

# Decolonising Archives and Systematic Research: Openings and Challenges in Library Services

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## **Abstract proposal**

This paper calls for an open discussion between anthropologists, librarians, and researchers over the shift in Library Services across the University of London towards projects associated with the "decolonizing the curriculum" national project in the UK. Traditional British organizations, such as the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the British Museum & British Library, as well as the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK & Commonwealth, have been at the centre of this discussion as their historical past is directly associated with colonialism. This reflects upon the way Archives have been collected and catalogued in the past, as well as, in relation to the present and future research and the means of opening systematic research to the world. In this context, the paper will open/ contribute to the ongoing discussion between academics and those who work in administrative and library services. It focuses on the challenges and limits in describing the shift of focus in Library Services towards processes of 'decolonisation,' 'disenclosure,' and 'worlding,' questioning and comparing their pragmatic value in relation to emerging research taking place at the LSHTM. The discussion paper investigates the hypothesis that although the educative role of Anthropology has been long discussed as central in relation to the engagement of anthropology with the world society, it is the way the past is catalogued, interpreted, and represented via archival material and other Library sources that form the national curriculum according to certain values and often unconscious biases. This methodological issue calls for a self-reflective manner in engaging and re-cataloguing these sources as a means of liberating worldly institutions from their historical association with both colonialism and/or nationalism. On the other hand, it is also the way by which systematic reviews are conducted by researchers via the use of Library sources and other resources that defines the focus of research, hence, equally demanding the openness of the focus of research via networking -beyond the exclusiveness of dominant English-speaking institutions and publishers. A further aspect of the paper will highlight the rapid changes taking place in Open Access and the challenges emerging from the publishing industry to researchers and their funders -with additional implications for anthropological research.

## A Historical Context

The LSHTM was an institution of its time, founded in October 1899 by Sir Patrick Manson with the support of the Colonial Office under the name ‘London School of Tropical Medicine’ (LSHTM) focusing on research in tropical diseases in the former empire, including West and East Africa and India. The activities and vocation of the institution have always been directly associated with the historical changes taking place in world history (including the ‘decolonising’ project). By 1924, the School added the word ‘Hygiene’ to its title as a means of breaking away from its original colonialist orientation into a world institution that focuses on public health, hygiene, and eugenics. This paradoxical process of breaking away from the colonial support continued throughout the 1940s to the 1970s, alongside the historical processes of ‘political decolonisation’ that took place in the world and the complete dismantling of the structures of colonial governance (including geographical and cultural categorization of peoples across the former Empire). According to the School’s Archivist, Victoria Cranna, it was during this period following the shift from Colonial to Commonwealth funding in the 1960s, that a major “dismemberment” of the archives took place. “British colonial governments undertook every effort to maintain control over colonial records, wilfully destroying archival documents that reflected badly on colonial governments and refusing colonized populations’ access to politically sensitive files. A great number of files pertaining to former British colonies are still held by The (UK) National Archives (TNA) in Kew, rather than by respective national archives in former colonies” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 250).<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the records did not only show the positive impact the institution had across the world in fighting malaria and other epidemiological diseases, but also an “entangled” approach to the same world that was deeply colonialist and racist whilst meticulously hiding the existing power structures of discrimination and colonization. The term “entanglement” refers to the structures and contractual agreements between the Colonial Office and the institution’s staff that underlie the institution’s world vocation, by systematically removing the colonial legacy of the School from the centre of its formal historical narrative and vocation in the world. This includes a silenced or deleted record of “hesitations, of sentences deleted from a previous meeting’s minutes, of contradictions in letters and reports, of pages missing in departmental collections.” Cranna and Hirsch give an example of entanglement as an institutionalized strategy to cover institutionalised racism:

For example, in order to guarantee jobs to all LSTM graduates, the Colonial Office amalgamated the Colonial Medical Services of its West African colonies to create the

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<sup>1</sup> On the violent “dismemberment” of the archives, see also Elkins, Caroline. “Looking beyond Mau Mau: Archiving Violence in the Era of Decolonization.” *The American Historical Review* 120, 3 (2015): 852–868. doi:10.1093/ahr/120.3.852; and Lowry, James. *Displaced Archives*. 1st ed. Milton Park: Routledge, 2019.

