

Transformation of library and information management: Decolonization or Indigenization.

Associate Professor Spencer Lilley

School of Information Management

Victoria University of Wellington

New Zealand

The concept of a library and an archive were foreign constructs to indigenous peoples when these institutions were first introduced into their traditional lands. As pre-literate societies, Indigenous peoples placed their emphasis of knowledge retention primarily through oral transmission.

Knowledge creation, its organization and methods of retention were managed using a variety of methods, including naming people, places and – after important events, individuals; transmission of stories that included memories of prodigious achievements and feats over the course of history; art works, performing arts, etc. Although libraries and archives had their origins in the areas we now commonly refer to as the Middle East, the Indigenous peoples of Alaska, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America, associate these institutions as an instrument of colonization (of European origin) and an assertion by colonizers of the superior nature of western knowledge. The concept of a library in an indigenous context can therefore be considered a colonial construct.

As the library and information professions seek to determine how best to address the impact of colonization on Indigenous knowledge paradigms, it is opportune to consider whether the focus should be on strategies or agendas associated with decolonization or the indigenization of libraries and other cultural heritage institutions. This article firstly introduces and defines these concepts and identifies the academic literature relevant application. It will then identify why the author believes that Indigenization provides a clearer and more inclusive pathway to be explored. As an Indigenous librarian and researcher of Māori descent, the author draws on his 30 years of experience to identify the critical steps that need to be addressed to enable a transformation process to occur. In the final part of the article, there is a discussion of the challenges and opportunities that Indigenization provides professionals, institutions and professional associations.

Decolonizing

Decolonization once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power. (Smith, 2012)

Decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999) is now in its second edition (Smith, 2012). Although there were others works on decolonization before Smith's, there is little doubt that her book has become the seminal text on the relationship between Indigenous research and western research. Her work has empowered Indigenous communities to take control of the research agenda and demand not only greater and demand not only greater transparency but also higher degrees of accountability from the academy, government, funding agencies and professions. There has been an extensive range of academic literature focusing on how individual disciplines or research areas can be decolonized. Examples of these include decolonizing education (Battiste, 2013), decolonizing museums (Lonetree, 2012), decolonizing social work (Gray, Coates, Yellowbird & Hetherington, 2013), decolonizing the intellectuals (Hiddleston, 2014), decolonizing solidarity (Land, 2015), decolonizing feminism (Donaldson, 1992; McLaren, 2017), decolonizing trauma work (Linklater, 2014), decolonizing employment (MacKinnon, 2015). The literature in this area unpacks the hegemonic reach and what is framed as 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 1994), and aims to empower Indigenous peoples to restore values, beliefs and practices that legitimises their indigeneity and the knowledge systems that underpin this. Decolonization restores an Indigenous worldview as the basis for organization and transmission of knowledge – In New Zealand, Graham Hingangaroa Smith developed kaupapa Māori as a framework that captures the essence of decolonization from a Māori perspective (Smith, 2012). This framework is built around six core cultural principles that draw on Māori customary practices and values. The application of these principles in a decolonization environment asserts the legitimacy of Māori knowledge and validates its epistemological application in Māori contexts.

In a broader Indigenous context, the application of decolonizing practices can be described as involving the process of restoring status to Indigenous knowledge and society by rediscovering indigeneity and identity from the obscurity enforced by colonization (Smith, 2012; Tuck and Yang, 2012). The validation process involves evaluating aspects of an Indigenous culture and identifying how it can be returned to a state that is in keeping with traditional practices. This is further strengthened by identifying and reclaiming Indigenous truths, rather than accepting the constructs and interpretations formed from Western knowledge perspectives. This will then lead to the reconstructing of this knowledge by using a lens that privileges Indigenous perspectives. The whole process can be summed up as 'being empowering' and in New Zealand this is clearly articulated through the development of the kaupapa Māori (Māori focused) framework, which has restored the mana (prestige) of Māori knowledge.

Although the references in this section relate to other disciplines, they demonstrate that the issues being discussed in this article are not new and they provide a foundation for the library and information studies profession to consider if it embarks on a decolonization journey.

Indigenizing

A dictionary definition of indigenization provides the following.

“The act or process of rendering indigenous or making predominantly native; adaptation or subjection to the influence or dominance of the indigenous inhabitants of a country; spec. the increased use of indigenous people in government, employment, etc.” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).

To those that are unfamiliar with the concepts of decolonization and indigenization, the definitions provided of the two terms might look very similar, with many overlapping ideas. However, there are distinct differences in how they are applied; critical to this process is the influence that ‘indigenous constructs’ become core to the structures.

