Decolonizing LIS curricula: advancing social justice through scholarly communication in Africa

Wole Michael Olatokun [1&2]

¹National University of Lesotho

²University of Ibadan

https://doi.org/10.15641/978.0.7992.2561.7

Abstract

This essay addresses the critical need to decolonize Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula in Africa, as the field remains heavily shaped by Western models. Colonial legacies continue to affect African scholars, who are often expected to publish in high-impact, English-language journals that are based in the global North, thereby reinforcing a colonial knowledge hierarchy. Open access (OA), although intended to democratize information, often favors Northern publishers and standard academic metrics, thereby limiting African perspectives in global research. Social justice is proposed as a framework for decolonization in LIS, emphasizing curriculum realignment to support equitable knowledge access, inclusivity, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems. Incorporating Diamond Open Access models into LIS curricula is suggested as a way to empower students and faculty to champion more equitable scholarly communication and alleviate the financial burdens faced by African researchers in subscription-based publishing. The essay advocates for LIS curricula that prepare information professionals to foster inclusivity in scholarly communication, ensuring visibility for underrepresented voices and indigenous knowledge. It calls for integrating an Indigenous Paradigm, which promotes epistemological pluralism and validates indigenous research methodologies, thus advancing epistemic justice. It concludes with recommendations for LIS curriculum realignment, focusing on diverse perspectives in scholarly communication. Key topics include indigenous knowledge, community engagement, cultural sensitivity, and sustainable, community-oriented research practices. Through these approaches, African LIS education can move beyond colonial structures, thereby fostering a justice-oriented pedagogy that addresses the unique information needs of African societies.

Keywords: curriculum realignment, social justice, open access, scholarly communication, LIS curriculum

Introduction

The field of Library and Information Science (LIS) in Africa is being transformed to align with the continent's cultural diversity owing to the fact that, traditionally, the discipline is shaped by Western paradigms due to the influence of colonialism. The practice of scholarly communication, a sub-field of LIS, remains heavily influenced by colonial frameworks especially in today's era of open access (OA) publishing which offers freely available, digital, online information. According to Cornell University Library (2024), open access scholarly literature is free of charge and often carries less restrictive copyright and licensing barriers than traditionally published works, for both the users and the authors (Cornell University Library, 2024). As well intentioned as OA publishing is, especially in terms of making knowledge freely available to all, scholars have pointed out its shortcomings. Jimenez, Vannini, and Cox (2023) criticized the global scholarly publishing system, which, according to the authors, is largely controlled by entities in the global North. This system, dominated by English-language journals and metrics like impact factors, marginalizes research from the global South, effectively rendering non-English publications invisible (Albornoz et al., 2020).

Scholars in the global South face pressure to publish in these prestigious Northern journals, often at the cost of adhering to Northern intellectual frameworks and research agendas (Gwynn, 2019). This dynamic reinforces the colonial structure within which academic libraries operate, embedding them further in a colonized system of knowledge production and dissemination. According to Jimenez, Vannini, and Cox (2023), the issue equally extends to information literacy, where there is an uncritical emphasis on high-impact sources found in systems like Web of Science and Scopus, despite their inherent biases. The broader power structures of capitalism, patriarchy, and racism also play a role, as evidenced by the dominance of commercial publishers and the managerial, neoliberal approaches to library management (Mirza & Seale, 2017). The architecture and décor of libraries, often reflecting European traditions, further exemplify the colonial legacy, creating spaces that subtly reinforce historical privileges linked to colonialism (Beilin, 2017; Brook et al., 2015).

This dominance of Western epistemologies poses serious setbacks to the inclusivity and diversity of LIS curriculum in Africa as it perpetuates power imbalances and marginalization of African knowledge systems. This has brought to the fore the need to decolonize education in the field and build a much more inclusive and equitable information landscape. It equally entails revising or developing curricula that would address the needs in African communities and free LIS curricula from power imbalances that have historically sidelined African perspectives. There is thus a pressing need to address these colonial legacies and promote the decolonization of scholarly communication within LIS with a view to developing decolonial curricula for LIS programs in Africa and thereby achieve social justice.

The rest of this essay is structured as follows: the next section details the research objectives, followed by the methodology. A brief background to the concept of social justice, its origins and John Rawl's theory about the concept is then presented; next, the link between concept and LIS is discussed followed by a discourse on the decolonization of LIS curriculum in Africa from various perspectives; the pertinent issues around decolonization of LIS curriculum through scholarly communication to ensure social justice are then discussed; the conclusions and recommendations finalized the essay.

Purpose and objectives

The main purpose of this essay is to propose a framework for decolonizing Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula in Africa, using social justice to foster equitable knowledge access, inclusivity, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems, thereby advancing epistemic justice in scholarly communication. Towards this end, the specific objectives of the essay are to: (i) contribute to the discourse on social justice with focus on decolonization of scholarly communication and LIS curricula in Africa from regional perspectives, (ii) examine the association between scholarly communication and decolonization efforts from the African perspective and discuss its implications for LIS curriculum design and implementation in African educational institutions, and (iii) make recommendations for achieving social justice through decolonization of scholarly communication and LIS curriculum in Africa.

Methodology

This conceptual cum qualitative essay employs a comprehensive methodology to examine social justice through the realignment of LIS curricula, with a focus on scholarly communication. The study utilizes a qualitative approach, combining theoretical analysis, desk research, and empirical data collection through key informant interviews. The theoretical analysis forms the conceptual foundation of the essay, exploring key concepts and discussions on social justice in LIS curricula. Desk research involves a thorough content analysis of literature on decolonization, social justice, and LIS in the South African context, identifying themes and patterns relevant to the study's focus. The empirical component, which is limited to the west African sub-region, includes key informant interviews conducted with faculty members at four universities in the West African sub-region: University of Ghana, Legon (2), University of Ibadan (1), Federal University of Technology, Minna (1), and University of Calabar (1). Participants were selected based on their involvement in LIS education and curriculum development, ensuring a diverse sample. Data from the interviews are presented in narratives, capturing the participants' views and experiences. Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring themes and patterns in the interview data. The integration of theoretical and empirical findings provides a comprehensive understanding of how to achieve social justice through the realignment of LIS curricula. The fact that the empirical aspect covers only West Africa is acknowledged as a methodological limitation.

Conceptualizing social justice

Social justice is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges within a society (McArthur, 2016). According to Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017), social justice is grounded in the belief that all individuals deserve equal rights and access to opportunities, regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. As noted by Capeheart and Milovanovic (2020), one of the core principles of social justice is equity, which goes beyond equality by recognizing that different people have different needs. Equity seeks to provide individuals with the resources and opportunities they need to achieve an equal outcome, rather than merely offering the same resources to everyone (Jurado de Los Santos et al., 2020). This principle is particularly important in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment, where marginalized groups often face barriers that are not present for more privileged individuals (Livingston, 2020; Poekert et al., 2022; Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2021). There are thus many definitions and perspectives to the concept, some leaning more towards issues of diversity, others that emphasize human rights, and still others that promote radical action. Generally, it can be defined as the fair, equitable, and just distribution of privilege, opportunity, and resources among all individuals, groups, and communities in a society (Sullivan et al., 2023). The common thread through the diverse definitions is the desire to disrupt the status quo. Thus, social justice is about giving voice to communities who have been forced into silence; social justice is about equity and equal access (Humboldt State University, 2015). Gray Group International (GG Insights, 2024) added its voice and noted that in today's society, the concept of social justice has become increasingly important in all aspects of our lives, including education and the responsibility of educators is to ensure that every student has access to equal opportunities and resources to optimally thrive academically and personally (GGI, 2024).