West African Medical Service (WAMS) in 1902. The foundation of LSTM and the WAMS are detailed in a Colonial Office memorandum, kept at TNA.<sup>15</sup> However, service in the WAMS was barred to individuals of non-European descent, making it the first openly racist UK-government department. The School archives omit a history of this policy, which was conceived to directly benefit the School and its students. Only by linking documents from two physically distinct archive institutions and putting the creation of the WAMS and of LSTM in relation to one another, was I able to foreground the School's entanglements with racism and white supremacy (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 251)<sup>2</sup>

"*Entanglement*", from the postcolonialist perspective/space of Spivak ("worldling" = i.e. the ordering and colonized space of a "world", Spivak 1985, 247-272, and Paganopoulos 2018, 23-28), refers to the structural processes which "hide" coloniality via the ordering of the archive and research in such a ways that reflects upon the exclusive claim of Europe to "science" (Tambiah 1990 et al). *Foregrounding* and *disentanglement* refer to exactly the counter processes that help to uncover, recover (where possible) and re-order / re-categorize data (ie "knowledge"). This would ideally help to foreground information that was hidden from public view and allow for readings that undermine or challenge the dominant historical narrative. In this context, the 'decolonisation' project in the LSHTM Archives started in 2019 in an effort to disentangle by foregrounding certain aspects of the past that have been conveniently hiding the structures of coloniality running through the institution's history and vocation in the world. It is also a contribution to major world events in academia and society, such as the emergence of the 'Decolonising the Global Health Group'<sup>3</sup> in 2020, alongside the popular rise of global movements such as Black Lives Matter. According to the Archivist Victoria Cranna, it was an indirect response to the murder of George Floyd on May 25 2020, which culminated a wave of well-publicized assaults, murders, and racist violence towards the black communities in the US. The emergence of new 'anti-colonial' and politicized strategies from these movements, such as the method of *foregrounding* adopted as part of the emerging Black archival strategies, "have long encompassed critical approaches to dealing with archival silences [...] to foreground Black experiences from the historical void in which they tend to disappear." (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 250 & 253, citing Hartman 2008<sup>4</sup>). Above all, however, it was also a necessary response to a recent independent review on "Structural Racism at LSHTM." The report found that "Though the LSHTM has a higher proportion of staff of colour than the UK sector average, they are under-represented at senior levels, have less success at promotions, and

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<sup>2</sup> See also Johnson, R. "'An All-White Institution': Defending Private Practice and the Formation of the West African Medical Staff." *Medical History* 54, 2 (2010): 237–254. doi: 10.1017/s0025727300006736

<sup>3</sup> Khan M, et al. "Decolonising global health in 2021: a roadmap to move from rhetoric to reform." *BMJ Global Health* 2021; 6: e005604. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2021-005604

<sup>4</sup> Hartman, Saidiya. "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, 2 (2008): 1–14. Doi: 10.1215/-12-2-1.

are more likely to be on short-term and fixed-term contracts than their white peers [... Furthermore,] staff and students of colour feel ‘unsupported’ when experiencing or trying to address racist behaviours and “do not have equitable experiences or opportunities to progress at LSHTM”. It also said ‘behaviours’ by senior staff had gone unaddressed because of their ‘influence’ in the institution (*The Guardian* December 13 2021). Indeed, despite the long history of LSHTM in Africa and the majority of students arriving from outside Europe, “96% of [academic] staff in LSHTM is white” (Victoria Cranna). This fact demonstrates coloniality in terms of “how colonial history and structures manifest s racial discrimination in the workplace, and vows to revalue the experiences of minoritised people.” (Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXVIII). It further exposes the “Whiteness” of the institution and Eurocentric legacy. In these terms, Crilly and Everitt argue, “The library [...] has a powerful role at the centre of the institution, and must either step up to support decolonisation, or continue to prop up the status quo.” (*Ibid.* XXVI).

