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Educating archivists for human-centred archival practices
It begins with ethics

Obrazovanje arhivista za arhivske prakse usmjerene na čovjeka počinje s etikom

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Abstract

This paper contemplates the need for archives to reorient their practices to actively prioritize humans and their humanitarian needs, wherever and in whatever circumstances they may be; and to ensure that archivists are ethical, equitable and empathetic as well as responsible stewards of the record. It briefly traces some of the many factors that lie behind calls for archives to reorient their current and future archival practices and take reparative action to address the hurts inflicted by past practices. Recognizing that this is a huge undertaking for archives, the paper argues that the starting point for such a reorientation should be archival education and more specifically, education that raises professional awareness of the ethical implications of archival work. The paper concludes by proposing a set of basic learning objectives regarding ethical stance and positionality that can inform the professional awareness and skills necessary for carrying out such archival transformation.
Keywords: archival education, archival ethics, human-centred, reparative practice

Sažetak

U ovom se radu razmatra potreba da arhivi preusmjere svoje postupke kako bi aktivno davali prioritet ljudima i njihovim humanitarnim potrebama, gdje god i u kakvim god okolnostima bili, te da se osigura da su arhivisti etični, pravedni i suosjećajni, kao i odgovorni upravitelji zapisa. Ukratko se prate neki od mnogih čimbenika koji stoje iza poziva arhivima da preusmjere svoju sadašnju i buduću arhivsku praksu i poduzmu reparativne mjere za rješavanje povreda nanesenih prošlim praksama. Prepoznajući da je to golem pothvat za arhive, u radu se tvrdi da bi polazište za takvo preusmjeravanje trebalo biti arhivsko obrazovanje, točnije, obrazovanje koje podiže profesionalnu svijest o etičkim implikacijama arhivskog rada. U radu se zaključno predlaže skup osnovnih ciljeva učenja u vezi s etičkim stavom i pozicioniranjem koji mogu osnažiti profesionalnu svijest i vještine potrebne za provođenje takve arhivske transformacije.
Ključne riječi: arhivsko obrazovanje, arhivska etika, usmjerenost na čovjeka, reparativna praksa

Introduction

In August 2022, James A. Sweet, President of the American Historical Association and Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison set off a firestorm with his reflections in the association's monthly magazine on the value of studying the past. Unwittingly he had opened up an increasingly contentious debate about historical activism and objectivity that has been consuming academics in history and closely related fields such as ethnic studies and gender studies in recent decades. In an article on this controversy, David Frum quotes Stanford Professor Priya Satia's 2020 book *Time's Monster*:

> As historians have backed down from their old positions at the helm of state power and adopted a critical posture, their work has become pivotal to countless conversations and legal actions around reparations, restitution, apologies, and, most important, memorialization, which all attempt to make new history.[1]

These movements to expose how contemporary ills and affects are the continuing legacy of past actions and injustices, and to redress them by developing "new history" that elevates the experiences and voices of those who have been victims of, or are simply missing from, previous historical accounts is not confined to the US. Similar impulses are driving academics in countries that have very different but also difficult histories whose effects are implicated in ongoing injustices and other societal concerns as wide-ranging as racism, the failure of particular communities to thrive, human trafficking and climate change.

Because they work with official bureaucracies and preserve and organize the source materials and artifacts generated by or otherwise associated with these difficult and often tragic histories, the work and mindsets of information and memory professionals and their institutions are also imbricated with these histories and their legacies. As such, they are now being called to account for assumptions, practices and systems that in the past were considered to be value-neutral, normative, educative, civilizing, and in accordance with natural or inevitable information logics that have been shown to have

1 Frum, D. (2022). The new history wars: inside the strife set off by an essay from the president of the American Historical Association. // Atlantic monthly, October 30 [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/10/american-historical-association-james-sweet/671853/

caused harm or hurt to certain populations.[2,3] In what has been dubbed in critical scholarship as a "reparative turn,"[4] archives have come under particular scrutiny with pressures coming from many directions to reorient how they do their work to better support those who have been damaged by archives and their practices, and for archivists to rethink their current ethical high ground and stop claiming that they are engaged in an objective set of practices.[5]

While it is not the intention of this paper to debate concerns about objectivity, value neutrality or presentism, it is indisputable that the current practices of archives fail many people in many ways. In an era where society and its institutions are striving to increase equity, diversity and inclusion, there remain people who are not represented well or at all in archives; there are people who are mis- or inappropriately represented; there are people against whom archives have been used as weapons; and there are people who need to use archives but have great difficulty in doing so because of archival accessibility and policies. To address these archival failures, which are both historical and ongoing, requires a complete ethical reorientation. That reorientation needs to centre the many kinds of relationships, proximities, effects and affects that exist between humans -- individually and as communities – with the record, rather than only focusing on the record itself and privileging particular kinds of research. New documentary approaches and digital analytical techniques make it increasingly possible to address some of these failures, if only archives and archivists are prepared to re-think their current practices to embrace them. For example, methodological and algorithmic innovation in the digital humanities and data sciences holds out all sorts of possibilities for surfacing the individual and the human experience from our historical collections, even given the many silences and mischaracterizations in those collections.[6] However the technical difficulties encountered in

2 Evans, J. et al. (2020). All I Want To Know Is Who I Am: archival justice for Australian care leavers. // Flinn, A.; W.M. Duff; D. Wallace, eds. Archives, record-keeping & social justice. Milton Park, Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://www.routledge.com/Archives-Recordkeeping-and-Social-Justice/WallaceDuff-Saucier-Flinn/p/book/9781472483881

3 Ghaddar, J.; M. Caswell (2019). Guest Editors, Special issue, Towards a decolonial archives. // Archival science 19.

4 Sedgwick, E.K. (1997). Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://hcommons.org/?get_group_doc=1003678/1629909863-sedgwick-1997-paranoid-reading-and-reparative-reading.pdf

5 Caswell, M. (2021). Urgent archives: enacting liberatory memory work. Milton Park, Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge.