Like decolonization, there is a broad range of scholarly literature that has been published on the practice of indigenization that the library and information profession should draw on to assist in determining a pathway towards indigenizing practices. These include, indigenizing the academy (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004); indigenizing the curriculum (Armstrong, 2013); indigenizing the museum (Boxer, 2008; Phillips, 2011); indigenizing psychology (Sinha, 1997; Kim, Yang & Hwang, 2006); indigenizing mental health services (Durie, 2011); and indigenizing counselor education (Guenette & Marshall, 2008).

Like Smith’s decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999, 2012) status in the literature on decolonization, the work by Mihesuah & Wilson (2004) can be viewed as a seminal text in the indigenization focused literature, in that it set a benchmark for how indigeneity, structures, disciplines and professions intersect within a Western academic institution. The literature in this area focuses heavily on culture, education and psychological applications.

Library and Information Studies literature

The most noticeable aspect of the literatures on the application of decolonization and indigenization discussed so far is the lack of discussion of either concept in relation to library and information institutions and/or professionals. It is acknowledged that this is an emerging area within the library and information science literature, and it is hoped that this article can provide a stronger contextual discussion of the critical issues that need to be considered. One area that has received strong

attention has been that of cataloguing and classification. The inadequacies of the Dewey Decimal system and Library of Congress classification, and subject headings for organising collections and providing intellectual access to Indigenous knowledge has been well documented (Holloway, 2018; Laroque, 2018; Cherry and Mukunda, 2015; Duarte and Berlade- Lewis, 2015; Lilley, 2015). These articles identify the need to design and assign in partnership with Indigenous people classification systems that are based on Indigenous knowledge structures. Other studies have looked at how libraries can be transformed to meet the needs of Indigenous communities through collection development, including the development of curated collections (Lilley, 2019; Lilley, 2019a; Kostelecky SR, Hurley DA, Manus J and Aguilar P, 2017). The importance of providing services focused on Indigenous needs is addressed by several authors (Thorpe and Galassi, 2018; Thorpe, 2019; Lilley, 2019b; Roy and Hogan, 2010; Doyle, Lawson and Dupont, 2015). These articles all describe the transformational effect that libraries can have on how indigenous knowledge is organised, managed and disseminated and how these need to be negotiated with Indigenous peoples to ensure that their needs are being addressed.

The 'academy'

Critical to our consideration of indigenizing practices is recognition that indigenous knowledge and perspectives have validity in the 'academy' and the institutions that library and information professionals are affiliated to. A vital aspect of this is identifying and articulating clear pathways for embedding indigeneity in the library and information sciences academy. This involves applying an indigenous lens to our curricula, including the creation of indigenous research, learning and teaching agendas, and facilitating Indigenous participation at faculty and student levels. Our library and information educational providers need to avoid offering these as extras, and place an emphasis on the integration of indigenous elements throughout and within each of the courses that contribute to the qualifications on offer, so that all students gain the requisite knowledge about indigenous matters. That would require not only a rethink about the content of these courses, and a need for stronger connections to be made with indigenous communities within and outside the traditional academy, including members of the profession that have a stake in this area. Developing these relationships will be mutually beneficial to all parties involved. These relationships might require considerable effort to establish, and strong commitment to making them enduring.

Is decolonization of our libraries a possibility?

Before embarking on an in-depth discussion on the merits of decolonization or indigenization, it is necessary to consider the different approaches to knowledge organization, storage and dissemination by non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples.

For non-indigenous communities, this is represented through the development of libraries in newly colonized territories. Early libraries in colonized countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America were initially either private or associated with adult working-class educational institutions. In Australia, Canada and New Zealand these were known as Mechanics' Institutes. Public libraries started to make an impact in the latter part of the nineteenth century, which was advanced further through the philanthropic efforts of Andrew Carnegie, who was intent on making libraries freely available. Major public libraries collections were further enhanced through endowments and/or bequests of prominent citizens and collectors of books. In New Zealand this is evidenced by the donations of Sir George Grey who donated his collection of Māori manuscripts and books to the Auckland City library, and in Wellington where Alexander Turnbull's collection forms the basis of a major research library and is attached to the National Library of New Zealand.