Historically, the notion of social justice goes back thousands of years. There's evidence that philosophers such as Plato (427–347 B.C.), Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) addressed social justice issues. Both Plato's and Aristotle's writings centered on the importance of justice and fairness in society (Maurya, 2021). Themes of justice and injustice have also been found in religious texts and practices (Informa Plc, 2024). The injustices and economic issues brought on by war, the Great Depression, and the dismantling of colonial empires in the first half of the 20th century led to efforts to codify a moral code with social justice at its core which led to the U.N. (United Nations) Charter in 1945, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) – drafted by a U.N. committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt – in 1948. (Informa Plc, 2024). The UDHR covered more than traditional Western civil rights, despite limited input from the African regions that were still under colonial rule. It included two categories of rights: political/civil and social/economic (Informa Plc, 2024).

However, the modern understanding of social justice emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries, as thinkers and activists began to challenge the social and economic inequalities that were prevalent in industrialized societies (Craig, 2021; Meringolo, 2021). This period saw the rise of movements for labor rights, women's suffrage, and civil rights, all of which were driven by a commitment to social justice. According to Capeheart and Milovanovic (2020), social justice also involves the recognition and protection of human rights. This includes not only civil and political rights, such as the right to vote and freedom of speech, but also economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the right to education, healthcare, and a decent standard of living (Anastasiou & Bantekas, 2023; Bhat et al., 2022). The protection of these rights is essential for ensuring that all individuals can participate fully in society and lead dignified lives.

In recent years, the concept of social justice has gained increased attention in the context of movements across Africa. The Arab Spring began in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread across North Africa and the Middle East. The movement was driven by demands for political freedom, economic opportunity, and an end to corruption and authoritarian rule. It led to significant political changes in several countries, including the overthrow of long-standing regimes. The #RhodesMustFall movement in South Africa began in March 2015 at the University of Cape Town, demanding the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes, a symbol of colonialism and white supremacy (Ahmed, 2020). The movement quickly expanded to address broader issues of decolonization and institutional racism in South African universities. It inspired similar movements globally, including at the University of Oxford (Cabe, 2023). In Nigeria, the End SARS protests gained prominence in October 2020, calling for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) due to widespread police brutality and human rights abuses (TrustAfrica, 2023). The protests, largely driven by young Nigerians, led to the government's announcement to disband SARS, although the movement continues to push for broader police reforms and accountability (TrustAfrica, 2023). In 2024, Kenya witnessed unprecedented nationwide protests led by Generation Z. Initially focused on rejecting the Finance Bill, the protests evolved to address broader issues such as police brutality, corruption, and broken political promises (Lynch, 2024). The movement, characterized by its use of social media for mobilization, has been notable for its intensity and the government's harsh response. The Lumumba Youth Movement in the Democratic Republic of Congo focused on promoting democracy, human rights, and social justice. It has been active in advocating for political reforms and challenging authoritarian practices in the country (TrustAfrica, 2023). These movements highlight the diverse and dynamic nature of social and political activism across Africa, each addressing unique regional challenges while contributing to the broader struggle for justice and equality. The "Black Lives Matter" and "Me Too" (Levy & Mattsson, 2023; Ozbilgin & Erbil, 2021) are other examples from the context of South Africa.

The authors noted these movements have brought to light the pervasive nature of systemic racism and gender-based violence, highlighting the urgent need for societal change. They have also underscored the importance of intersectionality, which recognizes that individuals may experience multiple, overlapping forms of discrimination and oppression. However, one area where the importance of intersectionality is particularly evident is in the criminal justice system, where racial and economic inequalities intersect to create profound disparities in outcomes (Stubbs, 2020). While supporting the foregoing, Lopez and Pasko (2021) explained that Black and Latino individuals are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, both as victims of police violence and as incarcerated individuals. According to Jeffers (2022), these disparities are not simply the result of individual bias or discrimination but are deeply rooted in the history and structure of the criminal justice system itself.

Among the modern theories are John Rawls' theory of justice (Rawls, 1999), which argues that our behavior is influenced by the institutions we create, and Nancy Fraser's three dimensions of social justice (Fraser, 1998): redistribution (of resources), recognition (of marginalized groups) and participation (of individuals and groups) (Informa Plc, 2024). Fraser's model of social justice has three modes of social ordering: economic, cultural and political. Social justice is achieved through redistribution of the resources of society (i.e., the economic mode), 'recognition' or parity of esteem (i.e., the cultural mode), and equity of representation (i.e., the political mode). In terms of a curriculum, redistribution is achieved through sharing knowledge and expertise as well as more tacit qualities such as qualities of professional practice and behavior (Winberg & Winberg, 2017).

Social justice in the context of LIS

As presented in the preceding section, social justice has various definitions, focusing on diversity, human rights, or radical change, but all share the goal of challenging the status quo. It involves amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and ensuring equity and equal access. Pateman and Vincent (2012), in their work, Public Libraries and Social Justice, argue that libraries and information professionals should actively engage with communities to address their needs and promote social justice. To Humboldt State University (2015) "Social justice is about giving voice to communities who have been forced into silence; social justice is about equity and equal access." Marcella and Chowdhury (2020) also stated that one of the central tenets of social justice in LIS is equitable access to information. Libraries serve as gateways to knowledge, but access to these resources is not always equally distributed (Abumandour, 2020). Factors such as socioeconomic status, geographic location, race, and disability can create significant barriers to accessing library services (Ward-Sutton et al., 2020). In response, LIS professionals advocate for the removal of these barriers through initiatives such as expanding digital access, providing resources in multiple languages, and creating inclusive spaces that welcome diverse populations (Palfrey, 2020).

Social justice has thus emerged as a critical lens through which Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals examine their practices, policies, and roles within the broader community (Mehra, 2021, Rubin & Rubin, 2020). As institutions committed to the free flow of information, libraries have long been associated with the principles of equity and access (Adedokun & Zulu, 2022). Patin et al. (2021) noted a critical aspect of social justice in LIS is the representation and inclusion of marginalized voices in library collections and services. Historically, library collections have often reflected the dominant cultural narratives, with materials by and about marginalized groups underrepresented (England, 2023). In addition to collection development, social justice in LIS also involves rethinking library services to better serve marginalized communities (Winberry & Bishop, 2021). More so, Dali and Caidi (2020) observed that the role of LIS professionals as advocates for social justice extends beyond the walls of the library. The authors noted that librarians and information professionals are increasingly engaging in advocacy work to address broader social issues that affect their communities, such as educational inequity, digital divide, and censorship.

However, one of the significant challenges in promoting social justice in LIS is addressing the systemic inequalities that exist within the profession itself (Poole et al., 2021). The LIS field, like many others, has historically been dominated by white, middle-class individuals, and this lack of diversity can impact the profession's ability to serve diverse communities effectively (Inskip, 2023; Mehra & Gray, 2020). Contributing further, Mehra (2021) noted that the integration of social justice into LIS education is another critical area of focus. LIS programs are increasingly incorporating social justice principles into their curricula, emphasizing the importance of equity, inclusion, and advocacy in library practice (Patin et al., 2021). A social justice reform agenda therefore requires an approach to curriculum, as Anwaruddin (2016) argues, with less of an interest in what curriculum is than what curriculum does, that is, the role that curriculum plays in relation to inequality. Raju (2022) noted that while inclusivity is central to social justice, so, too, is the dismantling of structures that perpetuate inequalities. The theory of social justice is centered on the notion that a society cannot be just until there is equity, which includes equitable access to scholarly literature (Raju, 2022).

