had only average results for the Loeb bibliography, 65 percent, but it had the most books from the Amico bibliography of any institution in the sample, 85 percent, and the most serials from the ACRLWSS list, 95 percent. The total holdings percentage for Bucknell was 80 percent.

Colorado College, a private four-year college located in Colorado Springs, CO and founded in 1874, takes a unique approach to its course offerings: faculty members teach and students take only one three and a half week course at a time according to the college's Block Plan. The Women's Studies program at Colorado offers a large number of courses compared to the average of the sample, 55, but Colorado's library holdings of the books and serials of the sample ranked on the middle-to-lower end of the scale according to the other schools in the sample. The library had 56 percent of the books from the Loeb bibliography, 47 percent from the Amico bibliography, and 60 percent

from the serials list, for a total holdings percentage of 53 percent. The total expenditure for books and serials for Colorado College was \$633,369.

Connecticut College, a private liberal arts college founded in 1911 and located on the coastline of Connecticut in New London, has an average undergraduate enrollment of 1,800. The Gender and Women's Studies department, one of 27 departments at the college, offers a major with 42 related courses. Connecticut had an average ranking according to its library's holdings of the sample books and serials and fairly even results among the three lists: 65 percent from the Loeb bibliography, 64 percent from the Amico bibliography, and 55 percent from the ACRLWSS serials list. The total holdings percentage was 61 percent, and the total expenditure for books and serials was \$890,869.

Originally founded as Geneva Academy in 1796 in Geneva, NY, Hobart and William Smith Colleges is divided into a men's college, Hobart, with 850 students, and William Smith, a women's college with 1,035 students. Although the colleges are divided into male and female populations, coeducational classes were the standard starting in 1941. The library has over 365,000 volumes, more than 1,300 periodicals, and access to more than 1,800 electronic journals. It spent \$566,115 on books and serials in FY 2000. This college was the first academic institution in the United States to establish a men's studies minor and was one of the first institutions to establish a women's studies program, started in 1969. The women's studies program offers 66 courses, the most of any institution in the sample. However, the holdings of Hobart's library had only an average percentage of the sample books and serials: 58 percent of the Loeb bibliography, 53 percent of the Amico bibliography, and 45 percent of the serials list, the second lowest

holdings for serials among the sample of institutions, making a total holdings percentage of 53 percent.

Hollins University, located in Roanoke, VA, was established first as a coeducational college by the name of Valley Union Seminary in 1842 but in 1852 became an academic institution exclusively for women. Hollins remains primarily a women-only university, but the graduate programs are coeducational. Hollins is small, having only 800 undergraduate students, but the Women's Studies program offers 40 courses, just under the average for the sample. Compared to the other institutions in the sample, Hollins had the lowest holdings from the monograph bibliographies: only 35 percent from both the Loeb bibliography and the Amico bibliography. The percentage was average for the serials, 58 percent, resulting in a total holdings percentage of 40 percent. Hollins' total expenditure for books and serials was \$227,777.

Middlebury College, located in Middlebury, VT, has an enrollment of 2,200 students. The Women and Gender Studies program, which offers 46 courses, is one of 44 programs offered by the college, although joint and interdisciplinary options are available to students. Middlebury's holdings from the bibliography samples were a little above average, with 74 percent from the Loeb bibliography, 70 percent from the Amico bibliography, and 63 percent from the serials list. This made a total holdings percentage of 69 percent. Middlebury's library spent \$1,243,515 on books and serials in FY 2000.

Established in 1837 in South Hadley, MA by a woman, Mary Lyon, Mount Holyoke College is a women's college with an enrollment of 2,000 students. The on-campus library has 680,000 volumes, although there is a major focus on the consortium among Mount Holyoke, Amherst College, Hampshire College, Smith College, and the

University of Massachusetts both for library resources and for academic opportunities. In FY 2000, Mount Holyoke spent \$1,230,731 on books and serials. The women's studies program at Mount Holyoke offers the lowest number of courses of any institution in the sample, 21 courses, but it had above-average holdings for each of the bibliographies: 81 percent of the Loeb bibliography (the highest percentage in the sample of institutions from this bibliography), 71 percent of the Amico bibliography, and 73 percent of the serials list, making a total holdings percentage of 75 percent.