In terms of Collections, two recent statistical evaluations in 2019 and 2021, conducted by Eloise Carpenter, the Collection Services and Acquisitions manager found that “only 26% of citations had a place of publication [of which] 67% were published in Europe and 32% in North America.” Indeed, this reflected upon the Collections in terms of 97% of the books with place of publication in the records, 60% of published in Europe, and 31% were in North America. Africa as a place was “published about” from publishers and institutions mainly of Europe (2/3) and North America (1/3). “These findings were very similar to what we discovered in the collection of e-books.” Same trend follows e-journals and OA material of about six and a half thousand titles. “From all our regional packages that we subscribe to, all of the publisher headquarters were based in Europe and North America, primarily America [sic, US] and the Netherlands [...] only six publishers had offices in Africa compared to 13 in Europe and 21 in North America.” It is ironical that schemes such as Open Access, although they were meant to open access to journals across the globe in a free and accessible manner, by following publishing and funding agreements actually contributed to widening the gap between English-speaking journals and books from the rest of publications. Indeed, “59% of citations were for journal content [of which] 22% of them were published by Elsevier, which accounts for the largest number being published in the Netherlands [...] 10% of all citations were for the Lancet and the BMJ.” (Carpenter July 6 2021).<sup>5</sup>

The above qualitative re-evaluation of the history and statistical evaluations of the present resources reveal the various ethical and methodological (practical) challenges in respect to the work conducted in Library Services and the historical association of LSHTM with the colonial establishment in the past. These include the issue of language (translation & acknowledgement), the issue of publications (English speaking dominant institutions in the US/ Canada and Europe), the issue of Open Access (pay per article/ funders agreements), and above all, in how is information collected, catalogued and distributed accordingly, which in many respects orients the research focus (systematic review) of the research as a whole. In addition to the hidden institutional structures of coloniality, all of the librarians I

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<sup>5</sup> Eloise Carpenter, July 6 2021). EDI Strategy Launch Event: Decolonising Library and Archives. [06.07.2021 \(11.00 - 11.30\) Decolonising Library & Archives \(Breakout Room\) \(panopto.eu\)](https://panopto.eu/06.07.2021-11.00-11.30-Decolonising-Library-&-Archives-Breakout-Room)

interviewed highlighted the loss of unrecoverable data and knowledge because of this structural entanglement. In the words of Cranna and Hirsch from the LSHTM Library Archives: “[...] history cannot be undone and so the possibilities of truly ‘decolonizing’ LSHTM’s archive are slim. A complete restructure of the existing catalogue might change the way in which users interact with the archive, but it would not be able to reverse epistemic power imbalances predicated on racist hierarchies and their ensuing consequences [...] The telling of critical, anti-colonial stories can showcase the true violence of colonial racism and white supremacy and their entanglements with the development of European science [sic]. Indigenous agency [sic] can be reconstructed from archival fragments, but no amount of decolonizing can change the past, nor the documentary traces that reveal the past.” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 254). Indeed, the archivists seem to be falling in a dilemma in respect to the past, for if they completely erase and eradicate it they themselves will be part of the same processes of ‘entanglement’ with they criticize throughout their project. On the other hand, to re-contextualize the categories and archival material does not exactly offer a way of coloniality itself. On the contrary, it rather establishes it as such by recognizing its existence. The power relations are still there and the changes needed must therefore be structural and in direct relation to the current vocation and employability of LSHTM –as the independent review on “Structural Racism at LSHTM” of December 2021 highlighted above.

### **‘Decolonising Curriculum Working Group’ at LSHTM Library**

Decolonising Curriculum Working Group (Headed by Carra Hansen)	
Academic/ educational role (Moodle – teaching/tutorials using tech)	TEL (Technologically Enhanced Learning)
Headed by Craig Higgins	Headed by supervising “Facilitator”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation and Metrics group</li> <li>• Staff training for tutors group</li> <li>• Student inclusion and feedback group</li> <li>• Events organization and publicity group</li> </ul>

The ‘Decolonising Curriculum Working Group’ at LSHTM started in 2019. It is an ongoing project, covering all the departments of the School, and forming the current vocation and vision of the institution in the world. It is in volunteering basis and all-inclusive, and divided in two areas of development: one regarding its academic role in terms of research and teaching, and the other, the support the main role if the institution receives by user services, including the Library Services, in terms of ‘Technologically Enhanced Learning’ (TEL). There are four main groups of activities, each group headed by a “Facilitator” on a rotating annual basis. These are the Evaluation and Metrics group, the Staff training for tutors group, the Student inclusion and feedback group, and the Events organization and publicity group. The Library Services belong to the Evaluation and Metrics group “with responsibility to evaluate the progress of work being done in the library as a whole and raise any issues in the Decolonising Curriculum Working Group” [interview with “Facilitator” Jane

Falconer, who is the Professional and User Support Services Librarian on Weds April 13 2022]. However, the four categories of activities overlap each other, as they are interconnected and in many respects, the work conducted by all the departments is to re-connect the disconnected and hidden fact as part of disentangling the colonial structures and coloniality associated with the School. The Library Services are themselves further divided into Archives, Collections, and User & Information services, each one with a given task that corresponds to their role in the Library and the institution as a whole. Below I am briefly looking at some of these tasks associated with each group.