Challenges and options for decolonizing LIS curriculum in Africa

Following their respective independence milestones, many African nations recognized the urgent need to revitalize their social, political, and economic systems, which had been distorted during the colonial era (Foga, 2020). Across the continent, there was a widespread call for the revival and reclamation of their heritage - a demand to restore their lost identity, culture, philosophy, and language. This movement sought to acknowledge and harness Africa's vast potential, which had long been marginalized (Foga, 2020). Each country, though achieving independence at different times, shared a common goal of overcoming colonial legacies and forging a new, empowered path forward. Further, the author

highlighted South Africa as an example, noting that the advent of democracy brought with it the need to reform university curricula by moving away from Eurocentric frameworks and languages, and instead towards incorporating South African perspectives, languages, and history. However, this goal remains largely unmet. The absence of African epistemologies, worldviews, languages, and discourses in university curricula led to growing demands for decolonization (Santos, 2014). These demands fueled widespread protests, most notably during the #RhodesMustFall movement in 2015, where students called for a departure from Eurocentric principles and the inclusion of African history, philosophy, language, and knowledge systems in university curricula (Heleta, 2016). Even after twenty-five years of independence, South African universities continue to reflect Western dominance, with curricula still deeply entrenched in colonial thought. The ongoing reliance on Western theories and texts poses significant challenges for curriculum designers, policymakers, and stakeholders as they struggle to dismantle these entrenched systems despite calls for decolonization (Hamadi, 2014). Moreover, in the 21st century, African scholars and writers (Mbembe, 2016; Wa Thiongo, 1981, 1993; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Fanon, 2014; Said, 2014) have strongly protested against the ongoing dominance of Western epistemology in universities (Foga, 2020) arguing for inclusion of African knowledge, philosophy, and values—such as discourse and thought - at the forefront of university education.

In addition to the efforts towards decolonization in South Africa, several other African countries have undertaken initiatives to decolonize their LIS sectors, with varying degrees of success. The situation in two West African countries - Ghana and Nigeria (with data collected from four universities) are presented to provide valuable insights into the progress so far made in the process of decolonizing curricula in the selected universities. The following questions were posed to the respondents:

1. What modules are in place to expose students to the fact that local knowledge systems and research are not very visible in the global canon, and that we tend to privilege the concepts, ideas, and theories of the West or Global North at the expense of our own knowledge systems and ways of knowing?
2. Apart from having courses on IKS in your LIS curriculum, what else is there that creates that awareness in graduates so that they too can play a role in decolonizing our education systems - through collections, information literacy programs, etc?
3. How can social justice be used to realign LIS curriculum through Scholarly Communication?

The results are presented in narratives as follows:

Ghana

Two respondents were interviewed at the Department of Information Science, University of Ghana, Legon.

Respondent 1

At the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Ghana, within existing courses such as Information in Society, Information Management & Records Management, User Services, Literature for Children, Administrative History among others, there is intentional critiquing of the historical and ongoing influence of Western knowledge systems on information production, dissemination, and access as well as exploring alternative information systems and practices from non-Western cultures, particularly within the Ghanaian context. There is also the opening up of discussion on the colonial legacy in archival and records management practices, including how power dynamics influence what is preserved and how it is accessed. Students are being introduced to community-based archives and knowledge preservation initiatives that center local control and ownership of information and incorporating case studies and discussions on how information management practices can support social justice and decolonization efforts. Emphasis is placed on the importance of cultural competency and understanding diverse user needs, particularly in the context of a multicultural society like Ghana and to explore how libraries and information centers can serve as spaces for cultural expression, community building, and decolonization.

Courses are structured to explore the representation of diverse cultures and perspectives in literature including works by African and Ghanaian authors and illustrators, and to encourage discussions on the importance of cultural representation in literature. The potential curriculum elements for the decolonization in LIS after the ongoing curriculum review include the introduction of the following courses: Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), community engagement (focuses on how LIS professionals work with local communities to preserve and promote their knowledge systems) and research methods (that prioritizes and respects local knowledge systems and ways of knowing). Efforts are equally ongoing to incorporate in the curriculum avenue for students and faculty to examine the ways in which power operates in information and knowledge systems and how LIS professionals can challenge these power structures.

Respondent 2

The interviewee opined that:

… the University of Ghana does not currently offer specific courses or modules focused exclusively on decolonizing the LIS curriculum or emphasizing Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). Our curriculum is aligned with international standards, but we do not have targeted interventions or courses that address the issues that border on decolonization. However, our faculty incorporates diverse perspectives and critical thinking into various courses to encourage students to question dominant narratives and consider local contexts. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the importance of decolonizing education and are open to exploring innovative approaches. Regarding social justice and Scholarly Communication, our university values equity and inclusivity. Still, we do not have explicit programs or courses that directly realign the LIS curriculum through social justice. (Respondent 2, University of Ghana, Legon)

Based on the above, it is evident that the University of Ghana is making efforts towards decolonization of curriculum with the introduction of new courses.

Nigeria

Interviews were conducted in three universities:

Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Respondent 1

Our department offers IKS courses. We also offer oral archives for recording of local information not in publications yet. I believe that is a way of collection development on indigenous knowledge and local culture and history. Much of the LIS courses we offer are not necessarily colonial but conform to world standards of information acquisition, organization, management and dissemination. Even in courses like engineering, law and medicine, world standards are the goals. Although Information Repackaging is not a separate course, it is subsumed within readers services, which is a way of providing locally relevant information. This could be in form of translations, music and dance, charts and other locally appealing forms of the original information. The question of social justice and LIS is a hard nut to crack. But we teach inclusiveness in collection development (to provide also for those with special needs), readers services and design of library buildings (which for now isn't a separate course in the curriculum but treated under Architect's Brief in Library Administration). Perhaps, the philosophy of collection development that does not encourage bias in the selection is a way of ensuring balance in the library collection for social justice. Overall, the Common Core Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS)

imposed on Nigerian universities does not allow much flexibility in curricula development.

Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calabar

Respondent 2 opined that:

…courses in Indigenous Knowledge Systems are not a component of LIS curriculum at UNICAL. As you are aware only 30% of CCMAS is handled in the Department and hence not much is expected from the Department in respect of the concern raised. Maybe in future, your concern may come to attention of the stakeholders in LIS nationally as the National Universities Commission (NUC) has taken over the job of universities through CCMAS.

Department of Library and Information Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna

Respondent 3 submitted that:

Yes, we have few courses around Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) at 200L and 500L, oral tradition and cultural literature and literature for children and adolescents. But beyond that, I think decolonization of LIS curriculum and embedding IKS depends on the lecturers and the regulatory body, NUC. NUC needs to first shift its mindset from being 'rigid' with certain aspects of our curriculum to allowing institutions have autonomy over what they feel is 'indigenous' to them. This has always been the "fight" between institutions and NUC, and the "fight" is further aggravated with the recent adoption of CCMAS. The 30% that is left for department is too little to actually decolonize whatever concept the department would love to see.

The respondent submitted further: *Then, upgrading the skillset of lecturers around IKS and especially leveraging Open Access would further help to contextually deliver lectures around IKS and to also inform their students about how to leverage Open Access to communicate indigenous scholarly outputs and be visible. Nonetheless, lecturers (in terms of teaching and research) and libraries (in the areas of collection development, information literacy programs, etc) can still play their roles by intentionally upgrading their skills around IKS and open access and embedding that expertise in the discharge of their duties to the students and the university community.*

From the narratives above, not much has been achieved in the area of decolonization of LIS curriculum owing to the fact that Nigeria, through its regulatory body, the National Universities Commission, over-centralized development of curricula leaving little room for innovation in the universities to address decolonization.

There was nothing in the universities on how to ensure social justice through scholarly communication.