Oberlin College, the first college in the United States to award women undergraduate degrees, was established in 1833 in Oberlin, OH. The College of Arts and Sciences has an enrollment of 2,200 students, and the Conservatory of Music has 650 students. Oberlin has large resources for a college its size, with over 2,000,000 items in its library, as well as a large library budget, spending \$1,441,235 on books and serials in FY 2000. The Women's Studies Program has the second highest number of courses of the institutions in the sample, 63, and its holdings were also high, with 74 percent of both the Loeb bibliography and the Amico bibliography, and 85 percent of the serials list. The only institution with higher results from the serials list was Bucknell University. The total holdings percentage for Oberlin was 77 percent.

Wells College, a women's college with only 450 students, is located in Aurora, NY and was established in 1868. The library at Wells has over 248,000 volumes and subscribes to approximately 400 periodicals. It has the lowest expenditure amount of the institutions on the list: \$110,687. The Women's Studies Program has the second lowest number of courses of the sample with 27 courses, and the holdings were also generally low. Wells had 49 percent of the Loeb bibliography, 30 percent of the Amico

bibliography, and 38 percent of the serials list, making a total holdings percentage of 39 percent. Wells' holdings of the Amico bibliography and the serials list were the lowest holdings among the sample of institutions.

The Institutions as a Group:

As can be seen in Figure 1, which details the holdings of each school for each bibliography, there was a wide variation among the institutions' percentages of holdings. This is made even more apparent in the representation of the total holdings percentages for each school, as seen in Figure 2.

