

## **The end of international and comparative librarianship?**

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Peter Johan LOR  
 Professor  
 University of Pretoria  
 Pretoria, South Africa  
[peterjlor@gmail.com](mailto:peterjlor@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT**

This question derives from the proposition that international matters presuppose the existence of nation states. If globalization is eroding the nation state, this has significant implications for the social sciences, including international and comparative librarianship as a field of study and research. In this paper I explore the history of the relationship between, on the one hand, the nation state and its predecessors; and on the other, the professional aspirations and activities denoted by international librarianship and the scholarly study of this field, asking what the implications may be of globalization and the decline of the nation state. I first attempt to sketch the evolution of the spatial and intellectual horizons of librarianship, documentation, and information activities from early times to the present. I propose identify six such horizons: local, imperial, universal, national, international and global, roughly in chronological order, with the caveat that although we may relate the horizons to certain historical periods and identify a number of horizons occurring in a chronological sequence, they overlap and some recur in new manifestations. I focus on the period since the mid-nineteenth century, relating the various forms of internationalism that arose then to the development of international bibliographic and library activities and to the emergence of the field of study known as ‘international and comparative librarianship’, before considering globalization and how it is impacting on library and information services. Finally I reflect on the implications for our field of the increasing dissatisfaction among social scientists with “methodological nationalism”, the assumption that the nation state is the natural and adequate “container” for the study of social phenomena. Similar critiques are found in comparative education and development studies. I consider the implications of this movement for international and comparative librarianship and make some suggestions for the renewal of the field.

### **Introduction**

Coming from someone who has devoted a good part of his career to international librarianship, in professional practice as well as in teaching and research, this title may appear to pose a surprising question. It is prompted by two observations.

The first observation is that international and comparative librarianship as a recognizable field of study and research has lost ground in the last three decades. I cannot offer exact comparative data, but my impression is that there are fewer library schools offering credits in ‘international and/or comparative librarianship’, although we see courses on such topics as “global information infrastructure”, international information economy”, and “international information issues”. It seems that the L-word (library/librarianship) is avoided, while in the titles of the few substantial recent books published in the field, the word ‘international’ is

avoided, as for example in *Libraries: global reach – local touch* (McCook, Ford & Lippincott, 1998), *Global librarianship* (Kesselman and Weintraub, 2004) and *Global library and information science* (Abdullahi, 2009). A recent exception is the Festschrift for Professor S.B. Ghosh, edited by Chakraborty and Das (2014), *Collaboration in international and comparative librarianship*. Most significantly, little is left of the attempts that we saw in the 1970s and 1980s to define the field (or fields) and develop its methodology and theory. International library matters are still being written about, and comparisons are still being undertaken, but not with any explicit aim of contributing to a recognizable body of theory (Lor & Britz, 2010; Lor 2014).

My second observation is less directly related to our field. In the social sciences today there is much questioning of the significance of the nation state. Globalization has wide-ranging economic, cultural, social, political, military and other implications, and it is argued that as globalization advances we are witnessing the decline of the nation state. At the theoretical level this has significant implications for the social sciences (e.g. Schriewer, 2006; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010). Here the assumption, more than a century old, that the nation state is a fit and proper “container” for the study of social phenomena, is increasingly being discarded as “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Dale, 2005). This has implications too for international and comparative librarianship as a field of study and research. My proposition is that international matters presuppose the existence of nation states. If nation states fade away, this affects the international system, international relations, internationalization, internationalism and international studies. What does this imply for international and comparative librarianship?

In this paper I explore the history of the relationship between, on the one hand, the nation state and its predecessors, and on the other, the professional attitudes and activities denoted by international librarianship and the scholarly study of this field. In the first part of the paper I attempt to sketch the evolution of the spatial and intellectual horizons of librarianship, documentation, and information activities from early times to the present. I shall focus on the period since the mid-nineteenth century, relating the various forms of internationalism that arose then to the development of the field of study known as ‘international and comparative librarianship’. Finally I reflect on the implications for our field of globalization and the increasing dissatisfaction among social scientists with the central position of the nation state.

At this point I will refrain from contributing to the already considerable corpus of definitions that have been put forward for international and comparative librarianship. Although much effort has gone into distinguishing between them, I group them together here pragmatically because that is how the field has been studied and taught. I see international librarianship as an area of professional action comprising library-related activities and organizations across national boundaries and the scholarly study of these. I use ‘libraries’ and ‘librarianship’ as shorthand for the wider field of librarianship, documentation and information services commonly denoted by LIS.

### **Periodization of library development**

The development of libraries is commonly delineated following the periodization of world history, which in most cases is focussed on the history of Europe and its antecedents. A tripartite division of history into ancient, medieval and modern, which had developed since the fifteenth century and was enshrined in the twentieth century in the three massive

Cambridge histories of the modern, medieval and ancient periods<sup>1</sup>, today remains the norm in western conceptualization. This is reflected for example in American university departments, textbooks and journals, and even in textbooks purporting to reject the prevailing Eurocentric focus (Green, 1992).<sup>2</sup> In library science texts we commonly find chapters dealing with libraries in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the modern period (cf, Harris, 1999; Arns, 2009). Sometimes Byzantine and Arab libraries are also covered, and in the modern period there may be some mention of libraries in the developing world. But the periodization is essentially Eurocentric and Americentric. This is the approach followed by Glynn (2004) in his brief overview of the development of “global librarianship”. Since libraries are social institutions, it makes sense to delineate their development in relation to political, social and cultural history. Clues regarding milestones and periods can also be found in histories of the book (e.g, Dahl, 1968), documentation (Coblans, 1974), information science (Rayward, 1996) and information history (Weller, 2008; 2011; Black & Schiller, 2014).

I was able to find only one substantial and theoretically based attempt to devise a comprehensive periodization scheme for library history. Meijer (1991) explicitly took Western history (including its origins in the ancient Near East, and in other regions in which European culture has subsequently been adopted) as the basis for his work. After considering various “keys” he arrived at “knowledge development” as the “periodizing key” and divided the history of Western librarianship into three eras. For the purpose of this paper, Meijer's periodization is too broad. At the other extreme, a periodization specifically of international librarianship by Ludington (1954) covered only the field of US involvement from 1876 to the early 1950s.<sup>3</sup>

As I explored the topic, it became clear that I was not dealing simply with periods that succeeded one another in time, but with orientations and aspirations in librarianship that emerged over time, but were not necessarily replaced by newer ones. I shall refer to these orientations and aspirations as 'horizons'.