In addition to the situation in the institutions from Ghana and Nigeria which revealed some attendant challenges constraining efforts towards decolonization, the literature further documents that despite its importance, decolonizing LIS education and research in Africa faces several challenges (Day et al., 2022; Raju, 2022). In the case of South Africa, these challenges stem from the country's complex landscape, burdened by social inequality, gender disparities, racism, nepotism, and the harmful effects of neoliberalism and globalization. In addition is the dominance of Western epistemologies and methodologies in academic institutions and publications (Mbembe, 2016); lack of resources and infrastructure to support indigenous research (Ngoepe & Saurombe, 2016, Ocholla, 2020, Omarsaib et al., 2023); language barriers (Ouane & Glanz, 2011; Ocholla, 2020; Leibowitz, 2017) leading to advocacy for the reform of LIS education and training programs in Africa (Raju, 2022) particularly through promotion of African indigenous knowledge systems and methodologies in the curriculum and research of African universities (Mawere, 2014; Reid, 2018).

Furthermore, the presence of multiple languages in many countries on the continent creates a barrier to curriculum reform, as not everyone is proficient in all the languages spoken (Heleta, 2016). The complexities and lack of confidence among African educational leaders also present a significant challenge. Heleta points out that many influential Africans and interest groups may resist and undermine decolonization efforts in order to protect their own positions and interests, while some of them even believe that Africa lacks a sufficient body of knowledge or intellectual tradition from which they can draw (Heleta, 2016). In spite of these challenges, the time has come for Africa to take concerted efforts towards decolonization of curriculum so as to train professionals who would be in the vanguard of ensuring inclusivity and diversity in protecting the continent's rich cultural heritage.

These challenges, no doubt remain hard nuts to crack in the quest to decolonize LIS curricula in Africa as what options are open to LIS schools on the continent. Scholars like Jansen (2017) and Keet et al. (2017), even suggest that decolonization might be a passing trend that would not lead to significant changes in curricula or practices. They caution against getting swept up in the hype and instead emphasize the importance of engaging students in meaningful discussions about the challenges faced by universities. The focus, they reasoned, should be on fostering genuine understanding and transformation rather than following trends. Mackinlay and Barney (2011) have pointed out that "[d]ecolonization is a concept that takes on different meanings across different contexts" (p.55). Nonetheless, it can be understood roughly to encompass a project that resists Eurocentrism,

works to address the harm caused by colonial domination, and moves towards more socially just practices in the field of education.

In their paper entitled, *A Holistic Decolonial Lens for Library and Information Studies* published in the Journal of Documentation, Jimenez, Vannini, and Cox (2023) argue that librarianship, as an institution and profession, is deeply entrenched in coloniality as it prioritizes textual knowledge, thereby marginalizing and even eradicating indigenous oral traditions - a process described as epistemicide (Nyamnjoh, 2012). This textual focus aligns with a Eurocentric knowledge system that privileges Western scientific knowledge, often to the detriment of traditional knowledge in the global South (Crilly, 2019; Cox et al., 2020). The classification systems and collection practices in libraries further perpetuate these colonial biases, privileging the records and perspectives of colonial powers and excluding or misrepresenting indigenous knowledge (Olson & Schlegl, 2001).

As also noted by Muller et al. (2018), the call for decolonized higher education has intensified in recent years as evidenced from the student protest movements that, as Jansen (2017) noted, placed great emphasis on a decolonized university curriculum (Muller et al., 2018). The authors reasoned further that there is a need to think about how research practices can inform and be informed by the response so thoughts about thinking, about curriculum change, transformation, and decolonization should be informed by research practices that make such change possible (Muller et al., 2018). Engagement with decolonization must thus be twofold - first, in our experimentation with a different way of doing research, and second, in the theoretical sphere of anti-oppressive education where we locate our experiences of change and social justice (Muller et al., 2018). Sekiwu et al. (2022) submit that decolonizing LIS research in Africa involves rethinking and restructuring the theoretical, methodological, and practical approaches to better reflect and serve the continent's diverse cultures, languages, and knowledge systems. Reid (2018) observes that decolonization addresses the historical imbalances and power dynamics that have marginalized African knowledge systems.

In an attempt towards decolonization of LIS curriculum in Africa, the framework of Jansen (2017) is of prime relevance here. Jansen (2017) discusses both "soft" and "hard" perspectives on decolonization, which are crucial for determining the most effective way to decolonize the LIS curriculum in Africa. These perspectives are summarized as follows:

Soft perspectives

Decolonization as additive-inclusive knowledge

This viewpoint acknowledges the value of existing knowledge systems but calls for the inclusion of new knowledge in established curricula. While adding new

content is necessary, critics argue that this alone is not enough to fully achieve decolonization. Simply incorporating additional courses or texts may result in isolating the new material from mainstream academic disciplines (Foga, 2020).

Decolonization as decentering European knowledge

This approach critiques the dominance of European ideals, values, and knowledge in educational institutions, arguing that Europe remains central in shaping curriculum content. Advocates of this perspective suggest that Africa should replace Europe at the core of the curriculum, without entirely excluding European contributions. Instead, African knowledge, values, and achievements should take precedence, reflecting the continent's central role in shaping historical, societal, and future understandings (Foga, 2020; Jansen, 2017).

Decolonization as critical engagement with established knowledge

This method encourages students to critically analyze knowledge by asking questions such as: "Where does this knowledge originate? Whose interests does it serve? What is included or excluded?" (Jansen, 2017). Rather than erasing uncomfortable aspects of the past, this approach promotes a transformative engagement with the curriculum, reshaping its meaning through critical reflection.

Decolonization as encounters with entangled knowledge

In this view, knowledge is not neatly divided into binaries like "us" versus "them" or "the West" versus "the Global South" (Foga, 2020). Instead, it reflects the interwoven nature of human existence. Scientific discoveries, for instance, are seen as products of both colonizer and colonized knowledge systems. No matter how much we try, our lives and knowledge are inevitably interconnected, which is mirrored in the curriculum.

Hard perspectives

Decolonization as the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society)

This "hard" stance assigns significant influence to the curriculum in shaping both established knowledge and settler society (Foga, 2020). Proponents of this repatriation model are often engaged in efforts to restore control of land to Indigenous peoples. They criticize the additive-inclusive model, claiming that it "domesticates" decolonization by containing it within existing structures rather than achieving true liberation (Jansen, 2017).

Decolonization as the Africanization of knowledge

Unlike the "decentering" approach, which seeks to replace European dominance with African centrality, this "hard" Africanization perspective aims to completely displace Western knowledge, achievements, and ideals as the standard of human progress (Foga, 2020). Advocates, particularly pan-Africanists, view Africanizing the curriculum as a nationalist goal that rejects European imitation and asserts African identity. A truly decolonized curriculum, they argue, should focus exclusively on Africa, without reference to Europe or the West. Based on the Jansen (2017) framework above, which decolonization approach is best for Africa in the bid towards realignment of LIS curricula and ensuring social justice through scholarly communication? The next section addresses this question.

Decolonizing LIS curriculum through scholarly communication and ensuring social justice in Africa

Decolonizing the curriculum means creating spaces and resources for a dialogue among all members of the university on how to imagine and envision all cultures and knowledge systems in the curriculum, and with respect to what is being taught and how it frames the world (Keele University, 2018). The process often goes through curriculum alignment which is essential in LIS education to address the evolving needs of society and the information profession. Traditional LIS curricula often focus on technical skills and theoretical knowledge without adequately addressing the social and ethical responsibilities of information professionals (Mehra & Rioux, 2016). Realigning the curriculum in LIS education means going beyond the traditional focus on library skills like cataloging and managing collections. It involves reshaping educational programs to emphasize social justice values such as equity, access, diversity, and inclusion. This shift aims to prepare LIS professionals who are not only skilled in their craft but also mindful of the broader social issues affecting marginalized and underserved communities. In the African context, where unequal access to information is a significant challenge, this realignment is especially important. By aligning library services with social justice principles, fairer access to information can be achieved, leading to strengthening libraries as powerful drivers of social change. In fact, this realignment is very crucial for training information professionals who are not only skilled in managing information but also committed to promoting social justice and inclusivity in their work. The following approaches to achieving LIS curriculum realignment through scholarly communication to ensure social justice, which follows Jansen's (2017) framework of decentering the curriculum, are discussed.