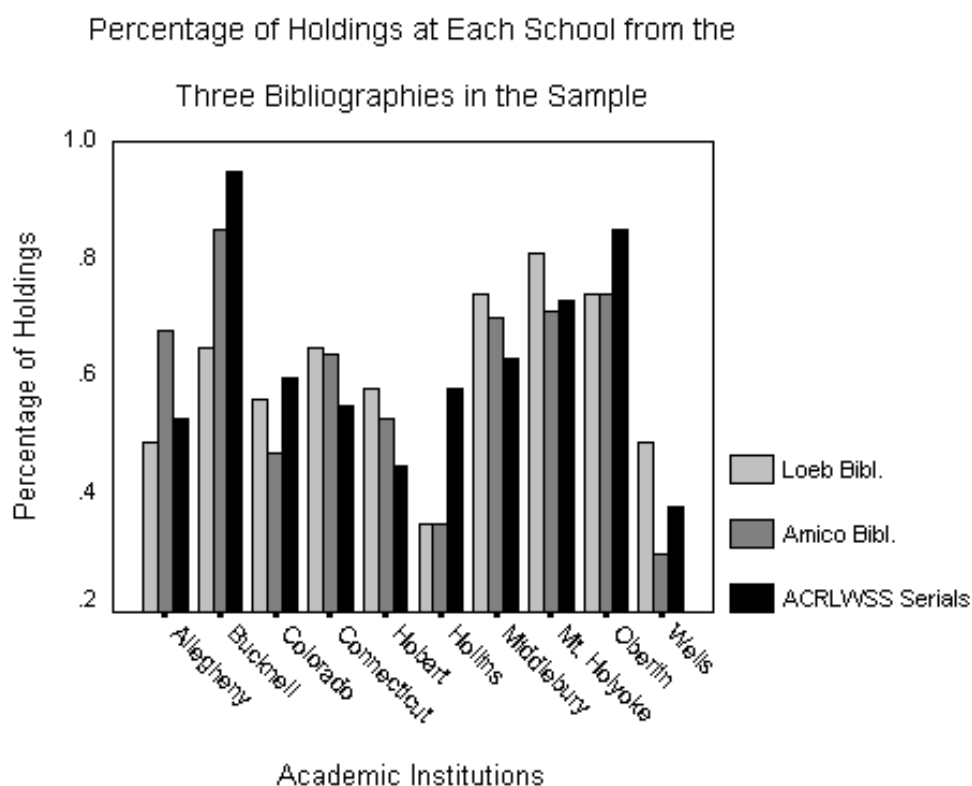


Figure 1

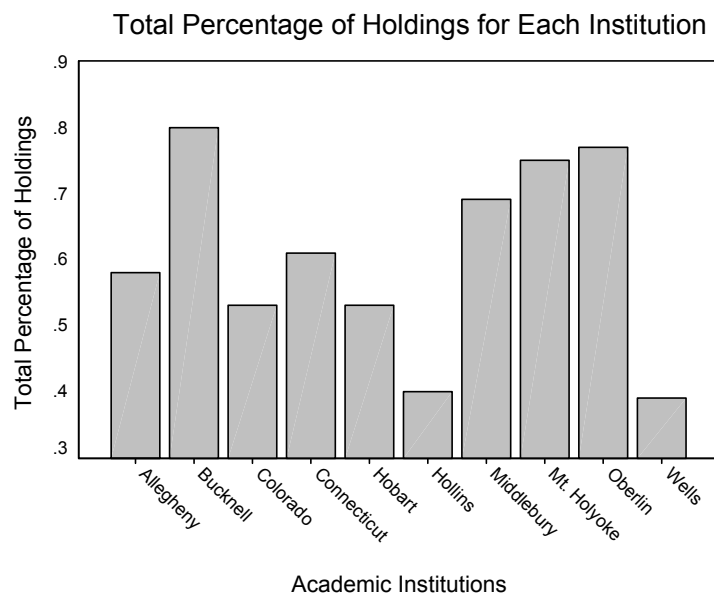


Figure 2

The Bibliographies:

There appeared to be a general correlation among the results for the three bibliographies used in the study: if an institution had low results for the Loeb bibliography, it also seemed likely to have low results for the Amico bibliography and the ACRLWSS serials list, and vice versa. Correlation tests of the pairings of bibliographies, as shown in Table 1, revealed that significant correlations exist between the Loeb bibliography and the Amico bibliography, and between the Amico bibliography and the serials list, but not between the Loeb bibliography and the serials list. An exploration of

Correlations Between the Pairings of Bibliography Holdings

		Loeb Bibl.	Amico Bibl.	ACRLWSS Serials List
Loeb Bibl.	Pearson Correlation	1	.732*	.544
Amico Bibl.	Pearson Correlation	.732*	1	.764*
ACRLWSS Serials List	Pearson Correlation	.544	.764*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1

the correlation among the three bibliographies revealed a Cronbach alpha value of .86, suggesting that there is a significant interrelationship.

Possible Influences on Collection Quality:

A main feature of this study was to determine whether or not there is a significant relationship between the holdings of women's studies materials and the size of the women's studies program. (The number of courses offered by that program was used as the proxy for the program's size.) As the scatter plot, Figure 3, illustrating this relationship suggests, and as the Pearson correlation value of $r = .171$ for the relationship between these two variables confirms, there is no statistically significant relationship.