## Archives

In response to this wider change in ways of thinking of the past in relation to the present taking place across the world society, the Archives team developed a self-reflective method that acknowledged the history of discrimination associated with the institution and tools to redress it. By July 2020, the Archives issued an “Action Plan” which covered five themes/ five areas for further development (Victoria Cranna, EDI Strategy Launch Event, July 6 2021, Decolonising Library & Archives breakroom<sup>6</sup> ; and Cranna & Hirsch 2021, 256-261):

- **Cataloguing practices** (online/ digitized) focus on language (terminology) and accessibility to sources. The aim is to raise awareness to “be mindful of the normalization of terminology and language.” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 256). There is also an increasing interest to secondary resources associated with the School’s history, in terms of how the institution presents by challenging the dominant narrative structures running through pre-existing archive collections. Not deleting history but re-contextualizing it in a reflective manner in order to bring to the surface material and perspectives conveniently silenced in the past (Cranna, July 6 2021). Re-cataloguing and digitizing the archives is not only means to self-reflect upon the past, but also to re-contextualize present types of discrimination, such as “by reviewing our HIV and AIDS collections to ensure that the terminology and language used is not offensive.” (*Ibid*, 257).
- **Archival practices** referring to how material is collected and how accession it in the Archives by becoming aware of and reflecting upon unconscious and conscious biases. In the words of the LSHTM Archivist, “Putting the emphasis more on people, the people in the institution rather than just the ‘significant’ [sic] people [...] ‘significant records’ the records of the powerful.” (Cranna, July 6 2021). In doing so, the team makes the effort to incorporate current ideas about “radical empathy” as they emerge in Archival studies in general. The three main questions/ focal points are “How do we prioritize collections for cataloguing? How do personal relationships

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<sup>6</sup> [06.07.2021 \(11.00 - 11.30\) Decolonising Library & Archives \(Breakout Room\) \(panopto.eu\)](#)

influence acquisition and cataloguing priorities? Who is not being represented?” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 259).

- **Dissemination** referring to the “critical engagement” to reflect upon and re-contextualize contested histories and on “how decolonizing principles/content can be included” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 259). Cranna describes this effort in terms of telling “a different story with our Collections” to widen out the emphasis from prominent individuals associated with the Colonial Office and highlighting the impact and involvement of communities (Cranna, July 6 2021). Dissemination takes place by re-contextualizing material and digitizing records. This opening of the Archives to the outside world society takes place on social media, online blogging, and public events such as “Student Day” and so on, as a public means “to rethink how we present the stories of the school [...] by putting a more critical lens on them” (Cranna, July 6 2021).
- **Education** referring to training as a means of redressing such issues, while encouraging training diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality, both within the institution and in terms of networking with other institutions in the UK and the world. Opening the discussion by educative and self-reflective means that raise self-awareness and empathy. Training includes the incorporation of study resources provided by networks such as the ‘Decolonizing Global Health Group’, the ARA and TN.
- **Inclusivity** referring both to the point of views associated with the power structures that historically run through the institution as a whole and give to the material and research a specific pov (i.e. ‘whiteness’), and to the effort to assert openness and equality in terms of accessibility and recruitment whilst encouraging diversity both in perspectives and staff.

It is clear from the above that these five “principles”/areas of development overlap each other, as well as, “reviewed regularly and updated with our newly acquired knowledge.” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 261). The wider questions that run through this process are “How does the nature of the collections, and the original owners’ intent in bequeathing them to the School’s archive, influence the histories we can tell from both the archive’s content and its form? With what uses in mind was the archive set up; what implicit thoughts and practices shape the understanding of the archive?” (Cranna and Hirsch 2021, 250). The challenge therefore is not to simply reflect upon and re-contextualize the history and categorizations that run through the institution’s associations with colonialism and colonality, but also to further developing the tools and methods actively to continue engaging with this process beyond the closed world of the Archives and into world society and open education.

## Collections

- What countries and regions do books and online resources cover?
- Where does the collected material come from?