The development of libraries in these colonized countries was the antithesis of the Indigenous approach to the sharing, storage and organization of knowledge. Traditional Indigenous societies placed significant emphasis on oral transmission of knowledge. Unlike Western approaches, which were focused on individualism, Indigenous knowledge was used for the benefit of all individuals within their society and had layers of protection to ensure that those receiving the knowledge had the right skills to use it for the advantage of all of their community. For example, in traditional Maori society, an individual's place in society determined their access to knowledge and their entitlement to learn the higher levels of knowledge. This access provided them with the skills that legitimised their positions of leadership. In a Māori worldview, it is believed that knowledge was acquired from the atua (gods), thus requiring a need for it to be protected and applied carefully. This knowledge included an explanation of the genealogical relationship between the atua, humans and all other living things. Understanding this connectedness was critical to understanding the value of knowledge and using it for the benefit of the health and well-being of the wider whanau (family unit). The knowledge required to perform the everyday functions was shared in a tuakana (senior)-teina (junior) relationship, like modern day apprenticeships. Knowledge was also retained in whakairo (carvings), tukutuku (woven panels), waiata (sung poetry), karakia (incantations) and place names.

Given the contrasting means of knowledge organization, it is highly questionable whether libraries and other information management agencies can be decolonized. The concept of decolonization would involve deconstructing institutions that were colonial constructs in the first place and not representative of Indigenous approaches to knowledge. Decolonization in this context simply does not make sense. However, if a decision was made to decolonize, it would involve an extremely complex set of negotiations between an institution and their local Indigenous community. An example of some issues to be resolved would be ownership and access to materials and whether this would be restricted to discussions around resources identified as being cultural and intellectual property of that community, where would these resources be stored/exhibited and who would have curatorial jurisdiction over them? what would happen to resources associated with other Indigenous communities and who would be responsible for those items?, how would intellectual access to Indigenous materials be organized and who would determine how these materials are described and in what language? Interpretation of these issues would have to be negotiated institution to institution and the degree of complexity would be dependent on the respective approaches of an institution and the local Indigenous community. Consistency of approach would be likely to be highly variable from one locality to the next, and although institutions could collaborate with each other to identify what decolonization would work for them, to be truly committed to a decolonization agenda the decision would be ultimately in the hands of the Indigenous community. Relinquishing these decision-making powers would not sit well with some institutions or their parent organizations (e.g. city/municipal councils; state/provincial governments; universities). Any such reluctance could lead to tension between institutions and their Indigenous community, and a situation where some institutions are decolonized but others are not. This level of inconsistency might cause confusion for users and could result in collections and structures not fulfilling the needs of the Indigenous community.

Choosing indigenization

In contrast, an indigenization option gives libraries and information management agencies an opportunity to incorporate and integrate indigenous knowledge systems, values and practices into existing institutions and tailor these to meet the needs of their indigenous community. If an indigenization agenda is chosen then it becomes an interdependent process, which makes a collective approach from across the profession possible. For Indigenization to be fully effective, it would involve institutions, organizations and individuals all undergoing a transformative process. Although this would still require similar levels of negotiation as the decolonization process, the

Indigenization agenda focus would be predominantly about transforming existing structures to be inclusive and to meet the needs of Indigenous communities.

Institutions

In this context, institutions include libraries, archives and other information agencies that collect resources and provide services relevant to Indigenous peoples. In undergoing a process of Indigenization there are three key areas that these institutions need to focus on. These are staffing, organizational structure and community engagement.

From a staffing perspective, institutions need to focus on recruiting Indigenous staff members, and not only to specialist Indigenous positions. To make the transition to an indigenized workplace, these staff need to be employed across the breadth of the institution, and to professional and non-professional positions. The recruitment process might require some proactive approaches to be made to local communities to ensure that Indigenous individuals apply for vacant positions. Institutions also need to ensure that they provide opportunities for Indigenous staff member to advance and that appropriate support structures are in place to retain Indigenous staff members, as highly competent Indigenous staff are likely to have offers from other institutions and other professions. In New Zealand, Māori staff who high skill levels and knowledge of tikanga (culture) and fluency in te reo Māori (Māori language) are highly sought after by other professions and organizations. Without enhanced retention strategies in place, a revolving door occurs where these staff leave as quickly as they came in. Part of this retention strategy and a key role for allies is to ensure that support mechanisms are put in place to ensure that Indigenous staff are not overburdened by workload. Non-Indigenous staff members need to have their cultural capacity increased, including their understanding of indigenous knowledge systems, values customs and beliefs. There is also a need for their knowledge of Indigenous resources to be increased, so the Indigenous staff are not required to answer every query related to Indigenous issues and subsequently become burnt out. A good ally also knows when support is required and when it is the appropriate time to pass an enquiry over. The employment of Indigenous staff is an important part of the process but is not the end point of the indigenization process, as this would be quite a superficial approach and would potentially create other problems for the organization.