## **Libraries – from local to global horizons**

In the sections that follow I attempt to sketch the evolution of the spatial and intellectual horizons of librarianship from early times to the present. By ‘horizon’ I mean the geographic (e.g. local, national, international, global) and intellectual space within which librarians see their work (for example in terms of collections, bibliographic control and users) and the extent to which they interact with librarians in other cultural and political entities. One might also use the German word *Umwelt*, which has a greater resonance than the English 'environment', to refer broadly to the spatial and cultural reach and intellectual scope of libraries. The term 'horizons' implies that different horizons can coexist in the same geographical space and at the same time. The evolution of libraries in terms of such horizons

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<sup>1</sup> For overviews, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Cambridge\\_Ancient\\_History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cambridge_Ancient_History), <http://www.librarything.com/series/Cambridge+Medieval+History>, and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Cambridge\\_Modern\\_History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cambridge_Modern_History).

<sup>2</sup> Green (1992: 52-53) himself does not subscribe to the tripartite division, preferring a view which identifies the 10<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as “times of major discontinuity in European society” and for world history, a sixteenth century division between pre-modern and modern epochs.

<sup>3</sup> Ludington identified three periods. The first period comprises 1876 to the outbreak of WW1; the second period is that between the two world wars; the third period covers WW2 and after.

is not necessarily synchronized. Although I relate this evolution to certain historical periods and identify a number of phases occurring in a chronological sequence, the horizons overlap and some recur in new manifestations.

I must emphasize that this is an exploratory exercise. I am not a historian and I paint with a broad brush using secondary sources and some personal observations. Unfortunately, this overview is limited largely to Western library and information history, and my emphasis is on the more recent periods. With these provisos, an outline of the horizons follows, roughly in order of appearance.

### **Horizon 1: Local**

The first libraries, which may have been primarily archives, are thought to have made their appearance in temples, which had governance as well as religious functions. Early libraries are known from China, Egypt and Mesopotamia (Harris, 1999; Glynn, 2004; Yu & Chiou-Peng, 2011). The early city states were small, as were the collections. In the course of time polities grew and we find royal libraries of greater scope. But libraries of mainly local significance and with collections of limited scope have persisted to this day. City libraries in Ancient Greece and the collections of monasteries, cathedrals and the nobility during the Middle Ages were of limited scope. The vast majority of libraries in the world today are relatively small public and school libraries. Their horizon is mainly local or institutional, which is not to say that their collections do not encompass material from the wider world.

### **Horizon 2: Imperial**

It is in the larger, expanding polities that we first find royal libraries with an imperial horizon. Here the well-known ancient libraries of Ashurbanipal, Alexandria, and Pergamum can be mentioned (Harris, 1999), while in China royal archives or libraries were maintained as early as the Shang Dynasty (1600-1100 BCE) (Yu & Chiou-Peng, 2011:976). The horizon expanded to encompass the literary and scholarly products of the diverse peoples of an empire.

The imperial horizon was to reappear later, notably in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, when national libraries, along with museums built up collections of books and artefacts collected from the colonial empires. Today, imperialism is a term of opprobrium. In this connection it is interesting to note that the reproach of “bibliographic imperialism” has more recently been levelled at the United States Library of Congress in connection with its acquisitions activities in Africa (Lor & Britz, 2004).

### **Horizon 3 Universal**

As we know from reports about the ancient Library of Alexandria the imperial horizon rapidly expanded to universal scope. The Ptolemies of Egypt were not the first rulers to collect and translate books in many languages “as tools of commercial and political intelligence and cultural information”. However, the Library of Alexandria, founded in the reign of Ptolemy I Soter in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, aggressively collected books from beyond its ruler’s realm. Galen recounted that the Pharaoh’s customs officials confiscated books from

ships entering the harbor, copied them and returned the copies to the ships, whilst keeping the originals (MacLeod, 2000).

During the Middle Ages the universe of libraries contracted. It was an intellectual rather than a spatial universe. Libraries served a society in which national boundaries were less significant than the church and the monastic orders, and where the national languages then developing took second place to Latin. For Europe at least, Latin was the universal language of the Church and scholarship. Astronomers from Poland, Denmark and Italy communicated their discoveries in Latin; Erasmus and Descartes wrote in Latin; in Sweden Linnaeus devised a universal scheme for naming all living organisms, using a mixture of Latin and Greek. The universal idea was widespread and from the late Middle Ages found expression also in dreams of universal bibliography, best exemplified by Conrad Gesner's *Bibliotheca universalis* of 1545 (Coblans, 1974:25-26) and by the proposals (not implemented) of a later polymath, Gottfried von Leibniz (1646-1716), for universal abstracting and indexing (Glynn, 2004:7).

The growing use in European scholarship of languages other than Latin, and the advent of the scientific journal greatly impeded bibliographic control (Coblans, 1974:26), but the universal ideal surfaced again in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, being reflected for example in formal agreements for the exchange of publications between institutions in different countries. Such international collaboration strictly speaking implies the existence of nation-states, and it is therefore necessary to consider the national horizon before proceeding to the international horizon.

#### **Horizon 4: National**

The Peace of Westphalia, a set of treaties which brought to an end the Thirty Years War (1618 to 1648), is traditionally thought to have provided the formal basis for the sovereignty of states. This was followed somewhat later by the notion of the nation-state, which emerged with the rise of nationalism. However, the recognition in 1648 of the sovereignty of the major European states was a milestone in a development process that had started considerably earlier, as is exemplified by the gradual process by which the rulers of the Île de France gradually extended their control over the hexagonal territory that we today know as France. Dialects spoken in centres of political and economic power such as the various royal capitals gained recognition as national languages. This period also saw the emergence of royal libraries in various royal capitals. From 1483 the royal library of the kings of France was passed on from father to son. It was moved to the royal palace of the Louvre in Paris in the 1560s. These royal collections later provided the basis for some of Europe's national libraries. The French royal library was renamed the Bibliothèque nationale during the French Revolution (Poulain, 2011:1877). The 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were also marked by other book and bibliographic developments of national scope, for example, the first legal deposit legislation, which was first promulgated in 1537 in France by King François I (Crews, 1988:553).