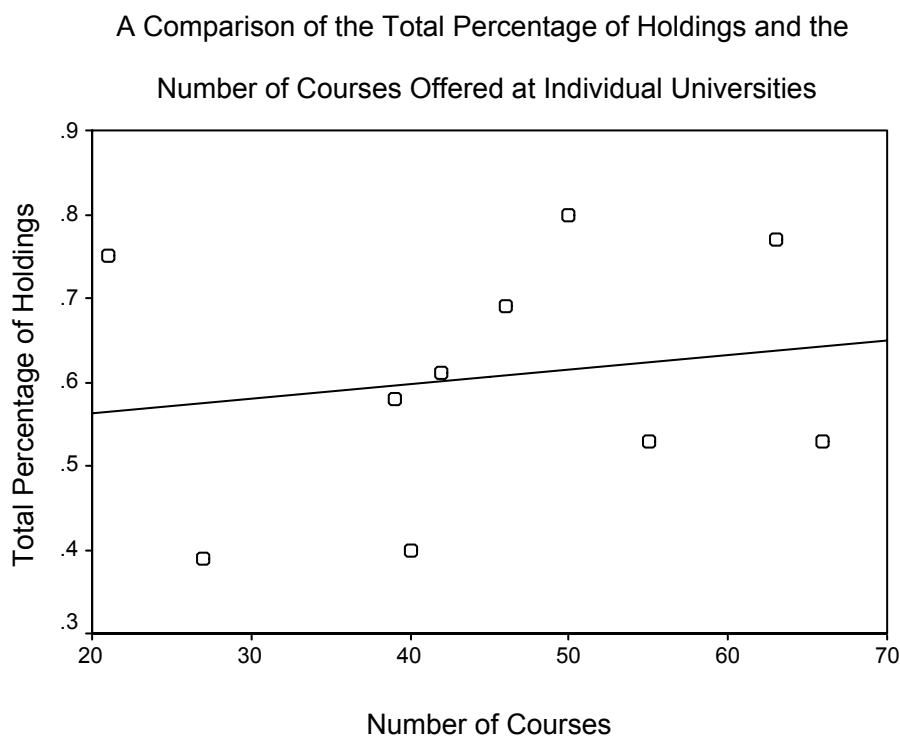


Figure 3

Because there was not a significant correlation between the holdings of women's studies materials and the size of the women's studies programs, another common factor in determining the quality of a collection, the available collection budget, was examined. As can be seen in Figure 4, the expenditures of the libraries involved in the study varied greatly. When this spending is graphed with the total holdings percentages, as shown in Figure 5, a clear correlation emerges. There is a significant correlation between these two variables at the 0.01 level, as indicated by a Pearson Correlation value of $r = 0.971$.