- Which is the dominant language in Collections? Which is the place of publication?
- Vast majority of collections are of European and US origin in English. F. ex. A Kenyan author may write about Kenya published by Routledge in English. It is this process that is both practically and ethically problematic, something that Spivak called the “the burden of English” (1993 and 2010). Places of publication reveal the institutionalization of these hierarchies and dominant cultures and authorities.
- Self-reflection and awareness demand opening of research towards networking with institutions outside the English-speaking world (opening the research).

Eloise Carpenter – Collection Services manager Acquisitions manager

“My work has been/was mainly focused on evaluating the content of the Library’s collections (print and online) and reading list content (journals and books), raising awareness of this at LAORS and School-wide levels, and supporting the DGH group. There was also, of course, the revision of the Barnard classification scheme which included decolonisation, this work has been completed and awaiting publication, the main print book collection (published 1900- ) has been reclassified as required.” (Eloise Carpenter, Head of Collections, email correspondence on April 13 2022.

Eloise Carpenter, July 6 2021). EDI Strategy Launch Event: Decolonising Library and Archives. [06.07.2021 \(11.00 - 11.30\) Decolonising Library & Archives \(Breakout Room\) \(panopto.eu\)](https://panopto.eu/06.07.2021%20(11.00%20-%2011.30)%20Decolonising%20Library%20&%20Archives%20(Breakout%20Room)):

- A) Colonial legacy: Content of collections – “Legitimation” and “Naturalisation” of colonial ways of thinking {‘Western’ pov) and speaking (English-speaking countries). “Decolonial practices”: “Promote critical engagement” and “diversity” in reading lists and collection development.
- B) Colonial legacy: “Knowledge organization and classification” systems “Decolonial practices”: “Classification that “resists” colonial taxonomies and offers “accessibility” to Collections.
- C) “Colonial legacy in science” (i.e. from an anthropological perspective exclusive identification of “science” and the Enlightenment with European thought and rationality (Jack Goody 2012, Talil Asad 1993, Stanley Tambiah 1990). Increasing development and inclusion of resources originating from the “global South” as a means of reconstituting “science” within its true historical context beyond its exclusive association to Europe.
- D) Re-evaluating Search Tools and Reading Lists in order to re-contextualize resources (geopolitical dynamics, places of publication, institutional authority, etc) making them accessible and discoverable in systematic reviews.

3 projects:

- Re-evaluating content of reading lists: HE Resources are dominated by ‘Western’ thought and funding. Therefore “biased link between colonialism and intellectualising” them. Directly affecting how research is oriented and conducted,



hence, its results, since Collections is seen “as the control and classification of resources, which is very much led to a Western commodification of knowledge, cataloguing conventions often conveyed by us to the global north [...] many subject headings and hierarchical structures are still weighted in very much racist and sexist past.” (Eloise Carpenter, July 6 2021). This historical reality and emerging awareness raises further questions of repatriation and restitution of Special Collections (as also in Price 2022, 213-224).

- Revising library’s classification system: “Discovery tools facilitate access, of course, to a wide range of resources but they also obscure the modes of production [...] inherited hierarchies and language bias of the classification schemes. In 2019, Collections “did a preliminary evaluation of the Beacon Journal Collections that were help in the library.” The results highlighted a number of issues, including the dominance of material published in the “global north” (even in reference to the “global south”). Other issues include a “significant” number of resources published in the so-called ‘End of the Empire’ legacy, while also using arbitrary locations, such as “Africa” and “Asia,” in a way that reminds the exotic and a-historical character of early anthropology, as passive points of reference and focus of research, rather than highlighting their active contributions and involvement *in* research. The result is that precious data and knowledge systems are either lost or hidden away from public view due to prejudice and the exclusive association of “science” with European thought (see also Tambiah 1990, Comaroffs 1992, Asad 1993, Jack Goody on multiple Enlightenments, and Paganopoulos 2018, among others).
- Updating Library’s Barnard classification system. As part of updating the Beacon system of classification, Collections have “added a lot more content [sic] to make a lot more content available. We have catalogued over 16,000 pamphlets for captions now available to readers, and we ‘ve also got significantly more journal content.” A second evaluation followed in March 2021 and “primarily, the evaluation was to identify the place of publication and the geographic focus of the resources within the Collections [...] we analysed about 19,000 titles of [printed] books.” (Eloise Carpenter, July 6 2021).