Further development of national libraries took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, sometimes as a symbol of national identity, as new states emerged (McGowan, 2011:3854-5). The national horizon continues to this day in national libraries and national library services, national legislation, standards, library associations, etc. But the national, imperial and universal horizons were intertwined. The great national libraries of major powers (such as the British Museum, the Bibliothèque nationale, and the Library of Congress) were national

institutions but universal and imperial in scope. Specimens and artefacts of all kinds, including books and other documentary materials, collected or looted in the colonies, were added to the collections of national museums, libraries and archives. The British Museum Department of Printed Books has been regarded as one of the instruments of imperial rule (Black & Schiller, 2014:650). For example, in 1842 the British Copyright Act was made applicable to all the colonies and territories comprising the British Empire, so that in the case of South Africa publishers in the Cape Colony and the Colony of Natal were required to send a copy of each printed work to London, to be added to the collection of the British Museum's Department of Printed Books. Unfortunately for the retrospective bibliography of South Africa, this requirement was honoured more in the breach than in the observance (Willemse, 1962). From the late 1800s to the mid-1900s the printed catalogues of the great national libraries were the closest approximation to universal bibliography to be found at that time. However, the cataloguing rules they handed down were national; there was as yet no impetus for international standardization (Coblans, 1974:11-12).

### **Horizon 5: International**

The concept 'international' presupposes that of 'national'. Hence one cannot strictly speaking discuss international librarianship before the coming of the nation state. Indeed, the word 'international' is of relatively recent origin, having been coined by the English utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, in his *Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) to refer to the law of nations.<sup>4</sup> International law was important to maintain relations – international relations in the true sense – between the autonomous nation states which formed the building blocks of the system of nation states. The 19th century saw the emergence of many new states. The Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) attempted to consolidate and bring into balance the major European powers following the Napoleonic wars, but the balance was disturbed by the decline of some empires, such as those of Spain and Turkey, and the expansion of others, such as those of Britain, France and Russia. Further turmoil accompanied the unification of Germany and Italy and the emergence or re-emergence of smaller nation states (e.g. Belgium, Serbia) in the interstices between the major powers. At the same time colonial empires expanded to cover the blank spaces on the maps of all the continents but Antarctica. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the system of nation states had developed to the point where almost all of the Earth's surface was controlled by one nation state or another. As powerful forces are released by colliding and separating tectonic plates, so the competition among the major powers and the resistance of subordinate groups striving to establish their own nation states led to a growing threat of instability and armed conflict. It is against this background that we see the rise of internationalism, this word first being recorded in 1851.<sup>5</sup>

The terms 'internationalism' and 'internationalist' have long been associated with ideals of supra-national world government and as such have had negative connotations (cf. Kuehl, 1986:1-2). Here I use the term 'internationalism' broadly to refer to attitudes, ideals and advocacy in favour of constructive relations among nations, and in favour of arrangements among them that promote peace, stability and human wellbeing. When applied to librarianship and documentation, this implies an international perspective. Internationalists

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<sup>4</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/view/Entry/98072?redirectedFrom=international#eid>, accessed 2014-06-21

<sup>5</sup>Oxford English dictionary, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/view/Entry/98074>, accessed 2014-06-21

then, are those who hold such attitudes and contribute to the pursuit of these ideals. The two categories of internationalists proposed by Herman (1969: 6-8) provide a useful perspective on internationalism. Herman distinguished between “community internationalists”, who “perceive society as something more than structured national states” and the “polity internationalists: who “think primarily along juridical or governmental lines” (Kuehl, 1986:4). Here we see two main strands of internationalism. While the polity internationalists worked within the framework of the nation-state system to create formal structures for peace such as the League of Nations and later the United Nations and related intergovernmental organizations, the “community internationalists” took more idealistic approaches:

They called for universal brotherhood, advanced the notion of an interdependent world, hoped to spread democracy, achieve disarmament, combat militarism, and abolish warfare (Kuehl, 1986:4)

Kuehl proposed two further categories of internationalists: Socialist internationalists adhered to Marxist doctrine, emphasizing the brotherhood of man and the necessity for the “minds of the masses...[to] be imbued with class consciousness before international cooperation in the form of universal brotherhood can be achieved” (Kuehl, 1986:5). This was sometimes referred to as “red internationalism” (Somsen, 2014:217). It was associated with socialism, communism and the socialist Internationals (Anderson, 2002).

The other category proposed by Kuehl was that of “liberal internationalism”, which had a middle class character, took a generally optimistic and positivist approach to the development of society, and sought practical means of achieving peace, for example, by arms control and arbitration (Kuehl, 1986:5). Within this category I would place what I shall call the scientific universalists, who held a positivist belief that the sciences offered the solutions to the problems of society, and who sought to create systems for the universal dissemination of scientific literature. Some went so far as to create artificial languages to facilitate scientific communication (Kajewski, 2014; de Kloe, 2014). This shows that there were many strands of internationalism. If all this seems rather far removed from librarianship, I hope that it will prove more relevant a little later as we consider the perspectives of librarians, documentalists and others concerned with information and knowledge.

The period which stretched approximately from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s was one of transition, characterized by increasing complexity and risk. Polity internationalists responded *inter alia* by the development of international law, including the first Geneva Conventions (1864, 1906, 1929)<sup>6</sup> and Hague Conventions (1899, 1907)<sup>7</sup> dealing with humanitarian relief and rules of war respectively. Various international agreements were reached relating to transport and communications. A new, global telecommunications order started taking shape in the mid-1800s (Hartmann, 2014:23-24). The International Telecommunications Union was founded in 1865 as the International Telegraph Union; it was followed by the World Meteorological Organization, founded as the International Meteorological Organization in 1873, and the Universal Postal Union in 1874.<sup>8</sup>

The responses of community internationalists took many forms. I have already referred to “Red internationalism” and the formation of international socialist and communist organizations. Various shades of liberal internationalists pursued ideals of universal peace,

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<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva\\_Conventions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Conventions)

<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hague\\_Peace\\_Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hague_Peace_Conference)

<sup>8</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations#Specialized\\_agencies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations#Specialized_agencies)

world government, and the harnessing of scientific progress for human well-being regardless of national borders (Somsen, 2014). This is illustrated by the creation of non-governmental organizations and institutions for humanitarian work, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross<sup>9</sup> in 1863, and for the promotion of peace, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union.<sup>10</sup> This body, initially established in 1889 as an organization of parliamentarians participating in their private capacities, was part of a larger phenomenon, the emergence of international non-governmental associations. In this era of scientific positivism many scientists – I have referred to these as scientific universalists – believed that scientific progress should be harnessed not only to combat social problems and promote healthier and more harmonious societies, but also to ensure world peace.