Looking at the structure of the institution is another critical factor. The key issues here are, how are policy and practice carried out within the institutions. This also includes a consideration of how decisions are made at the leadership and governance levels. Ensuring Indigenous voices are present at the senior leadership level and other decision-making committees is crucial to ensuring that the

institution has made informed choices about how their decisions will impact on Indigenous clients and the services and resources that they need. Institutions with a governance layer (advisory board or board of directors), should have positions for representatives from Indigenous communities. Representation of this type can then be strengthened through engagement with the communities these individuals come from.

Successful engagement with Indigenous peoples is built on the leaders and staff members from institutions becoming known and seen in local communities. In Māori cultural terms this is framed as *kanohi kitea* (the face that is seen) and implies that individuals are recognised as active participants in the activities and events that occur in that space. Having this recognition will ease the discussions and negotiations over the types of resources and services that the community expects to see in the institutional structure. Having not only the indigenous staff involved in community events, but a selection of staff from across the institution will ensure that there is a continuity in the relationships should key staff leave the institution. Given the difficulties in recruiting Indigenous staff members, the establishment of strong relationships could also lead to individuals from the Indigenous community becoming interested in exploring career pathways for themselves or other family members.

The role of individuals

Institutions can declare their Indigenization intentions, but its success in achieving this is highly dependent on the commitment of individuals within its own organization. As individuals this commitment and transformation to becoming an Indigenous ally will take several forms. Firstly, there is a need for individuals wanting to provide this type of support to consider and reflect on their own identity, how this was formed, where their cultural origins lie and how their culture has shaped their character. If an individual does not feel 'safe' in their own culture, it will be difficult for them to embrace another culture confidently and recognize that Indigenous cultures will have worldviews that differ to those that inform western knowledge systems. Once this is understood, it is then imperative that individuals focus on developing a strong understanding of how Indigenous worldviews are informed by beliefs and values that validate Indigenous knowledge. These beliefs and values influence the process of how Indigenous peoples engage with each other, and so learning when, how and where to apply these will assist allies to provide support to their Indigenous colleagues. There should not be an expectation that this learning to become the responsibility of Indigenous staff, it should instead involve participation in professional development opportunities and through the development of personal learning plans. The learning should not just stop at values and beliefs as the ability to provide support would be further strengthened through learning about

core resources that will assist indigenous clients with information needs. Gaining an understanding of these resources will enable non-Indigenous staff to relieve their Indigenous colleagues from being continuously on-call to answer basic information requests, because it has an 'Indigenous element'. This would hopefully negate any possibilities of Indigenous staff burning out due to burdensome workloads. Without allies or other Indigenous staff member being present, an Indigenous individual can easily become overworked and isolated, which could result in a decision to seek positions in a more supportive workplace and/or another career.

Library and information science associations

Professional associations exist at local (state or province), national and international levels and their membership is open to individual professionals and library and information institutions. They are designed to provide services to its members and to act as an advocate for matters of wider professional importance. How a professional association is organised is determined by its members and is embodied within the rules created to ensure that the governance structure is representative of its membership and their needs. If an organization wishes to ensure that they are inclusive of Indigenous professionals and to engage with indigenization, then there are several actions that they need to take to enable this.

The first of these actions is to undertake a comprehensive review to check for the inclusiveness of its structures (governance and management), affiliated bodies (chapters, divisions or special interest groups), and their policies, strategic plans and other corporate documentation. This review should be undertaken using an Indigenous lens to identify where Indigenous perspectives or representation is missing and could be strengthened. To realise the full potential of the review the organization must ensure that its Indigenous members are at the heart of the process and strongly represented within the group(s) undertaking the design and execution of the review process, as well as the discussion and analysis that follows. When considering structural matters, it is important to identify how committees and leadership teams can incorporate Indigenous membership, and to liaise with Indigenous members and/or groups so they can put forward individuals mandated to represent their views. Starting these conversations will provide a pathway to creating an Indigenous organization (within/outside the wider organization), with which a partnership arrangement can be agreed upon. In New Zealand, such an arrangement has been in place for the past 25 years between LIANZA and Te Rōpū Whakahau. This partnership has led to mutually beneficial outcomes for both organizations and clients of library and information institutions. As a sign of its importance, the partnership agreement is re-negotiated and signed every year. Creating such alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous professional associations provides opportunities to use skillsets across organizations

(locally, nationally and internationally) to advance the aspirations that they might share or require additional support for. An example of these synergies being utilised is in the area of advocacy, not only on library and information matters, but other areas such as education, literacy and social justice issues that are of importance to Indigenous peoples.