### **User Services & Information Services**

Extracted notes from interview with Jane Falconer (Professional Services and User Support Services Librarian) on Weds April 13 2022.

- Teaching materials: Shows the need for new standards set by the School according to its values and world vocation.
- *How* research is conducted (self-reflexivity and awareness) in terms of both student modules and postgraduate literature reviews / systematic research.
- Why are the researchers choosing particular fields (areas) and relevant sources (literature)?
- How to categorize the “field” (for example, “Sub-Saharan Africa” is too general and vague, if not exotic term). “Are we actually catching all the information [systematic

review] provided in other countries and other languages? For example, the School has lots of material from pamphlets, monographs, and books that relate to 19<sup>th</sup> century Africa written by British doctors. However, some of the attitudes and language used is not only offensive but can be racist.

- Translation is a challenging issue (Spivak 2005 & 2018). This is manifested in both cataloguing and interpretation, the researchers must at least to acknowledge the source in the Bibliography in order to avoid copying or ignoring previous research material written in non-English language and published by a smaller publisher on a local level and/or a not English-centric place of the world. Acknowledging of existing sources and research is vital to show that the researcher at least recognizes and builds on pre-existed resources in the local area without ignoring, or worse, copying work already taken because of institutionalized bias both on an educative/searching and publishing level.
- Re-cataloguing and re-calibrating material what is seen as important. Re-evaluating material and acknowledge subjectivity in the process. Re-cataloguing helps to re-evaluate lost information by bringing it to the surface and highlighting any methodological and representational issues that may have kept the data hidden from public view, or worse, completely ignoring that it was there in the first place. The concept is not to delete this data but contextualize them according to the times. At the same time, re-cataloguing and re-evaluating archival material can positively make things discoverable and offer access to knowledge that for long has been undervalued. Search for alternative data types of knowledge, and local publishers.
- Open dialogue/ conversation / networking between the School with researchers and other agents on a local level needs further developing to achieve a more rounded and historical accurate understanding of a topic, including research priorities and translation of terms and concepts in direct relation to the everyday life and practices of the community.
- Reflexivity: Is a 'global' study really "global"? What is the rationality behind this label?
- Advice & feedback by the students and users of the library is vital in this respect.

## **'Decolonising' the Library Space**

To "**decolonise**": [...] a paradigm shift from a culture of exclusion and denial to the making of space for other political philosophies and knowledge systems. It's a cultural shift to think more widely about why common knowledge is what is it, and in doing so adjusting cultural perceptions and power relations in real and significant ways." (Keele University *Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum*, 2018, cited in Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXI)

"The work of decolonising the library is about understanding how the past has informed the present but must also be about envisaging a better future, even if how to achieve it isn't always clear." (Crilly and Everitt 2022. XXV)

“[...] thinking and acting on the colonial legacies that impact libraries and knowledge production” (*Ibid.* XXV)

Contested term:

- “more about enactment than purpose?” (Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXI)
- “a superficial buzzword severed from its radical essence” (?) (Doherty, Madriaga, and Joseph-Salisbury 2020, 3).
- “How illogical is it that the structure we are attempting to decolonise is the structure we are attempting to use to decolonise?” (Adebisi 2019, cited in Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXII).
- “There is also the risk that actions such as diversifying collections and reviewing reading lists can be opted into programmes of tokenistic change, to defer the need for more fundamental change.” (Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXIII).
- “De-colonial” or “Anti-colonial”: Anthropological critique as process of self-reflective re-evaluation and re-contextualization and/or political radicalisation and disruption.

‘Decolonisation’ in the library workplace is a self-reflective process that has emerged, and still is emerging, out of the changes that take place in the wider academic society. These include changes in ways of thinking (self-reflective turn to subjectivity and rise of historical awareness) alongside the rapid development of new open technologies and social platforms that have evolved library services towards the digital new world. These allow both networking on a global scale, and promoting the re-evaluation of archive and research material, whilst democratizing the quality and accuracy of the material in terms of its categorization (cataloguing) and use (research review). Inevitably, the opening of library services to new forms of service have made the library space an arena of contestation – especially in respect to the association of British institutions, such as LSHTM, the British Library and British Museum to name a few. This contestation takes place between the efforts to coming in terms with the past in the present time according to the wider changes taking place in academia across all interdisciplinary fields.