The variously named international fairs and expositions that became prominent from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century can be seen as expressions of both polity and liberal internationalism. The national pavilions showcased the achievements and nationalist aspirations of the participating nation states. They served national commercial interests, but also provided opportunities for the diffusion of information and for communicating scientific progress, providing platforms for scientific universalists. Rayward (2014: 6) expresses the paradox: “They embodied a universalist aspiration that was harnessed to goals of nationalist prestige”. They are of particular interest here because they played a significant role in the development of our field, stimulating both national and international contact and cooperation in librarianship. The first national meeting of librarians took place concurrently with the second World’s Fair, held in New York in 1853 in imitation of London’s Great Exhibition. This first ‘national convention of librarians’ in the United States attracted some international interest, if not attendance. It was followed by a second meeting at the second World’s Fair held in the United States, the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. On this occasion the American Library Association (ALA) was founded (Gambée 1968). The British followed the American example in the following year, when the (British) Library Association was founded at the First International Congress of Librarians, in which librarians from a number of countries participated. Further international congresses and conferences followed. Paul Otlet used the Universal Exposition of Brussels, held in 1897, to promote his project (on which more below) of a universal scientific catalogue, a section on bibliography being included in the science exhibition (Rayward, 2014:8-9). The holding of international conferences of librarians and the creation of international associations of librarians and documentalists can also be seen as manifestations of community internationalism.

Rayward (2012, 2014) has discussed the growth of the idea of a universal catalogue from roughly 1850 onwards, focussing especially on the European Belle Époque, from 1880 to 1914, as a turning point in the development of the world’s information infrastructure.<sup>11</sup> Coblans (1974:26-28) described the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a period of crisis in bibliographic control, which came to a head in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I see this as a period during which the universal, imperial, national and international horizons coincided to a greater or lesser extent. During this period too, the contradictions internal to internationalism, as reflected in the various forms mentioned above, in the fields of bibliography and librarianship, can be discerned in various international initiatives and projects. Here I can touch on only a few illustrative examples.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Cross)

<sup>10</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inter-Parliamentary\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inter-Parliamentary_Union), accessed 2014-07-02

<sup>11</sup> Rayward has written extensively on bibliographic control initiatives of international scope in this pivotal period, (e.g. Rayward, 1975, 1981, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2012, 2014).

An early attempt to achieve universal bibliographic control was an ambitious project by the Royal Society to compile a universal index, the *International catalogue of scientific literature*, which ultimately covered the years 1901-1914. The project was plagued by problems and was finally written off. The failure of the project was in part due to its reliance on “national bureaux” and the recording of scientific input on a country-by-country basis (Coblans, 1974:27-28).

The most ambitious and fascinating initiatives during this period were those of two Belgian lawyers, Paul Otlet and Henri la Fontaine, who organized the First International Conference of Bibliography in 1895 and followed it up by founding the *Institut international de bibliographie* (International Institute of Bibliography, IIB). An international office to support it was set up in Brussels with support from the Belgian government. The aim of the IIB was the construction of an index named the *Répertoire Bibliographique Universel* (RBU). It would organize the scholarly literature of the entire world, using the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), an adaptation and expansion by Otlet of Melvil Dewey’s Decimal Classification. The first conference was followed by four more, in 1897, 1900, 1908 and 1910. The *Répertoire* was a visionary scheme, well in advance of the technology it needed. It did not survive the vicissitudes of the First World War and lack of interest on the part of successive Belgian governments. It was terminated in the 1930s, when it had grown to around 16 million entries (Rayward, 2012, 2014). However, the IIB did survive under different names until 2001. The UDC is still being updated and used worldwide.

Both Otlet and La Fontaine (a Belgian senator who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1913) were strong advocates for world peace. In terms of the categories of internationalists, I would classify them as liberal internationalists, and within this category I would group Otlet with the scientific universalists. Rayward (2003) indicates that, although Otlet had a positivist worldview, there was also a mystical element in his writings and this is reflected in his conceptualization of the Mundaneum. One can thus read the outcomes of initiatives such as those of Otlet and La Fontaine, and the failed attempts by leaders of the British Society for International Bibliography to work with the IIB and the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations (Laqua, 2013), as reflecting a clash between the universality of science (reminiscent of the earlier universal horizon) and the ideals of community internationalism on the one hand and on the other, the constraints imposed by the nation-state system.

The increasing emphasis on nation states as the basis for international bibliographic work is reflected in the evolution of the IIB. In 1937 it became the *Fédération internationale de documentation* (FID, International Federation for Documentation), in 1988 renamed International Federation for Information and Documentation (Rayward, 1994). The changes of name reflected organizational changes. As the work at its Brussels headquarters declined and effectively came to an end in the 1930s, leadership passed to a younger generation. Following a revision of its constitution in 1924, the IIB evolved into an international non-governmental organization with national organizations as the effective members (Rayward, 1994). In 1934 the headquarters were moved to The Hague. In 1994 the FID took the initiative to create a “Strategic Alliance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Information to serve better the World Community” (Horton, 2009:2897), a strategic shift to the high ground of the information society. In spite of this, the FID was dissolved in 2001, having played a major role as the international forum for documentalists and librarians in research libraries and special libraries for over 100 years. It seems ironic that the FID, which had positioned itself in the broader information society, failed while the International

Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) survived in spite of being more closely linked to libraries –institutions some regarded as obsolescent. One clue to FID’s demise may be found in Horton’s account (p.2897) of the final years, which highlighted FID’s dependence on a dwindling number of national members.

A great deal of international library activity followed the First World War. The horrific destruction wrought by the war stimulated humanitarian and library development activities in Europe by American organizations, for example the rebuilding of the University Library of Leuven in Belgium (Civallero, 2007), the donation of children’s libraries named *L’Heure Joyeuse* in Belgium and France (Maack, 1993; Mitts-Smith, 2007), and the creation of the American Library in Paris (Maack, 2005, 2007). The short-lived but influential American-sponsored Paris Library School (1923-1928), has been analysed by Witt (2014) as an example of cultural internationalism, a growing sense of “global community” (p.506), the peace movement, the advent of international non-governmental organizations, and early manifestations of (a somewhat benevolent) globalization. At this time the American Library Association (ALA) was deeply involved in international work (Kraske, 1985), collaborating with the State Department in its cultural diplomacy initiatives, which intensified during WW2. The 1920s and 1930s saw major library development programmes by the Carnegie Corporation of New York in British Commonwealth countries (Rochester, 1990, 1993, 1996). Space constraints preclude a discussion of these varied activities, which reflect the full spectrum of polity and community internationalism.

An outcome of the “new, more zealous spirit growing out of World War 1” (Kraske, 1985:6) was the founding of IFLA. Koops and Wieder (1977) situated the origins of IFLA “in the light of the reviving supra-national tendencies towards union, characteristic of the post-war period of the twenties. These amalgamating trends were strongly effected [sic] by the consequences of ... World War I...” and by “the radiance of a youthful League of Nations” (p.12). Here they refer also to the League’s Commission for Intellectual Cooperation and its Secretariat, the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation. Thus, in terms of the categories of internationalism, IFLA appears to have been of mixed parentage, having roots in both community and polity internationalism. During the Inter-War period IFLA was closely associated with the League of Nations. IFLA’s long-serving first Secretary General, Dr Tietse Sevensma, was the head of the League’s Library in Geneva (Lor, 2012:270). But it has been noted that in its early years IFLA resembled nothing so much as a “gentleman’s club” (Wilhite, 2012:23) – perhaps evidence of the more bourgeois manifestation of liberal internationalism.