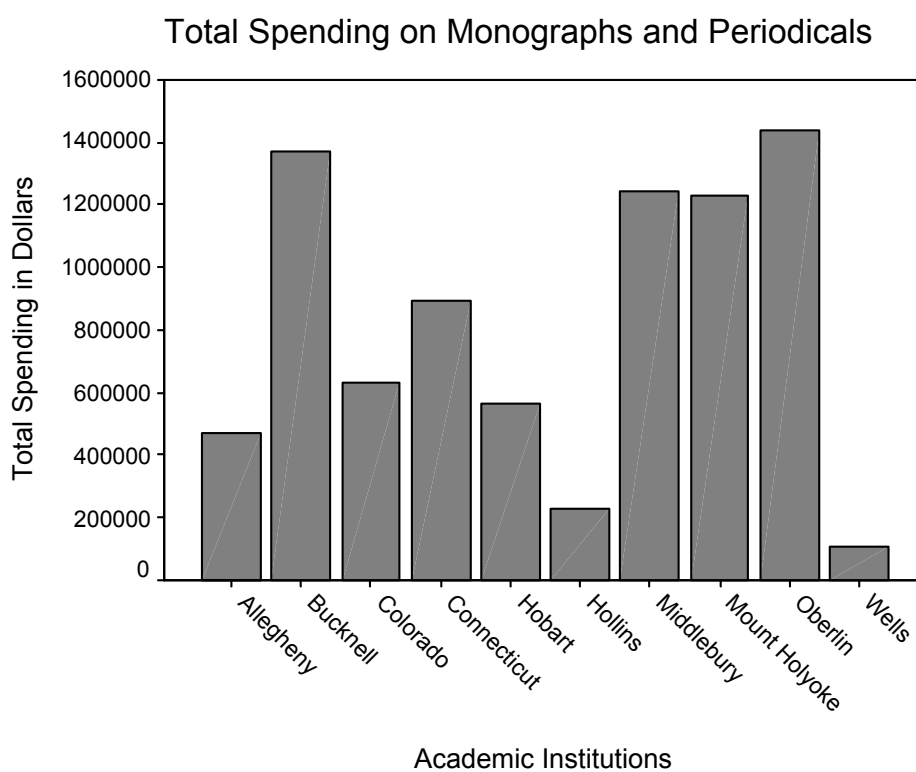


Figure 4

Total Percent Holdings and Total Expenditures

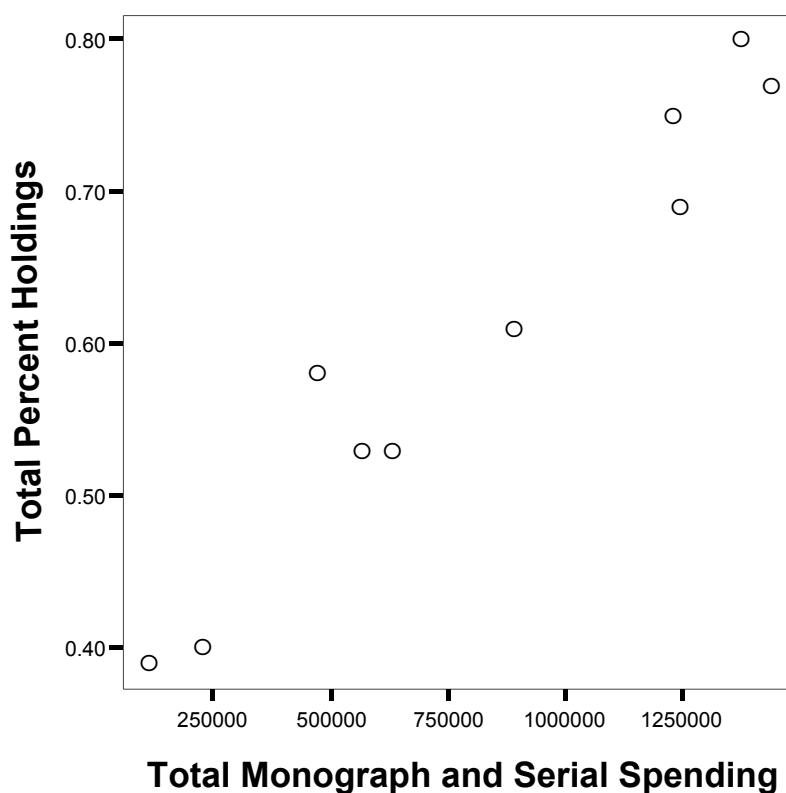


Figure 5

A Look at the Books in the Monographic Samples:

Further examination of the sample of studied books offers some added complexity to the study's results. Although there was a wide range of years of publication, the majority of the books used in the study were published during the early 1980s. This is not only because the Loeb bibliography covered (mostly) books published between 1980 and 1985; the Amico bibliography, although it was published in 1998, also had a number of books from these years. Figure 6 illustrates this distribution of years of publication.

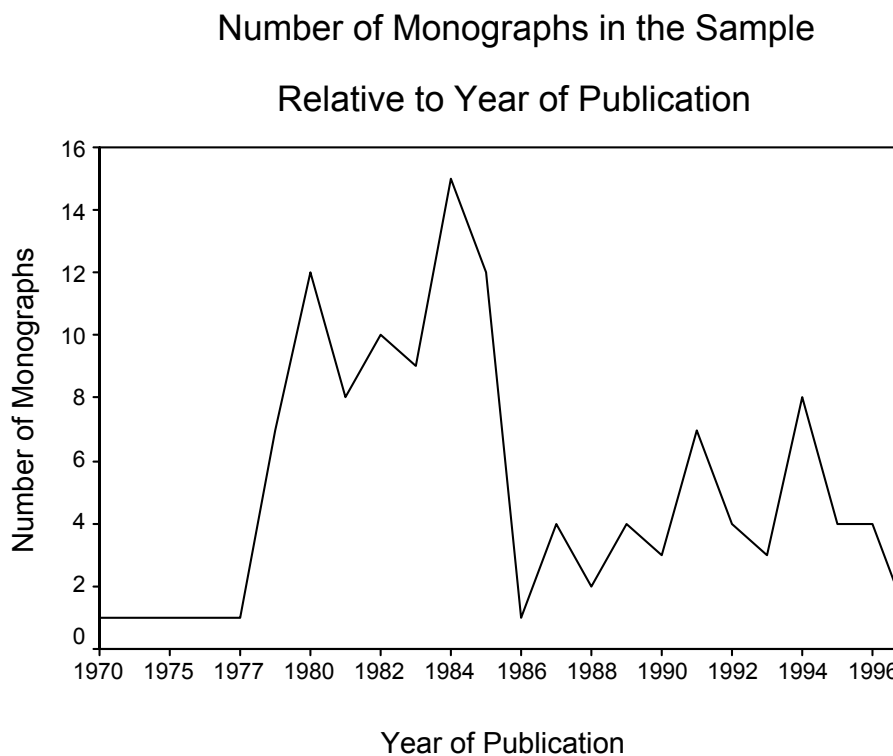


Figure 6

The books from these various years of publication were not collected evenly at the ten libraries in the study. As can be seen in Figure 7 (from which the books from 1970-1974 were excluded, since there were only two books), it appears that the most thorough collection of books is that of books published between 1980 and 1994. Fewer libraries included in the study collected books published between 1975 and 1980 and between 1995 and 1999. It should be noted, however, that this variation is not huge; it is only a matter of approximately 10 percent.