Integrating open access publishing in curricula as a means of achieving equitable access

Today, scholarly communication, which is the process in which research findings are created, evaluated, disseminated, and preserved (Okechukwu et al., 2024), has been identified one

of the avenues of achieving curriculum realignment and ensuring social justice. Scholarly communication being a fundamental aspect of academic life, serves as the primary means by which researchers share their findings, engage in dialogue with their peers, and contribute to the collective knowledge of their disciplines (Luzón & Pérez-Llantada, 2022). According to the authors, this process encompasses a wide range of activities, from the creation and dissemination of research to the preservation and access of scholarly works.

 Going further, White and King (2020) noted that scholarly communication involves the creation, evaluation, dissemination, and preservation of academic research. The traditional model of scholarly communication is often associated with the publication of research articles in peer-reviewed journals (Lee & Yue, 2020). This model has long been the cornerstone of academic publishing, providing a platform for researchers to disseminate their work to a global audience while ensuring that the research meets the standards of rigor and validity through the peer review process. However, scholarly communication extends beyond journal articles to include books, conference papers, data sets, and other forms of research output that contribute to the advancement of knowledge (Okechukwu et al., 2024). The advent of digital technologies has had a profound impact on scholarly communication, transforming how research is created, shared, and accessed (Meyer & Schroeder, 2023). The authors further argued that the digitization of scholarly content has facilitated the rapid dissemination of research, enabling researchers to share their findings with a global audience almost instantly. Elliott et al. (2020) noted that digital platforms and tools, such as online journals, repositories, and social media, have expanded the reach of scholarly communication, allowing for greater collaboration and engagement among researchers, policymakers, and the public. More so, Arboledas-Lérida (2021) noted that metrics and impact assessment of scholarly communication are also evolving, with a growing emphasis on alternative metrics, or altmetrics, which measure the impact of research beyond traditional citation counts. In furtherance, Lyu and Costas (2020) indicated that altmetrics track the attention that research receives online, including mentions on social media, coverage in news outlets, and engagement on academic networking sites. The authors further noted these metrics provide a more comprehensive view of the reach and influence of research.

In the context of social justice, scholarly communication can help democratize knowledge by making research findings freely available through open access publishing models (See Figure 1).

- **Gold OA** – this form of Open Access makes the final published Version of Record permanently, freely available, immediately upon publication by the publisher, at the point of publication (i.e. the journal itself, not in a repository). Gold Open Access frequently requires payment of an article processing charge (APC), which may be paid by authors or subsidized by a third party such as a funding council – however, payment is not a necessary characteristic of Gold Open Access, it simply means that the article is free for readers to access from the journal itself under a Creative Commons license.
- **Green OA** – making a version of the manuscript freely available in a repository. An embargo period is usually set by the publisher, such as 6, 12 or even 24 months. No charges are paid.
- **Delayed Open Access** – refers to scholarly articles in subscription journals made available openly on the web directly through the publisher at the expiry of a set embargo period.
- **Hybrid** – a subscription journal which allows authors to make their papers Open Access. Typically a significantly higher price (relative to dedicated Gold OA journals), while others remain toll access.
- **Bronze OA** – articles marked as 'Open Access' without an explicitly stated Creative Commons license, and/or without charge of an APC to the author.
- **Gratis OA** – this access refers to the publisher optionally making a paper free to read at no charge to the author – usually for marketing and promotional activities. The Gratis Open Access may not be permanent. Copyright/licencing is still determined by traditional formats. This is not 'true' Open Access.
- **Libre OA** – this is a blanket term for 'true' Open Access; where the paper is made available under an open licence, allowing it to be shared and reused, depending on which licence is used.
- **Diamond OA** – this refers to the form of Gold Open Access in which there are no author fees (APC). Funding for the journal publishing operations comes from alternate sources, and is not charged to the authors.

Figure 1: Open Access Models. Source: IFIS Libguides https://ifis.libguides.com/journal-publishing-guide/open-access-models

Open access, particularly the Diamond model, provides an opportunity for researchers to communicate their findings publicly without having to pay article processing fees (Kodua-Ntim & Fombad, 2024). The benefits of open access include increased visibility and discoverability of research results, increased collaboration, and exchange of ideas, enhanced quality and efficiency of research, and increased global impact of research, education, and innovation (Kodua-Ntim & Fombad, 2024).

This ensures that all individuals, regardless of their institutional affiliation or economic status, can benefit from and contribute to the body of knowledge. Moreover, scholarly communication can amplify diverse voices and perspectives, promoting a more inclusive and representative scholarly discourse.

Several studies have noted that scholarly communication plays a vital role in the pursuit of social justice (Canfield et al., 2020; Roh et al., 2020). In the context of social justice, scholarly communication has the potential to highlight inequalities, give voice to marginalized communities, and advocate for systemic change (Polk & Diver, 2020). One of the primary ways in which scholarly communication promotes social justice is by increasing access to information (Mehra, 2021). Access to information is a fundamental human right, and scholarly communication can help bridge the gap between privileged and marginalized groups (Faturoti, 2022). Traditionally, Logullo et al. (2024) noted that access to scholarly research has been limited by the high costs of journal subscriptions and other paywalls, which often restrict access to individuals and institutions with sufficient financial resources.

According to Ochieng and Gyasi (2021), the open access movement, which advocates for research to be freely available to the public without financial or legal barriers, has been a critical development in promoting social justice through scholarly communication. Knöchelmann (2021) noted that open access helps democratize knowledge, enabling a wider range of individuals to engage with and benefit from scholarly work. In addition to increasing access to information, open access also plays a key role in amplifying the voices of marginalized communities (Roh et al., 2020). The study by Vetter et al. (2022) explored the role of Research-Practice Partnerships (RPPs) in advancing equity and justice within educational research in the United States. Findings from Vetter et al. (2022) revealed that RPPs have grown significantly, fostering collaborations between researchers and practitioners to address educational challenges through shared efforts. The authors further emphasize the importance of reflecting on the strengths of these equity-oriented partnerships to sustain and enhance their impact on social justice in education. In addition, Raju (2018) discussed the evolution of the open access movement, emphasizing its philanthropic goal of sharing research for societal benefit and its potential to disrupt traditional publishing models. Their findings found that open access has expanded to include gold and diamond routes, with the latter gaining traction as libraries increasingly adopt the role of publishers. As observed by the authors, this shift, exemplified by the University of Cape Town Libraries' diamond open journal and monograph publishing service, highlights the social justice imperative of open access.

According to UNESCO (2024) the widespread endorsement and support for Diamond Open Access journals, repositories and platforms represent a paradigm shift towards dismantling the barriers hindering the access and distribution of publicly funded research. DOA is not just about broadening access; it's a commitment to bibliodiversity, affirming equitable access to scholarly publishing and research outputs regardless of geographical, financial or institutional constraints (UNESCO, 2024). Thus, emphasizing open access in low-resource areas helps to reduce the significant barriers researchers from the Global South face due to costly subscription fees and article processing charges (APCs) (Chan & Costa, 2020). DOA is preferred among other models in the context of teaching LIS students because it ensures that no fees are charged to authors or readers, making knowledge accessible to everyone, regardless of financial resources. This model supports inclusivity by allowing a diverse range of perspectives from researchers worldwide to be published without cost barriers, challenging the traditional Western-centric focus in scholarship. DOA also promotes ethical publishing practices, supporting community-driven initiatives and the democratization of knowledge. With DOA, LIS students can advocate for a more equitable, diverse, and just academic environment. Teaching LIS students about diamond open access empowers them to support equitable platforms, enhancing access to knowledge and promoting inclusivity. These platforms encourage diverse perspectives in global academia, challenging the traditional Western-centric focus in scholarship. By promoting Diamond Open Access, LIS programs also address the digital divide by ensuring that access to scholarly resources and research outputs is not limited by financial barriers or infrastructure constraints. This inclusivity helps bridge the gap between well-resourced and under-resourced institutions, enabling researchers from low-income areas to participate fully in the global academic community. Consequently, it supports a more balanced and diverse exchange of knowledge and ideas across different regions.