Until 1976 IFLA’s membership was limited to national library associations, reflecting the primacy of the nation state in international professional cooperation, but in that year membership was opened to institutions and its name was changed to reflect this, to International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, while the acronym IFLA was left unchanged. It is tempting but speculative to interpret this change as a reduction of IFLA’s dependence on bodies delimited in terms of nation states and hence as a clue to its survival in contrast with FID.

The nation-state system was reinforced after the Second World War (WW2) by the founding of the United Nations Organization (UN) and the creation of the “United Nations family”, a panoply of subsidiary or related intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), some of which were of earlier vintage. For our purposes the most relevant of the IGOs is the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Its founding document

embodies the ideals of community internationalism: “That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”<sup>12</sup> This statement echoes an idealistic community internationalism that goes back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paradox is that the lofty ideals expressed in UNESCO’s constitution have to be pursued using resources provided by governments who may not share these ideals and are often unwilling to contribute the resources. In accordance with the nation-state system decisions are made by diplomats representing governments. In many cases the governments of wealthy countries, which contribute most of UNESCO’s funding, jealously guard their sovereignty and are the most reluctant to agree to any form of super-national structure or programme.

Nevertheless UNESCO has played a long and significant role in international librarianship, documentation and related fields. UNESCO helped to resuscitate IFLA after WW2. In the early years such assistance was not limited to funding and formal partnership relationships, but also extended to providing advice on how to run IFLA in an efficient manner. The result was that IFLA became a more modern and effective international non-governmental organization (INGO). At the same time, IFLA adopted terminology and somewhat bureaucratic procedures similar to those of UNESCO, such as medium-term programmes (Lor, 2012:271). Several of the INGOs which had close relationships with UNESCO sometimes resembled a miniaturized version of UNESCO, an IGO. As UNESCO’s interest in libraries waned, so did its support for IFLA and with it, its influence there.

Interesting examples of UNESCO’s contribution are its involvement in two of IFLA’s core programmes during the 1970s to 1990s, Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) and Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) (Lor, 2012:274). As in the case of UNESCO’s ill-fated NATIS and UNISIST programmes, the emphasis was on national building blocks. Their names notwithstanding, these programmes were conceptualized within the framework of polity internationalism. They required the construction of infrastructure at the national level. International and regional reports, meetings and training workshops were employed to promote the development of national structures, activities and facilities (such as national bibliographies, national union catalogues and inter-library lending systems). These were to feed into “universal” (more correctly, international) systems through standardization and the sharing of data and resources. Much work was done, particularly in developing countries, to promote cooperation at the national level and to cajole national governments into releasing the necessary funding, but with limited success. The UBC and UAP programmes were terminated in 2003.<sup>13</sup> Although brave statements were made about the concepts and principles having been successfully disseminated, and about the programmes’ legacy of standards, programmes and publications (Parent, 2004), in fact national bibliographies and inter-library lending in many developing countries still leave much to be desired. It can be argued that such progress as has taken place, has been through the Internet and OCLC – but these must be considered under the next horizon, the global horizon.

Before I close this section, three further aspects of internationalism in the period following WW2 require mention. In a period marked by the Cold War and decolonization, there was intense competition between the West and the East for the allegiance and resources of unaligned countries. In the Third World a number of proxy wars were conducted between

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<sup>12</sup> UNESCO Constitution, [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), accessed 2014-07-02

<sup>13</sup> The UBC programme survived in a slimmed down version as part of the UBCIM (UBC-International MARC) programme.

forces allied to the two blocs. The rivalry gave rise to a great deal of international activity involving libraries, documentation and information services. Here I highlight three areas: development aid, area studies, and the internationalization of library and information science (LIS) education.

Cultural diplomacy was part of Cold War rivalry. Agencies such as the United States Information Agency (USIA) (Dizard, 2003; Simmons, 2005) and the British Council (O'Connor & Roman, 1994; Maack, 2001) disseminated information materials generally intended to put the donor country in a favourable light, which is not to say that they were not found useful. The cultural diplomacy agencies also showcased modern Western library techniques in developing countries and promoted library development there based on Western models, sending expert consultants and expatriate librarians to set up libraries and provide technical assistance training. The British Council in particular played a significant role in library development in former British colonies (Rosenberg, 1994; Olden, 1995). Although library and information related aid has never been more than a minor component of aid programmes, it generated much professional discussion. By the 1980s and 1990s it was clear that in a significant number of developing countries well-intentioned, western-inspired library development programs had begun to falter. Starting in the 1970s a critical re-evaluation of these post-colonial efforts, sometimes referred to as "cultural imperialism" (Foskett 1976:7), got under way, as is described, for example, in contributions by young African librarians such as Adolphe Amadi (1981) and Kingo Mchombu (1982) and in seminal works such as Gassol de Horowitz's *Librarianship: a third world perspective* (1988).

A second consequence of the rivalry between East and West was the rise of area studies, particularly in the United States but also in the USSR (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006). For effective diplomatic and military action, the competing powers needed information about their enemies, their allies, and countries in between. Area studies brought together in research centres scholars from different disciplines to focus in depth on a particular region of the world (Katzenstein, 2001:787). In the USA a number of Federal programmes provided significant funding for area studies. Public Law 480 of 1954 allowed countries receiving food aid to pay for this using their national currencies. These payments were placed in special accounts that were used in part for the acquisition of materials from those countries by Field Offices operated by the Library of Congress (Hazen, 2012:123-124). In 1966 the Library of Congress initiated the ambitious National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC), involving a number of "shared cataloging centers" overseas as well as cooperative arrangements with national libraries for the acquisition of data from national bibliographies (Lorenz, 1972:553-558). Using mechanisms such as these, large research collections on regions such as Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe have been built up in the Library of Congress and in major US universities. The scale of the programmes and the resulting collections, running into hundreds of thousands of volumes, are those of an imperial power and far exceed what the 19<sup>th</sup> century librarians of the British Museum could have imagined.