Contested ‘decolonization’ - Dialectics of contestation	
Contested Narratives (Institution)	Vs Contested Spaces (Libraries)
Terminology, language, concepts	Vs Workplace – Library space
Self-reflective Process/ hist.	Vs Material, ways of selecting, prioritizing and cataloguing
Degrees of decolonisation	Vs Ways of decolonising virtual and physical space
Legacy of European Enlightenment	Vs Racism and discrimination at workplace today

Three types of Public areas of contestation and appropriation of library space as a workplace and “**learning spaces [...] framed as places of active critical enquiry and co-production**” (Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXVIII, citing pp 139-152). Three areas of contestation in Library workplace: a) classification / cataloguing b) collections / metadata c) Historical and

political legacy of institution. The Library “field” is suitable in examining as a means of re-discovering and accurately evaluating library sources and services out of the opportunities and challenges s they emerge from the process of ‘decolonisation’, both on a theoretical level (anthropology, library studies, and cultural studies) and practical manner (ethnography of workplace).

A further aspect of this contestation of public spaces, such as Libraries, one that expands beyond the physical limits and architecture of spatial divisions in the Library and the Archive is privatization in the name of freedom. Indeed, as the Collections re-evaluation of the material at LSHTM Library shows above, since 1990 the gap between the three dominant countries of publications (US, UK, the Netherlands) instead of decreasing is in fact rapidly increasing via schemes such as Open Access. These give advantage and promote a rather privatized system of education and recruitment, based on paying fees and/or receiving funding from institutions of the “global north” in the name of free access to data and networking and s part of recruitment. To put it simply, the more publications in English-speaking journals a candidate for a job has, the more chances he has to go through the HR’s eagle eyes of choice and selected for the job interview. This gives an obvious advantage to those who can afford to pay the fee for Open Access publishing, either by funding that arrives from the same countries and/or worldly English-speaking institutions, or by private funding. As a result, research via publications is compromised by comforting to the educative values and organizational principles of the same privatized institutional environments that promote it, the majority of which is in the US and UK and naturally dominate their e-sources.

### **Anthropology and the ethnographic field of Library Spaces**

Anthropologists in the past have shouted for alternative types and forms of knowledge. For example, medical anthropology has a long history of searching and engaging with communities in order to gather their empirical knowledge about so-called “alternative” traditional medicines, which counter and/or complement pharmaceutical material and the industry. In bringing alternative forms of knowledge and practices, the School has opened up its research focus from exclusively scientific to cultural appropriations of practical wisdom and community involvement, in order for the laboratories to be closer to the grounded reality of the field. This type of knowledge still faces questions in terms of authority and accuracy (because of the Enlightenment and so on). The Library in this sense is the middle ground where knowledge is kept, used and reused, and the librarians are mediator gatekeepers to this making cataloguing and evaluation of the material essential in how research progresses on a *glocal* level (beyond the exclusive association of the Enlightenment and science with Europe). In this context, the library space is a contested space centralized around the Archives, the way of ordering things, from where knowledge re-emerges in terms of how it is gathered and catalogued, oriented and interpreted; a never-ending power game (as in Foucault 1961 and 1966).

Since the issue is coloniality, that is, the underlying structures that survive time and historical change by evolving and emerging out of the modes of production of knowledge, simply by changing the terminology used and names does not mean that the envisioned 'decolonization of the curriculum' is achieved. For instance, The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems group has recently highlighted the need to rethink the hierarchies of knowledge associated with sustainable food systems according to the commitments made by the UN Food Systems Summit (2021). The team highlighted the damage and distortion of the evaluation of food systems via systematic reviews, which are inherently biased by relegating "traditional knowledge" systems to those of questionable quality. This question of authority in information reflects upon the external vocation and future orientation of research of an institution in the emerging world society, a situation the urgently needs to be re-addressed and re-evaluated as the material shows above (The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems 2021, 843-845). On the other hand, coloniality also takes place at the workplace. For example, although most of the students and researchers at LSHTM come outside Europe and the US (the School has a long tradition of good work and vaccination programs in Africa) the teaching staff, and even those who lead the project of 'decolonisation' are British, European or from the US.