Inclusivity and the representation of diverse voices

Inclusivity in scholarly communication requires both access and the representation of diverse perspectives in knowledge creation and dissemination. Traditional publishing has often sidelined voices from less privileged regions, favoring research from wealthier nations, which limits global academic diversity (Subramaniam, 2019). Integrating inclusivity in LIS curricula equips students to recognize and address these imbalances, such as by analyzing trends that underrepresent non-Western scholars and exploring how open access, particularly diamond open access, can elevate indigenous knowledge systems without financial barriers (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013). Through learning about alternative scholarly communication models, students are prepared to advocate for platforms that foster wider representation and challenge exclusionary editorial practices (Hudson-Ward, 2020). This approach supports social justice objectives in LIS by democratizing knowledge production and amplifying marginalized voices.

Ensuring the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems in research methodology

The late South African Minister of Health, Mantho Tshabalala-Msimang, commenting on the need to study indigenous knowledge systems said:

> the study of indigenous knowledge was "an opportunity to reclaim Africa's scientific and socio-cultural heritage, which was stigmatized and discredited as primitive rituals and witchcraft by colonialism and apartheid" (Hasslberger, 2010)

Two of the major values of research to society are that it is the means by which society validates (or confirms) past and current knowledge; and research is also a means by which new knowledge is created by searching and discovering the unknown. Most often, African universities are looked upon as ivory towers or Western enclaves which serve as Trojan horses for perpetuating Western domination of knowledge systems by dancing to the Western research agenda. As an experiential knowledge system whose application has been tested since the beginning of time, the various facets of IKS should be validated through research as a means of integrating them into LIS curricula. Currently, only three research paradigms namely - positivist, interpretive and critical theory, which are Eurocentric in origin are recognized in scholarly publishing (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). A fourth, Indigenous Paradigm, which would value indigenous systems, values and methodologies, should be integrated into LIS curricula and recognized by the Global North. Its principles would be based on epistemological pluralis, relational ontology, decolonization and empowerment, knowledge as intergenerational and community-based. The specific IKS courses that should be incorporated include but not limited to the following: oral traditions and narratives, community participation and collaboration, respect for indigenous epistemologies, traditional ecological knowledge, language and cultural sensitivity, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and indigenous methodologies.

Empowering LIS Students to engage with equitable knowledge systems

Incorporating themes of equity and inclusivity into LIS programs equips graduates to critically address disparities in knowledge organization and access. Students gain essential skills in open access usage, ethical metadata practices, and advocacy for inclusive policies, fostering social empowerment and community building (Mehra & Rioux, 2021). This curriculum shift prepares future librarians to advance social justice through local knowledge preservation, community-driven research, and responsive library services, ultimately shaping a more inclusive global information landscape. Addressing the digital divide is integral to this effort, as these programs emphasize the importance of providing equitable access to digital resources and technology.

By teaching students to recognize and bridge gaps in digital literacy and infrastructure, LIS graduates can ensure that marginalized communities are not left behind in the digital age. This approach helps reduce inequalities and promotes inclusive participation in the global information society.

Conclusion

It is crucial to remember that advancing the decolonization of LIS curriculum by aligning it with principles of social justice is an ongoing process. It requires constant reflection, engagement with diverse perspectives, and a commitment to challenging dominant narratives in LIS. In this essay, Jansen's (2017) approach of "decolonization as decentering European knowledge" was selected as the most feasible framework because it addresses the historical dominance of European knowledge while ensuring African knowledge takes precedence. This balanced approach fosters an inclusive curriculum, acknowledging valuable European contributions without marginalizing African perspectives. It promotes ownership and pride among African students and educators, validating and celebrating African intellectual traditions, which can enhance engagement and motivation. In addition, the framework aligns with broader decolonization goals by challenging colonial structures and ideologies, contributing to a more equitable society. It avoids the pitfalls of other frameworks, such as the additive-inclusive model, which may not fully challenge Eurocentric paradigms, or the Africanization model, which could isolate African knowledge from global discourse.

Several approaches have been discussed in line with decolonization as decentering European knowledge. By integrating the approaches towards decolonising LIS curriculum, universities in Africa would be on the path towards equipping their graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to a more just and equitable information landscape. This transformation also entails embedding practices that focus on social justice, such as open access publishing, which broadens access to knowledge by removing economic barriers. By doing so, LIS programs can develop professionals who are not only skilled in managing information but are also dedicated to ethical practices that promote inclusivity, equity, and community engagement. To achieve this vision, LIS practitioners, educators, policymakers would need to work together to prioritize reforms that emphasize social responsibility alongside technical expertise. Initiatives like open access, particularly Diamond OA, are crucial in supporting diverse perspectives, enhancing accessibility, and addressing information inequities. In the final analysis, a decolonized, socially conscious LIS curriculum will prepare professionals to effect positive change in African societies.

References

Abumandour, E. S. T. (2020). Public libraries' role in supporting e-learning and spreading lifelong education: A case study. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*, 14(2), 178-217.

Adedokun, T. A., & Zulu, S. P. (2022). Towards digital inclusion in South Africa: The role of public libraries and the way forward. I*nterdisciplinary Journal of Economics and Business Law*, 11(4), 127-154

Ahmed, A. K. (2020). #RhodesMustFall: How a decolonial student movement in the Global South inspired epistemic disobedience at the University of Oxford. *African Studies Review*, 63(2), 281-303. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2019.49

Albornoz, D., Okune, A., & Chan, L. (2020). Framing power in open science. Nature.

Anastasiou, D., & Bantekas, I. (2023). Education for learners with disabilities as a social right. *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law*, 25, 365.

Anwaruddin, S. M. (2016). Interrupting the Conditions of Sexual Violence: Towards a Critical Literacy Approach to Pedagogy. *Society and Culture in South Asia*, 2(2), 256-275. https://doi.org/10.1177/2393861716644351

Arboledas-Lérida, L. (2021). On the Coercive Nature of Research Impact Metrics: The Case Study of Altmetrics and Science Communication. *Social Epistemology*, 35(5), 461–474. https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2021.1919237

Beilin, I. (2017). Student success and the neoliberal academic library. *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 2, 1-15.

Bhat, R. M., Rather, A. A., Ahmad, P. A., & Lone, A. S. (2022). An empirical study of human rights and social justice. *Journal of Psychology and Political Science (JPPS)*, 2799-1024.

Brook, F., Ellenwood, D., & Lazzaro, A. E. (2015). In pursuit of antiracist social justice: Denaturalizing whiteness in the academic library. *Library Trends*, 64(2), 246-284.

Canfield, K. N., Menezes, S., Matsuda, S. B., Moore, A., Mosley Austin, A. N., Dewsbury, B. M., ... & Taylor, C. (2020). Science communication demands a critical approach that centers inclusion, equity, and intersectionality. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5, 2. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2020.00002

Cabe, M. (2023). How Rhodes Must Fall amplified calls to decolonize. *New Internationalist*. https://newint.org/features/2023/01/01/how-rhodes-must-fall-amplified-calls-decolonize

Capeheart, L., & Milovanovic, D. (2020). *Social justice: Theories, issues, and movements* (Revised and expanded edition). Rutgers University Press.