In the USA a third consequence of post-war conditions was a movement for the 'internationalization' of library education. Internationalization was defined by Carroll (1987:x) as "the process by which a nationalistic library school topic, an entire curriculum, or an entire school is changed into one with a significant and varied international thrust, the process whereby it is permeated with international policies, viewpoints, ideas and facts". The American use of the word 'international' to mean 'foreign' can cause confusion here, as 'international education' is sometimes used to refer to the education of foreign students. Here the education of American students is intended.

An early scholar in this field was Frances Laverne Carroll, who wrote a PhD dissertation on *The development of an instrument for the evaluation of internationalism in education for librarianship* (1970). In it she identified six possible goals of international content in US library school curricula (pp. 43-55), which included “international understanding”, “advancement of knowledge” and “technical assistance”. Another aim was to advance the objectives of US foreign policy (including the combating of communism and the strengthening of relations with the allies of the USA). Carroll’s analysis highlights some of the ambivalence inherent in international studies, particularly at the height of the Cold War. Some goals are clearly subordinated to national policy interests. Others too, may not be as altruistic or idealistic as they look. The promotion of positive attitudes, friendship and cooperativeness in the library sphere, and understanding the behavior of librarians in other countries are laudable motives, although exerting national influence is also a motive in seeking international understanding. It would be uncharitable, however, to ascribe all this to selfish (national) motives. Regardless of the motives of the politicians and administrators who recruit them, many library professionals give unselfishly of their time and energy in the belief that they are contributing to international understanding – idealism harnessed in the pursuit of Realpolitik.

It is no coincidence that, although international relations and international comparisons among libraries can be traced much further back, international and comparative librarianship made their appearance as distinct fields of study during the 1950s and 1960s. The earliest mention of comparative librarianship occurred in the mid-1950s (Dane, 1954a, 1954b), coinciding with the growing Cold War competition described above. The early literature (e.g. Shores, 1970; Asheim, 1989) emphasized the value of these fields in terms of international cooperation and understanding, and had an idealistic and aspirational tone akin to missionary zeal, as manifested in an article by Swank (1963) who identified “six items for export”. These were characteristics of American librarianship that he considered deserving of emulation in other countries, for example the evolution of the library profession, the attitude of service, and the role of the library in promoting intellectual freedom. Swank particularly envisaged “exporting” these concepts to developing countries. The 1970s saw various attempts to define and delimit the two fields and to distinguish between them (Collings, 1971; Danton, 1973, 1977; Harvey, 1973; Parker, 1974; Foskett, 1976). This literature petered out somewhat inconclusively. In comparative librarianship attempts were made to establish a sound conceptual and methodological basis for the field (Simsova and McKee, 1970, 1975; Krzys, 1974; Danton, 1973; Krzys *et al.*, 1982). The mechanistic and formulaic approach of these texts betrays the positivist influence of the educational comparativists of the 1960s, such as Bereday (1964) and Noah and Eckstein (1969). Newer thinking in comparative education and other comparative disciplines has somehow had little or no impact on comparative librarianship.

At least three possible explanations for this failure to thrive present themselves. First, librarianship, library history and related library-related courses generally have lost ground in library or LIS schools as the emphasis has shifted to information science and related offerings (Kajberg, 2009:2). Second, in the USA the generous federal funding for language and area studies and for technical assistance in Third World countries was drastically reduced during the Vietnam War (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006:30). It is likely that this also impacted funding for international and comparative librarianship. Third, as has happened in other social science disciplines, the advent of globalization has cast doubt on the validity of the more

conventional approaches to international and comparative studies (cf. Katzenstein, 2001: 790).

## Horizon 6: Global

It has become standard practice for people writing about contemporary library matters to preface statements by phrases such as “in this era of globalization” or “in our globalized world”. Although globalization is often mentioned in this way, there is much less in-depth discussion of it. Globalization is a bit like neoliberalism: those in favour of it do not discuss it nearly as often as those that oppose it. The word ‘globalization’ was first recorded in 1930, but judging by the quotations cited in the Oxford English Dictionary<sup>14</sup> the current meaning of the word did not emerge until ten or twenty years later:

The action, process, or fact of making global; *esp.* (in later use) the process by which businesses or other organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale, widely considered to be at the expense of national identity.

In the mean time it has become evident that globalization is a much more complex phenomenon than its OED definition suggests. Furthermore, it is a phenomenon of ancient origin. Rikowski (2005:9-10) traces it back to the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations. Tilly (2004:13) takes it back much further, arguing that “since the movement of humans out of Africa some 40,000 years ago, humanity has globalized repeatedly”. He identifies three phases of globalization since 1500. The third, now under way, followed WW2. It is characterized by a complex pattern of migration, the rise of multinational companies, the growth of international trade, and a multifaceted development of international relations and institutions which undermine the power of individual states (pp.13-17).

Globalization is multidimensional, embracing not only the commercial and economic domain emphasized by the OED, but also political, social, cultural, technological and environmental domains (Tilly, 2004; Rikowski, 2005; L.T. Smith, 2005). Its impact in these domains – positive or negative – is contested, particularly in developing countries (Rist, 1997; Haynes, 2008; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010). In our field the impact of globalization, amplified by modern information and communications technologies, on the flow of information and access to knowledge is particularly relevant. But for the purposes of this paper I must highlight the political-economic impact of globalization on the nation state.

In many areas of modern life we are far more internationally connected than in the past. ‘Territoriality’ – where we are located geographically – counts for less too, and this has led to changes in thinking and behaviour (Haynes, 2008:55). There are many issues, such as the pollution of the environment, drug smuggling, the movement of political and economic refugees, communicable diseases, terrorism, and cross-border information flows, which cannot be dealt with by individual governments. The reality is further that intergovernmental organizations – which are constituted by nation states – are also unable to deal with many of them. In response to domestic concerns nation states more readily block solutions than craft them. The inability of the ‘international community’ to deal decisively with global warming is a case in point and illustrates the limitations of the nation-state system in a globalizing world.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/view/Entry/272264?redirectedFrom=Globalization#eid>, accessed 2014-07-07

In (generally leftist) political-economic analyses the erosion of the power and significance of the nation state (Rikowski, 2005:12-13) and the “hollowing out of the state” (L.T. Smith, 2005:93) are mostly attributed to the growing power of multinational corporations and institutions such as the World Bank which enforce neoliberal economic policies. Rist (1997:223-224), a development theorist, sees globalization rhetoric as a means of attacking the state in order to deregulate and privatize the economy along neoliberal lines, leading to “dismemberment of social policies” previously entrusted to the state, so that the market mechanisms, so it is thought, can be left to bring about prosperity. He points to the weakening of the state’s control of the economy, for example, of the state’s ability to control the creation of money, interest rates and exchange rates, which are the “fundamental levers” of economic policy. Globalization has enabled big transnational corporations to “break loose from their nation-state of origin” (p.224). They can invest capital where most profits can be made, often shifting to countries with weak labour legislation, where labour is cheap and easily exploited.