It is also important that professional associations ensure that there is meaningful Indigenous content in the conferences, seminars and professional education opportunities that they organize. This ensures that Indigenous issues can be promoted, analysed and discussed by the wider membership. Critical to this is the formation of strong relationships with the Indigenous community that are the traditional owners of the land where the meeting is being held and ensuring that they have a prominent role in the organization and hosting of the event. This also provides an opportunity for these relationships to continue to thrive after the event has been completed, again bringing benefits to the local Indigenous community, and the libraries and other organizations in that locality.

Professional associations must also ensure that they provide opportunities for their Indigenous members to engage in professional and cultural development, that is tailored to their needs. In addition, non-Indigenous members require opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of cultural values and customs so they can become effective supporters and potential allies of their Indigenous colleagues. Care must be taken to not pressure or coerce Indigenous members to provide the education for their non-Indigenous colleagues without adequate support and/or remuneration being made available that recognizes their intellectual and cultural contributions to any sessions they offer.

Issues for the profession

The three previous sections of this article have focused on the actions required of individuals, institutions and professional associations, all of which can make a major contribution to Indigenous development and in a sense these three areas are interdependent because without they all need to be functioning to make Indigenization possible. However, it should be recognized that it is the 'profession' that provides the link between these three factors and that there are over-arching issues that the 'profession' needs to act collectively to achieve on-going success. These issues relate to ensuring that there are strategies to strengthen the profile of Indigenous peoples in the profession.

The first of these issues relates to recruitment and retention of Indigenous peoples. Growing the profession by expecting Indigenous people to apply for advertised positions will meet with limited

results. To increase the chances of success, the profession as whole needs to actively promote information focused careers to Indigenous populations. Included within this is a need for high visibility of indigenous content, individuals and languages in corporate publications, web sites and social media postings so that Indigenous communities can see themselves reflected and valued. The combined efforts of individuals, institutions and organizations need to be employed in order to showcase the opportunities that careers in the library and information professions can provide. This would go beyond just the need for staff who can be specialists in Indigenous matters, it would highlight the other types of positions available within the library and information professions. Having Indigenous representation in other sections (e.g. technical services; systems, document supply services etc.) provides an institution with the ability to strengthen the responsiveness to Indigenous peoples' needs. Retention is also vitally important to this process, and distinct strategies need to be put into place to ensure that the profession continues to offer opportunities for advancement and further development to their Indigenous staff, because those with the education, skills, and experience will also be attractive to recruiters seeking to lure them to other professions and career pathways.

Another critical area is that of library and information studies education. The addition of an eleventh core element focused on Indigenous knowledge systems to the bodies of knowledge that form the basis of the library and information studies curriculum (Smith, Hallam, & Ghosh, 2012) provides educators with a template to shape courses that are inclusive of Indigenous content. An important aspect of this is to ensure that Indigenous contents exists not only in a standalone course, but that it is incorporated into all courses that are part of the qualification offered. If educators do not have any Indigenous faculty, they should seek specialist assistance from the wider profession or from Indigenous specialists elsewhere in their institutions of learning. The addition of Indigenous content recognizes the importance and legitimacy of Indigenous knowledges, and the service and resource needs associated with these. Their inclusion provides non-Indigenous students to gain an understanding of these needs, why they are important, and what role they can have in ensuring that Indigenous peoples are able to successfully access and use the services required.

Concluding remarks

In considering whether libraries and information management institutions should transform themselves to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples some thought needs to be given to how this might be initiated. This article has discussed the options of decolonizing or Indigenizing the library

and information professions and the impact that this would have on the individuals, institutions and organizations involved. Although both options provide advantages and opportunities, it is my contention that decolonizing a colonial construct (libraries) is more difficult than it is to transform them through Indigenization. However, in recommending a strategy that is centred on Indigenization I do so with caution, as any decisions should ultimately rest with the approach determined by Indigenous communities themselves. Institutions considering how they wish to transform to represent the needs of Indigenous peoples must build a strong relationship with their local Indigenous community and ensure that they have a critical role in the decision-making processes. Those responsible for making any decisions will need to closely consider the advantages of each approach (decolonization or indigenization), and the consequences of adopting one approach over the other. Although in a sense the concept of decolonization provides opportunities for a sense of self-determination, there is no defined roadmap to making it occur in a consistent and coherent. Whereas, it might be seen that an Indigenization process as outlined in this article would be highly visible. This process would provide opportunities for meaningful partnerships to be developed between institutions and their local Indigenous peoples and provide a platform for negotiations on how information services and resource needs could be tailored to serve their needs.

Whakairo	Carvings
Whanau	Extended family unit

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