The question then is whether the transition and changes taking place in Library services are relevant to the vocation of the School in the world and to the emerging new world society as a whole beyond it, or if it is just a "buzzword" in Crilly and Everitt's terms. This brings forward the different ways of engaging with the process in terms of degrees of "decolonization" on the one hand, and on the other in terms of ideological and political disruptive "anti-colonization". The term itself carries various degrees of engagement: one level is the reviewing and adjustment of incorrect or politically and ideologically charged language. A second level is re-cataloguing that brings forward lost or hidden knowledge and research. An even deeper level is how research is oriented based on the sources used and acknowledging previous work. Finally, in terms of how the Library Services mirror the vocation of the School as a whole in respect to publications, Open Access, and funding bodies, all of which are necessary criteria for future employability.

The implications of these challenges directly affect the focus of research, as the sources used define the orientation and categorization (cataloguing) of research as well as its accessibility and use in the present time (and not as a remnant of the colonial past). 'Decolonisation' in the Library Services, therefore, refers to the wider process(es) of turning the tables around by bringing on the surface the material that has been long kept hidden from view or discarded because of cultural and other types of institutionalized bias. Since these challenges and opportunities are divided between those that relate to the past (Archives, Collections) and the present/future (systematic reviewing / research networking) 'decolonization' refers to a wider shift in our engagement with Libraries, and vice versa, in the way Libraries engage with the new world. The transition from the library physical space to online resources for example paves the opportunity to networking and opening up research focus and sources. Re-cataloguing pre-existing material paves the opportunity of discovering knowledge that was thought to be lost. An engagement with resources outside

the English-speaking market paves the opportunity for supporting equality and equity in education according to the values of the School.

A final point has to do with the relationship between Anthropology and Library Services. As Simon Cohen who head the anthropological department at LSHTM wrote (with Lynch, 2017) there is an increasing shift towards returning to classic anthropological concepts and texts in medicine and epidemiology. In medical anthropology for instance, the leader of the anthropological dept at LSHTM Simon Cohen has argued in an article that in the spirit of collaboration between epidemiologists and anthropologists classic anthropological themes become again relevant and may be re-evaluated according to the times (f.ex. contagiousness and C-19). Anthropology thus has a central role in decolonising both the Archives and the Library space in collaboration with the librarians and working staff especially in re-discovering and re-cataloguing existing ethnographic and other material from the classic anthropological field, which may have been undervalued, distorted, or completely missed in the past.

On the other hand, the re-conceptualization of the world as an 'Anthropocene' that directly associates the human and the natural environment as One has given a fresh breath of research in ecological sustainability and human activity, epidemiology and disease in relation to both ecological and socio-economic challenges. This has brought a wave of new researches coming from across the globe, many of which appropriating knowledge and resources from outside the dominant institutionalized English-speaking education, via networking and increased interest in re-discovering the past towards the future vision for a better society. In this context, just like Libraries are the middle grounds between researchers and the community, and librarians are the mediators between researchers and knowledge kept and catalogued according to categories of thought and method, so are anthropologist the mediators between gathering, cataloguing, and interpreting/using such information. Both librarians and anthropologists therefore focus on how visibility and accessibility enhanced in relation to the re-evaluation and re-cataloguing collections, metadata, and the existent systems of classification: "What do we remember, what do we forget? And how do we not simply 'forget and move on' but *reclaim* radical past?" (Crilly and Everitt 2022, XXVIII).

Hence, the project of 'decolonization' is a two-way process. It does not only affect the way knowledge is gathered and oriented (for example in Library Services, training etc.) but also the way Anthropology engages with this process (via other multi-disciplines and various multi-fields) as a critical way for re-evaluating and re-categorizing knowledge both in the past (Archives) and in relation to future research (the way research is conducted). In this context, reflexivity, historical awareness and appropriation/adjustments of terminology and re-cataloguing of sources may not be enough to engage successfully with the project on a pragmatic level of real change in the way of thinking and acting. Since Libraries are mirrors of their institutions and educational character of their respective societies as a whole, they are like theatrical stages where knowledge is formed and performed, collected and distributed according to the values of their time. The main challenge for Library Services is thus not only to change the means of preserving and reproducing knowledge just for the shake of it. Above all, the process of 'decolonising' Library Services in relation to the wider

curriculum must focus towards being all-inclusive in the way research is conducted and technologically oriented, whilst equality in employability is sustained. In other words, in moving the Library space from the theatrical stage of representation of the Archives to everyday society, that is, from the Library space and computer screen to the everyday socio-economic reality of the students, readers, professors, and researchers, and above all, the communities themselves.

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