If we shift focus and “zoom in” on our own field we can see some of this being played out here as well, albeit on a much smaller scale. With the coming of the Internet, major global players such as Google, Amazon and Wikipedia have come to occupy dominant positions in the dissemination of information, displacing or overshadowing local and national systems. This is illustrated by what has happened to the centuries-old preoccupation of librarianship with universal bibliographic control and (more recently) with universal access to publications. I mentioned earlier that IFLA, with support from UNESCO, devoted much energy to these projects, which emphasized national building blocks such as national bibliographies, union catalogues, inter-library lending schemes and repositories. Today, however, OCLC’s WorldCat constitutes a *de facto* global bibliography with over 320 million entries and a *de facto* global union catalogue with over 2,131 million holdings representing 72,000 libraries in 170 countries. Every four seconds a request is filled through its resource sharing facility.<sup>15</sup>

Not surprisingly, elements of national information infrastructures are being absorbed into this global player. In the Netherlands, OCLC gradually acquired ownership of Pica, a Dutch bibliographic utility which also provided services in other West European countries. Pica was fully absorbed into OCLC in 2007.<sup>16</sup> In South Africa the national bibliographic utility, SABINET, has been a partner of OCLC since 1995. Today, along with a number of other databases, the *South African national bibliography* is part of SABINET’s SACat Plus<sup>17</sup> and is also available in WorldCat. It is no longer published in print.<sup>18</sup> In effect South Africa’s national union catalogue and national bibliography still exist, but virtually, as subsets of a global database system. From a management perspective this makes good economic sense, but although OCLC has created a global governance structure which includes regional councils (Jordan, 2012), I have some disquiet about the USA’s global bibliographic hegemony.

The global dominance of US-based systems has also had an effect on international bibliographic standardization. IFLA’s UNIMARC format, well-adapted as it is to international use, has not taken off universally. In South Africa and other countries national MARC variants were scrapped in favour of USMARC (now MARC21). Similarly the Dewey

<sup>15</sup> WorldCat facts and statistics, <http://oclc.org/worldcat/catalog.en.html>, accessed 2014-07-13.

<sup>16</sup> Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OCLC\\_PICA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OCLC_PICA)

<sup>17</sup> SABINET reference, [http://www.sabinet.com/sabinet\\_reference](http://www.sabinet.com/sabinet_reference), accessed 2014-07-13

<sup>18</sup> [http://rda-sa.nlsa.ac.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=220](http://rda-sa.nlsa.ac.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=220)

decimal classification and Library of Congress classification systems are the dominant classification systems worldwide, in spite of being arguably less elegant and flexible than UDC. This illustrates the predominance of industry standards, which are not necessarily superior, but are chosen because of their large (global) user bases.

## **The nation state, methodological nationalism and globalization**

The advance of globalization has been accompanied by rethinking of the central place that the nation state has occupied in research in the social sciences since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Writing about the comparative social sciences, Schriewer (2006:319-322) pointed out that the nation state has not always been regarded as the necessary and immutable unit of analysis in comparative research. During the nineteenth century the formation of the social sciences disciplines, history and linguistics happened to coincide with the “full realization... of the modern nation state” (p.321). It then came to be accepted that the nation state was the normal setting for comparative studies in a world which “seemed to consist of clearly distinguishable entities defined as nation states” (p.321). It was assumed that these entities were distinct and internally coherent. As a result, many processes of interaction between cultures (mission, colonization, migration, conquest etc.) were overlooked.

This rethinking is not limited to comparative studies. A development theorist, Nederveen Pieterse (2010:1), has argued that, while the nation has been seen in the past as the standard unit of development, it is being overtaken by globalization and regionalization. And as international institutions and market forces become more influential the role of the state as the agent of development is being eroded. Furthermore,

The *boundaries* between what is internal and external are by no means fixed. Development discourse and its implicit assumptions of the ‘country’, ‘society’, ‘economy’ as the developing unit paper over this issue and assume much greater national cohesiveness and state control than is realistic. (p.46)

As the focus on the nation state in the social sciences, education and related fields was called into question, we see the term ‘international’ being problematized and the appearance of alternative terms such as ‘transnational’, ‘cross-national’ and supra-national. Generally, ‘transnational’ is used for processes (such as migration) that cross national borders; and ‘cross-national’ for comparisons of countries (with the assumption that they are functionally equivalent). This is an oversimplification. For more background see Schriewer (2006:323-324) and Hantrais (2009:2-5), who also deal with terms such as ‘cross-cultural’, ‘cross-societal’, ‘trans-cultural’ and ‘trans-societal’.

Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) have used the label “methodological nationalism” to refer to “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (p.302). They identified three forms of methodological nationalism (pp.304-308):

- (1) Ignorance: The nation-state was taken for granted to the extent that it became an invisible background to social science research. The result was an inability to understand the paradoxical co-existence of globalization and nationalism (p.308).
- (2) Naturalization: The second form of methodological nationalism “is taking national discourses, agendas, loyalties and histories for granted, without problematizing them or

making them an object of analysis in its own right” (p.304). An example is the barely questioned assumption that in newly independent states “nation building” is an obvious corollary of modernization (p.304).

(3) “Territorial limitation” or “territorialization”: This involves an obsession in the social sciences with “describing processes within nation-state boundaries as contrasted with those outside”. As a result, social scientists have “lost sight of the connections between such nationally defined territories” (p.307). Various processes and phenomena such as migration, diasporas and long-distance nationalism are overlooked as a result of thinking within the boxes of nation-states.

While the place of nation state in social science research has been challenged, some caution is also called for in embracing globalization. Green (1997:13), cited in Tikly (1999), has warned that in studies of postcolonial education an over-emphasis on globalization can lead to “...many issues relating to race, culture, diaspora and identity” [being] ignored or marginalized”. There is a danger that globalization simply becomes a smokescreen for shoddy comparative research. Another danger is that globalization may embody an unquestioned assumption that society – or education systems, or libraries – must evolve along predetermined lines to become increasingly homogenized and Westernized. A probably unintended example is found in a comparison of academic libraries in Ireland and Mexico (McCarthy & Tarango Ortiz, 2010) where the authors state that they

...hoped to profile characteristics of change, which the new technologies and philosophies of service bring to libraries, which have developed independently in different cultures and societies. It aims to place these changes and their implications in the context of what is now emerging as a common definition of the profession worldwide. This commonality defines the characteristics of a global profession i.e. one of common thinking, common technologies and common patterns of service delivery (p.506).