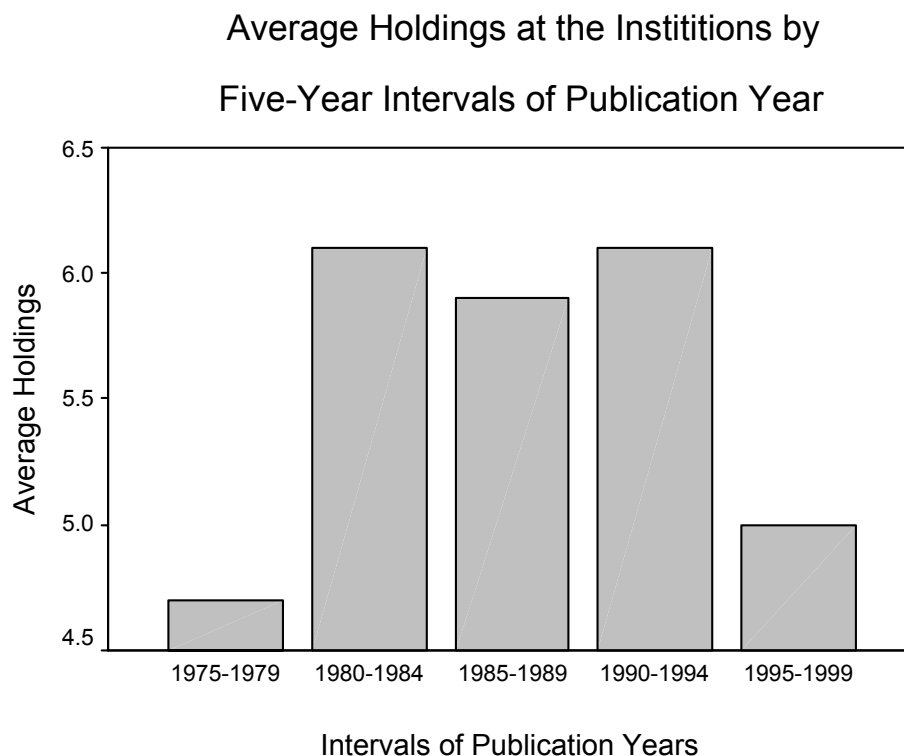


Figure 7

As the books on the Loeb bibliography list were being searched for in the various library catalogs, it became apparent that there might be some connection between the placement of the item in the bibliography and how likely it was to have been collected. It seemed that the further the study progressed in the bibliography, the less often those books were found in the libraries' collections. When graphed, there does seem to be the potential for a negative correlation, as seen in Figure 8. A test for correlation revealed that there is a significant negative correlation at the 0.01 level between how late a book was listed in the bibliography and how many libraries had collected it, as indicated by a Pearson Correlation value of $r = -.448$.