Chan, L., & Costa, S. (2020). Equitable Access to Knowledge: Reimagining Open Access Publishing Models for the Global South. *Scholarly and Research Communication*, 11(1).

Cornell University Library. 2024. *Open Access Publishing: What is Open Access?*
https://guides.library.cornell.edu/openaccess

Cox, A. M., Griffin, B. L., & Hartel, J. (2020). The materiality of research: Implications for data sharing. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 71(3), 282-294.

Craig, G. (2021). Putting the global in social justice? In C. Deeming (Ed.), *The Struggle for Social Sustainability* (pp. 237-254). Policy Press.

Crilly, J. (2019). Decolonising the academic library: Disrupting whiteness in library spaces. *Information Services & Use*, 39(3-4), 273-287.

Dali, K., & Caidi, N. (2020). *Humanizing LIS education and practice*. Routledge.

Day, A., Lee, L., Thomas, D. S. P., & Spickard, J. (Eds.). (2022). *Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization: Practical Tools for Improving Teaching, Research, and Scholarship*. Bristol University Press.https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2jn920v

Elliott, S., Bevan, N., & Litchfield, C. (2020). Parents, girls' and Australian football: a constructivist grounded theory for attracting and retaining participation. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 12(3), 392-413. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1602560

England, E. (2023). Perpetuating whiteness: Disrupting the dominant narrative in academic library collections. *Journal of Radical Librarianship,* 9, 98-115.

Fanon, F. (2014). In N. Gibson (Ed.), *Decolonizing Madness: The Psychiatric Writings of Frantz Fanon*. London: Palgrave.

Faturoti, B. (2022). Online learning during COVID-19 and beyond: A human rights-based approach to internet access in Africa. *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, 36(1), 68-90.

Foga C. M. (2020). *The Challenges of Decolonising University Curriculum in South Africa: A critical perspective.* [Master's Dissertation, University of Johannesburg]. https://hdl.handle.net/10210/411771

Fraser, N. (1998). *Social justice in the age of identity politics: redistribution, recognition, participation.* SSOAR. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-126247

Fuchs, C., & Sandoval, M. (2013). The Diamond Model of Open Access: Strategies for Sustainable Open Access Publishing. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 211-231.

GG Insights (2024, October 1) *Social Justice: Strategies for Advancing Equity in Education.* Gray Group International. https://www.graygroupintl.com/blog/social-justice

Gwynn, D. (2019). Funding and inequality in global research: The case of African studies. *Research Evaluation*, 28(4), 305-315.

Hamadi, L. (2014). Edward Said: The Postcolonial Theory And the Literature of Decolonization. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 10(10). https://core.ac.uk/reader/328024387

Hasslberger, S. (2005, January 17). *South African Minister: No Restrictive Controls For Natural Medicines*. Sepp Hasslberger. http://www.newmediaexplorer.org/sepp/2005/01/17/south_african_minister_no_restrictive_controls_for_natural_medicines.htm

Heleta, S. (2016). Decolonisation of higher education: dismantling epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa.*Transformation*, 1(1): Article 9

Hudson-Ward, A. (2020). Dismantling the Master's House: On Power, Privilege, and Antiracism in LIS. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology,* 71(8), 999-1008.

Humboldt State University. (2015). *Social Justice Summit.* http://www2.humboldt.edu.summit/

Informa Plc (2024) *Diversity and Inclusion.* https://www.informa.com/talent/diversityandinclusion/

Inskip, C. (2023). What are the options for library and information studies education reform in addressing racial inequity in the library profession in the UK? *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science,* 55(4), 972-998.

International Food Information Service. (2023). *Guide to getting published in journals.* https://ifis.libguides.com/journal-publishing-guide/open-access-models

Jansen, J. (2017). Sense and non-sense in the decolonization of curriculum. In J. Jansen (Ed.), *As by Fire: The End of the South African University,* (pp. 153-171). Tafelberg.

Jeffers, J. L. (2022). Justice is not blind: Disproportionate incarceration rate of people of color. In S. E. Crewe (Ed.), *Race and Social Policy*, (pp. 113-121). Routledge.

Jimenez, A., Vannini, S., & Cox, A. 2023. A holistic decolonial lens for library and information studies. Journal of Documentation, 79(1). https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-10-2021-0205

Jurado de Los Santos, P., Moreno-Guerrero, A. J., Marín-Marín, J. A., & Soler Costa, R. (2020). The term equity in education: A literature review with scientific mapping in web of science. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(10), 3526.

Keele University. (2018). *Keele manifesto for decolonising the curriculum.* https://www.keele.ac.uk/raceequalitycharter/raceequalitycharter/keeledecolonisingthecurriculumnetwork/keelemanifestofordecolonisingthecurriculum/

Keet, A., Sattarzadeh, S. D., & Munene, A. (2017). Higher education and knowledge otherwise. *Education as Change*, 21(1), 1–12.

Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(5), 26-36.

Knöchelmann, M. (2021). The democratisation myth: Open access and the solidification of epistemic injustices. *Science & Technology Studies*, 34(2), 65-89.

Kodua-Ntim, K., & Fombad, M. (2024). Challenges and strategies for open access in South Africa: A knowledge management approach. *Information Development.* https://doi.org/10.1177/02666669241257188

Lee, Y., & Yue, C. A. (2020). Status of internal communication research in public relations: An analysis of published articles in nine scholarly journals from 1970 to 2019. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3), 101906.

Leibowitz, B. 2017. Power, knowledge and learning: Dehegomonising colonial knowledge. *Alternation Journal,* 24(2), 99-119.

Levy, R. E., & Mattsson, M. (2023). The effects of social movements: Evidence from #MeToo. *SSRN*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3496903

Logullo, P., de Beyer, J. A., Kirtley, S., Schlüssel, M. M., & Collins, G. S. (2024). Open access journal publication in health and medical research and open science: benefits, challenges and limitations. *BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine*, 29(4), 223-228.

Lopez, V., & Pasko, L. (Eds.). (2021). *Latinas in the criminal justice system: Victims, targets, and offenders* (Vol. 18). NYU Press.

Livingston, R. (2020). How to promote racial equity in the workplace. *Harvard Business Review*, 98(5), 64-72.

Luzón, M. J., & Pérez-Llantada, C. (2022). *Digital genres in academic knowledge production and communication: Perspectives and practices.* Bristol, Multilingual Matters.

Lynch, G. (2024, July). "Kenya has changed": The Gen-Z protests and what they mean. *Democracy in Africa*. https://democracyinafrica.org/kenya-has-changed-the-gen-z-protests-and-what-they-mean/

Lyu, X., & Costas, R. (2020). How do academic topics shift across altmetric sources? A case study of the research area of Big Data. *Scientometrics*, 123(2), 909-943.

Mackinlay E., & Barney K. (2011). Teaching and learning for social justice: An approach to transformative education in Indigenous Australian studies. In G. Williams (Ed.), *Talking back, talking forward: Journeys in transforming Indigenous educational practice*, (pp. 117–128). Darwin, NT: Charles Darwin University Press.

Marcella, R., & Chowdhury, G. (2020). Eradicating information poverty: an agenda for research. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 52(2), 366-381 https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000618804589

Maurya, S. K. (2021). The concept of justice in reference with philosophies of Plato and Aristotle: A critical study. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 7(3), 250-266.

Mbembe, J. A. 2016. Decolonizing the university: New directions. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 15(1), 29-45.

Mawere, M. 2014. *Culture, indigenous knowledge and development in Africa: Reviving interconnections for sustainable development.* Langaa Rpcig.

McArthur, J. (2016). Assessment for social justice: The role of assessment in achieving social justice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 41(7), 967-981.

Mehra, B. (2021). Social justice design and implementation: Innovative pedagogies to transform LIS education. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 62(4), 460-476.