This may be well meant, but is symptomatic of what D.G. Smith (2003:39 calls “Globalization One”, a deterministic neoliberal vision that assumes a single universal logic.

### **Towards global library and information studies?**

If the international horizon and internationalism gave rise to international and comparative librarianship, can we assume that the global horizon and globalization will give rise to ‘global librarianship’ or something similar?<sup>19</sup> This depends on what we are talking about: the practical professional activity or its theoretical analysis.

The practice of librarianship and information work is already widely affected by globalization. Here are some examples:

The development of a global intellectual property regime has a major impact on the ability of librarians and information workers to serve their users. It is therefore appropriate for our international bodies such as IFLA and EBLIDA (European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations) to be actively involved as part of global or transnational civil society in advocacy at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and elsewhere. IFLA’s advocacy in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

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<sup>19</sup> The question arises, while we are doing away with the old-fashioned term ‘international’, should we not also scrap ‘librarianship’? But that’s a topic for another paper.

(SDGs)<sup>20</sup> that are being formulated to succeed to the millennium development goals (MDGs) is further evidence of such engagement in global processes.

The globalization of higher education has had various impacts on academic libraries. Increasingly, the literature reflects the challenges faced by these libraries in serving campuses located in more than one country or collaborating with partners in other countries (e.g. Hammond, 2009; Sharif & Demers, 2013). The education of librarians is also affected. While ‘internationalization’ of LIS education is nothing new, we are seeing more far-reaching trans-border programmes, especially in Europe (Abdullahi, Kajberg & Virkus, 2007; Johnson, 2013) which go well beyond the traditional ‘semester abroad’ or the earning of a few credits at a foreign university

The global movement of educated individuals is very evident in our profession, where it is no longer unusual for scholars to have worked in a number of countries and to hold concurrent positions in library schools in more than one country. The ‘brain drain’ from developing to developed countries is also turning out to be a more complex phenomenon than was initially thought, as the individuals concerned not only contribute to scholarship in the First World institutions they have joined but also contribute to development in their countries of origin as mentors, consultants and visiting professors (*Economist*, 2011; UNCTAD, 2012).

The question that remains is whether a corresponding development is taking place in the scholarly study of global library and information work – are we developing a field that we might name ‘global library and information studies’ – or, if we need to de-emphasize the L-word, ‘global information studies’? In my introduction I referred to the displacement of ‘international’ in ‘international librarianship’ by ‘global’ or in some cases ‘world’. I suspect that the main reason is that globalization is fashionable. It is simply *de rigueur* to use the word ‘global’ or its derivations in current writing in our field. This does not necessarily signify a real change. Although some texts and many articles and chapters claim to concern themselves with global LIS or global aspects of LIS, this often simply means contemporary or modern LIS, in which we are all connected in ICT-enabled networks. The emphasis is often on the impact of information technology. It seems that globalization is seen as more or less synonymous with the ‘information society’, ‘knowledge society’, ‘knowledge economy’, etc. To be fair I should note that considerable attention is paid to issues of international political economy, notably intellectual property.

If we are to develop a field of global librarianship, however designated, at least a shift in emphasis is needed, if not entirely new content. A greater, critical awareness of the many dimensions of globalization, beyond our concern with the technological, would be a start. There is no lack of critical theoretical literature in various disciplines on which we can draw, as for example in the recent article by Witt (2104). From my own reading I would add theoretical work in development studies (e.g. Rist, 1997; Haynes, 2008 and Nederveen Pieterse, 2010) and comparative education (e.g. Thomas & Postlethwaite, 1984; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2008; and Schriewer, 2012). In development studies we can gain insights from theories on modernization, dependency and world systems which could be put to work in studies of library development and development aid in developing countries. In comparative education, Schriewer (2006), writing about comparative social science more generally, has suggested that more emphasis be placed

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<sup>20</sup>IFLA, <http://www.ifla.org/node/8658>, accessed 2014-7-14.

...on *trans*-national, *trans*-cultural or *trans*-societal relations, transfers and interconnections... as an alternative to the social scientific mainstream of comparative enquiry traditionally conceived as *cross*-national, *cross*-cultural or *cross*-societal analysis (p.323)

He specifically pointed to studies focussing on “trans-societal structures” such as cross-border relations, migration movements, exchange and transfer processes among nation states, regional processes at the levels above and below nation states, ‘world cities’, and transnational networks and organizations (pp.232-324). Translating these to LIS, this opens up interesting possibilities. For example, one could look at national libraries and at their treatment of exile literature as well as their responses to diasporas and long-distance nationalism, in a transnational perspective. Other transnational phenomena worth exploring in relation to libraries and information are cultural and linguistic diffusion, dominance and imperialism, the A2K movement, intellectual property issues, civil society movements, and also regional and supranational phenomena, such as various aspects of European integration.

The shift to transnational processes does raise questions about the future of *comparative* library and information studies. In comparative education the early, rather mechanistic country comparisons on which we modelled comparative librarianship and which I myself put forward as the norm for the field (Lor, 2008, 2010) have long passed, making way for a wider range of studies such as those suggested above by Schriewer, with much emphasis on educational policy borrowing. There then seems to be little point in insisting on comparative librarianship as a separate field.

## Conclusion

Any analysis of the concept ‘international’ inevitably strikes, just below the surface, the concept ‘national’. The very word ‘international’ embodies a contradiction between national interests and those common to, shared with, or above the interests of individual nation states.

The international horizon has dominated our profession for the best part of the twentieth century. Closer scrutiny shows that the period starting around 1850 was characterized by an ambivalence about internationalism – an ambivalence also reflected in the emerging international librarianship and documentation. Here terms such as ‘world’, ‘universal’ and ‘international’ were being used cheek by jowl and quasi interchangeably, for example in the names of the institutions and tools being created by Otlet: Coblans (1974:30) quotes Donker Duyvis as referring to the Mundaneum as a “*centre à la fois international, mondial et universel*”. More specifically, the words ‘international’ and ‘internationalism’ embody a certain dualism: on the one hand, a realist *polity internationalism*, which accepts the status quo and tries to make the states system work; on the other an idealistic, humanistic *community internationalism*, which places a higher value on the bonds between human beings that transcends national borders. This internationalism can be seen as deriving from an older tradition of universalism. Developments in international librarianship following the Second World War saw the ascendancy of polity internationalism, but the triumph was short-lived. Globalization has given our profession a new horizon, and with its own, fascinating contradictions and stresses, it offers the field of study we have known as international and comparative librarianship a new lease on life, in a new manifestation, as global studies in libraries and information.

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