Comparison of the Number of Times a Monograph Appeared in the Libraries

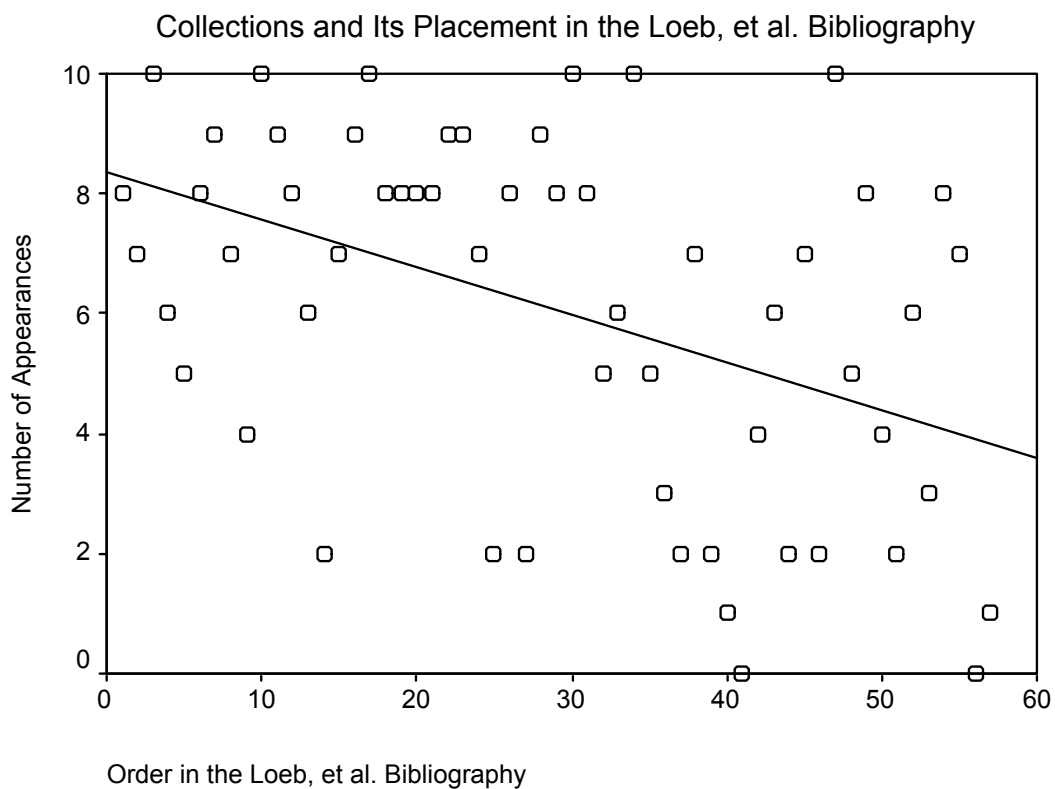


Figure 8

These findings raise a number of issues: What does the interrelationship between the results for the three bibliographies suggest? What is to be discerned from the results for the individual institutions and how these results relate to the size of the women's studies programs and the libraries' budgets? And should the correlation between the placement of an item in the Loeb bibliography and its tendency to not be collected be a matter of concern? These issues and others will be examined in the conclusion.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although the sample of 10 academic institutions is not enough to generalize the results to the entire population of institutions, it does give a good basis for understanding collection quality in the area of women's studies at particular institutions. There were differences among the institutions in the sample – some were women's colleges and some were coeducational, some had larger libraries than others – but there were also some unifying qualities. Each institution is in the same bracket in the Carnegie Classification System and each school offers a women's studies major but no graduate women's studies degrees. It seems that these institutions could be considered to be fairly comparable to each other.

It was interesting, then, to see the great variety among the results. The range of the total percentage holdings from the three bibliographies together was wide. Bucknell, Oberlin, and Mount Holyoke, for example, all had consistently high numbers of holdings from all three bibliographies chosen for the study, with no total holding percentages below 75 percent. Hollins and Wells, on the other hand, had total holding percentages of 40 percent and 39 percent, respectively. This trend is made even more clear by specific comparisons, such as that of the highest and lowest percentages of holdings from the serials list. Bucknell University had 95 percent of the serials list sample, and Wells College had only 38 percent, a difference of 57 percent.

Some of these differences can likely be accounted for through certain qualities of the institutions, such as their library holdings and budgets. The library system at Oberlin College, for example, has over 2,000,000 items, eight times the number of volumes housed at Wells College. It would be surprising if two collections with such an extreme difference in size had similar holdings results. Also, as suggested by the strong correlation between the book and serial expenditures of the institutions' libraries and the total holdings percentages, the money available for the collection of materials is closely tied to how thorough the collection is.

However, even with differences such as these, the library at each institution is still responsible for providing the resources necessary to support a women's studies major. The size of the program might not have had a significant correlation with the holdings of women's studies materials, but its presence and its size do matter in terms of what the library should be providing for the students involved in research and well-rounded learning in this field. For example, the women's studies program at Hobart, which has the highest number of classes offered (66), has only an average showing in the books and serials found at the library that supports it. Mount Holyoke's women's studies program, on the other hand, offers less than a third of the number of courses that Hobart offers (21, the lowest of any school involved in the study), but Mount Holyoke was one of the schools with the highest percentage of holdings. This seems an especially successful example of careful collecting, even when the program the collection is directly supporting is small.

One might think that a women's college would be more likely to have a substantial, thorough women's studies collection, but at least in this sample, that did not

seem to be the case, except with Mount Holyoke, which had a high percentage of holdings. The other two women's colleges in the sample, Hollins and Wells, were the two lowest according to holding percentages.