Mehra, B., & Gray, L. (2020). An "owning up" of white-IST trends in LIS to further real transformations. *The Library Quarterly,* 90(2), 189-239.

Mehra, B., & Rioux, K. (2021). The Role of LIS in Community Engagement and Social Justice Work. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 62(4), 251-262.

Mehra, B., & Rioux, K. (2016). *Progressive community action: Critical theory and social justice in library and information science*. Library Juice Press, Sacramento, CA.

Meringolo, D. D. (2021). *Radical roots: Public history and a tradition of social justice activism*, (p. 632). Amherst College Press.

Meyer, E. T., & Schroeder, R. (2023). Knowledge machines: Digital transformations of the sciences and humanities. MIT Press.

Mirza, R., & Seale, M. (2017). Resistance in practice: Pedagogies of resistance in the library classroom. Progressive Librarian.

Müller, M., Motai, C., Nkopane, M., Mofokeng, T., Lephatsoe, N., & Mouton, R. (2018). Working toward a socially just curriculum in South Africa: A collaborative autobiographical narrative inquiry. *Journal of Education*, 74, https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i74a06

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization*. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). https://dataspace.princeton.edu/handle/88435/dsp01bz60d006g

Ngoepe, M., & Saurombe, A. (2016). Provisions for managing and preserving records created in networked environments in the archival legislative frameworks of selected member states of the Southern African Development Community. *Archives and Manuscripts*, 44(1), 24-41.

Nyamnjoh, F. B. (2012). Blinded by sight: Divining the future of anthropology in Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 47(2-3), 63-92.

Ochieng, V. O., & Gyasi, R. M. (2021). Open educational resources and social justice: Potentials and implications for research productivity in higher educational institutions. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 18(2), 105-124.

Ocholla, D. 2020. Decolonizing higher education in Africa: Implications and possibilities for university libraries. *College & Research Libraries News,* 81(6), 289.

Okechukwu, O. C., Ndubuisi-Okoh, E. E., Okoche, C., & Oladokun, B. D. (2024). Scholarly Publishing Practices among LIS Lecturers in Higher Institutions of Learning in Nigeria. *Journal of Digital Learning and Education*, 4(1), 50-60.

Olson, H. A., & Schlegl, R. (2001). Standardization, objectivity, and user focus: A meta-analysis of subject access critiques. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly,* 32(2), 61-80.

Omarsaib, M., Naicker, N., & Rajkoomar, M. (2023). Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Into Library and Information Science Teaching Practices. *Advances in information quality and management,* (pp. 303–321). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7024-4.ch016

Ouane, A., & Glanz, C. (Eds.). 2011. O*ptimising Learning, Education and Publishing in Africa: The Language Factor--A Review and Analysis of Theory and Practice in Mother-Tongue and Bilingual Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Özbilgin, M. F., & Erbil, C. (2021). Social movements and wellbeing in organizations from multilevel and intersectional perspectives: The case of the #blacklivesmatter movement. *The SAGE handbook of organizational wellbeing*, 119-138.

Palfrey, J. (2020). Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces: Diversity and Free Expression in Education. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/11245.001.0001

Pateman, J., & Vincent, J. (2012) *Public Libraries and Social Justice* (Farn-ham, UK: Ashgate).

Patin, B., Sebastian, M., Yeon, J., Bertolini, D., & Grimm, A. (2021). The mis-education of the librarian: Addressing curricular injustice in the LIS classroom through social justice pedagogy. In B. Mehra (Ed.), *Social justice design and implementation in library and information science*, (pp. 175-189). Routledge.

Poekert, P. E., Swaffield, S., Demir, E. K., & Wright, S. A. (2022). Leadership for professional learning towards educational equity: A systematic literature review. *Leadership for Professional Learning*, 26-47.

Polk, E., & Diver, S. (2020). Situating the scientist: Creating inclusive science communication through equity framing and environmental justice. *Frontiers in Communication*, 5, 6.

Poole A. H, Agosto D, Greenberg J, et al. (2021) Where do we stand? Diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in North American library and information science education. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 62(3): 258–286

Raju, R. (2018, August 26). From green to gold to diamond: Open access's return to social justice. In Session 92 - *Science & Technology Libraries* [Paper presentation] IFLA WLIC 2018 –Transform Libraries, Transform Societies, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. https://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/2220

Raju, J. (2022, July 22-23). *LIS research methodology: decolonial perspectives informing knowledge of African communities*, IFLA WLIC 2022, Dublin. https://repository.ifla.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/fe46cca3-43a4-4464-bc6f-335e4374100f/content

Rehman, A., & Alharthi, K. (2016). An introduction to research paradigms. *International Journal of Educational Investigations,* 3(8), 51-59.

Reid, J. (2018). Decolonizing education and research by countering the myths we live by. *Cinema Journal,* 57(4), 132-138.

Roh, C., Inefuku, H. W., & Drabinski, E. (2020). Scholarly communications and social justice. *Open Access Reader.*

Rubin, R. E., & Rubin, R. G. (2020). *Foundations of library and information science.* American Library Association.

Said, M. (2014) *Developing the culturally competent public librarian: An investigation of diversity training for public libraries to support empathic service provision to Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.* [PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield (United Kingdom)]

Santos, B. D. S. (2014) *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Sekiwu, D., Akena, F. A., & Rugambwa, N. O. 2022. Decolonizing the African University Pedagogy Through Integrating African Indigenous Knowledge and Information Systems. In J. Keengwe (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Transformative and Innovative Pedagogies in Education*, (pp. 171-188). IGI Global.

Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education.* Teachers College Press.

Stubbs, J. (2020). Bringing racialised women and girls into view: An intersectional approach to punishment and incarceration. In S. Walklate, K. Fitz-Gibbons, J. Maher, & J. McCulloch (Eds.), *The Emerald handbook of feminism, criminology and social change,* (pp. 295-316). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Subramaniam, M. (2019). Decolonizing Knowledge and Power in LIS: A Framework for Critical Practice. *Library Trends,* 67(3), 467-484.

Sullivan, A. L., Arora, P., Song, S. Y., & Jimerson, S. R. (2023). Theory, Methods, and

Practice to Advance Equity and Social Justice in School Psychology: Articulating a Path Forward. *School Psychology Review*, 52(5), 493-503, https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2023.2235221

TrustAfrica. (2023). *African social movements - Shaping the future of Africa*. https://trustafrica.org/project/social-movements/

UNESCO (2024). *Diamond Open Access: Global Paradigm Shift in Scholarly Publishing*. https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/diamond-open-access-global-paradigm-shift-scholarly-publishing

Vetter, A., Faircloth, B. S., Hewitt, K. K., Gonzalez, L. M., He, Y., & Rock, M. L. (2022). Equity and Social Justice in Research Practice Partnerships in the United States. *Review of Educational Research*, 92(5), 829-866. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543211070048

Ward-Sutton, C., Williams, N. F., Moore, C. L., & Manyibe, E. O. (2020). Assistive technology access and usage barriers among African Americans with disabilities: A review of the literature and policy. *Journal of applied rehabilitation counseling,* 51(2), 115-133.

Wa Thiong'o, N. (1981) *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey.

Wa Thiong'o N. (1993). *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational publishers.

White, E., & King, L. (2020). Conceptual framework for scholarly communication guidance by the academic library: The case of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science,* 52(4), 1137-1151.

Winberg, S., & Winberg, C. (2017, April 25-28). *Using a social justice approach to decolonize an engineering curriculum*. IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON), Athens, Greece

Winberry, J., & Bishop, B. W. (2021). Documenting social justice in library and information science research: A literature review. *Journal of Documentation*, 77(3), 743-754.

Wolbring, G., & Lillywhite, A. (2021). Equity/equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in universities: the case of disabled people. *Societies*, 11(2), 49.