Exactly what percentage of holdings should be expected is a matter of opinion, but it is significant that none of the schools had all of the books or serials in the sample from any of the bibliographies used, and two of the institutions, Hollins University and Wells College, had overall holdings of 40 percent or lower. Students in the women's studies major at one of these institutions would likely only find two out of every five items they searched for. Further, the mean of all the results from each school was 60.5 percent, suggesting that if a person were to look for any particular book at any of the libraries in the sample, she would find it an average of three out of five times.

No library can be perfect – funding will likely always be a problem – but there is obviously room for improvement at many of these institutions. It seems that collection for women's studies in general might also be improved, as evidenced by the mean of the total results, and to do this would require careful attention to which books and serials are important to the field. Collecting older materials could prove difficult, but perhaps new editions could be found of the older materials. Back-runs of serials can also be difficult to find, but starting a subscription is the first step to providing a very necessary means to understanding the current developments of the field.

The question remains as to whether or not the evaluation of the libraries using the three bibliographies was accurate. Although ascertaining this is impossible without an item-by-item evaluation of the entire collection, the results did show a significant correlation and interrelationship among the results found at the individual schools from

the various bibliographies. Essentially, the results from one bibliography are supported by the results of the other two. This suggests that even if the holdings percentages generated in the evaluation are not accurate representations of what the libraries have to offer in the area of women's studies, at least the evaluation using these samples from these bibliographies was consistent within itself.

Attention by collection developers to the evolving field of women's studies will pay off in the long run, and it is essential that this attention be maintained. Women's studies places great value on its history, and the difficulty of getting out-of-print materials is such that it is better to be aware of potential purchases while they are easily available.

This is why the strong negative correlation between the placement of a book in the Loeb bibliography and how likely that book was to be collected is such a concern. This correlation suggests that the collection developers, if they did use this bibliography as a source for some of their purchases, could have run into problems, such as dwindling funds, as the bibliography was used. There may be no causation, but this correlation can at least serve as a reminder to be aware of thoroughness and persistence in the collection development process.

Although this study is limited to a particular field, it does speak more broadly to other interdisciplinary programs. At least women's studies has the edge of being a highly visible field, which some others are not.

Also, although this study is limited to a certain kind and size of academic institution, other sizes of academic institutions face similar issues. Research-level institutions may have greater resources available than the institutions used in the study, but choices still must be made and hard-to-find materials (such as those published by

small, alternative presses, as is often the case in the field of women's studies) must be sought out. The responsibilities that come with these greater funds are also increased. Even if a research institution does not have a women's studies program, it still has the responsibility of collecting relevant women's studies materials that tie into the disciplines it does directly support. This issue of funding relative to collection development is all the more true for smaller libraries with smaller budgets, where each title purchased involves a significant decision-making process.

It would be interesting to see how well all 64 of the libraries in the original sample would fare with a similar study and how different these collections are from libraries of the same size that are not supporting a women's studies program. Lesser-known bibliographies could also be useful in a similar study. This study faced the risk that libraries have used the bibliographies chosen for the study samples as collection tools, thereby possibly distorting the results. (The portion of the findings addressing the correlation between placement in the Loeb bibliography and the probability of collection even assumes this possibility.) Using more obscure bibliographic tools or even compiling one specifically for use in a study similar to this would provide further evidence as to the general quality of women's studies academic collections.

This study was limited to collection practices at academic institutions in the United States, but the issue certainly extends beyond national boundaries. Studying collection practices in other countries would give a broader picture of how well women's studies materials are collected, as would studying collection practices in areas of the library world other than academic libraries. Just as the field of women's studies has

broadened to encompass the experience of all women and the aspect of gender, so should the study of its materials be broad.

NOTES

¹ Writers such as Mark Sandler advocate focusing on a small number of areas rather than “attempting to draw a thin sample of the whole of a field” (13).

² A section of the RLG Conspectus, which is a subject-oriented evaluation of a library’s holdings, does pertain directly to women’s studies. It includes an outline of the subject groups that make up the area of women’s studies, organized by LC classification.

³ This is not to say that older serials are not necessary, but, in this study, serials are included specifically for their function as the cutting edge of a field.

⁴ Money spent on electronic serials was not included because this study dealt almost solely with print subscriptions. Microform format was included only because it was inseparable from the print expenditure.

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