6 Hedges, M.; R. Marciano; E. Goudarouli (2022). Introduction to the Special Issue on Computational Archival

doing so illuminate that how these collections have been acquired, described and digitized has rarely considered that they might in the future be used in such ways.

This paper therefore contemplates the need for archives to reorient their practices to actively prioritize humans and their humanitarian needs, wherever and in whatever circumstances they may be; and to ensure that archivists are ethical, equitable and empathetic as well as responsible stewards of the record. It briefly traces some of the many factors that lie behind calls for archives to reorient their current and future archival practices and take reparative action to address the hurts inflicted by past practices. Recognizing that this is a huge undertaking for archives, the paper argues that the starting point for such a reorientation should be archival education and more specifically, education that raises professional awareness of the ethical implications of archival work. The paper concludes by proposing a set of basic learning objectives regarding ethical stance and positionality that can inform the professional awareness and skills necessary for carrying out such archival transformation.

Archivistics: Constantly-evolving, ever-mutating

Archivistics have never been either singular or static, even though we often speak of them as if that is the case. Archival rationales and expectations have shifted many times since archivistics became a formal profession and they also differ significantly in different settings. Two classic works by leading archival thinkers articulate the dynamics and diversity of the record and the field. Sue McKemmish, in her monograph "Constantly Evolving, Ever Mutating": An Australian Contribution to the Archival Metatext[7] discusses how the record, rather than being finite or fixed, grows and takes on different values and meaning and engages different communities over time. We could substitute "archives" here for the record and make the same argument. Terry Cook drew attention to the ways in which archival rationales and approaches have changed over time in his article, "Evidence, memory, identity, and community"[8]. He identified four different paradigmatic approaches that

Science. // Journal of Computing & Cultural Heritage 15, 1 [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1145/3495004

7 McKemmish, S. (2021). "Constantly evolving, ever mutating": an Australian contribution to the archival metatext. Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Press.

8 Cook, T. (2013). Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms. // Archival

emerged sequentially in the archival field and that continue to co-exist. In the years since the article's publication, the lines between these paradigms have become increasingly blurred, especially as more traditional or "mainstream" archives seek to respond to the kinds of calls discussed above. Nevertheless, it is helpful to understand something of the long history behind these paradigms and calls for reorientation in order to contextualize why and how professional education also needs to change.

The distinctive focus of archival practice, as opposed to museum or library practices, across the late nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century was on the record, its nature and needs. In particular, it focused on how that record could be used to support organizational mission, priorities and self-knowledge. The record primarily comprised accumulations of bureaucratic instruments and other kinds of documentation generated in the course of the administrative, legal and fiscal activities of a government, business, religious, academic or other organizational entity. Accountability to citizens and other stakeholders, and use of the organizational or bureaucratic archive in modern historical scholarship were additional concerns that gained prominence in western democracies and with the rise of history as an academic discipline. Because of these responsibilities and responding to the structures and logics used by the bureaucracies themselves, organizational archives developed a document-centric and evidence-based paradigm that became increasingly complex to maintain in the second half of the twentieth century as records were created and kept in computational formats that evolved far beyond traditional physical documentary forms. Archives with mandates outside the bureaucracies of their own organization, such as those housed within research libraries, tended to collect personal papers of prominent families or individuals, as well as documentation generated through literary and other creative endeavours. Sometimes referred to as "collecting archives", they found that the bureaucratically-based approaches of organizational archives did not always fit well with the kinds of archival materials they preserved or their research missions and thus they were more receptive to library practices, especially in the area of description and later descriptive standards development.

The development of organizational archives is closely associated with the rise of nation states, and imperial and colonial administrations, as well as the evangelism and mercantile expansion that was frequently associated with

science 13, 95-120 [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7

such administrations. Archives became integral tools of governance, information management, knowledge production and ultimately the wielding of power over others. This aspect of their history and its continuing legacy is pivotal to current-day critiques of bureaucratic archives as instruments of control and exploitation. After World War II, archives in many parts of the world were actively used as instruments of societal change by governments seeking to bolster new political systems, national identities and borders through reformed bureaucratic structures and official projects to re-write national histories and class narratives.

By the 1960s, civil and other rights-based, liberatory and anti-war movements found both organizational and collecting archives to be élitist and notably deficient in preserving the kinds of documentation needed to support the movements themselves as well as education and scholarship relating to the histories and experiences of working class or ethnic, women's or sexuality-based communities. As a result, new kinds of subject or thematically-based collecting archives emerged that sought to document aspects of society that were missing from existing archives as well as to house research documentation such as oral histories, survey data, and photographic materials gathered by researchers in the new "studies" fields being initiated by academic institutions. At the same time, however, scholars began to recognize the potential that computational methods offered for extracting new analytical insights from the documentation that had been preserved by more traditional organizational and collecting archives. Moreover, by the late twentieth century, the public could also learn far more about the scope of archival holdings because of networked access to archival descriptive information and even begin to access digitized copies remotely. As a result, during the second half of the twentieth century, public and scholarly expectations of and demand for archives grew simultaneously and exponentially.

By the early twenty-first century yet another form of archive took shape and rose to prominence – the community archive. Community archives take a multitude of forms – through both their diversity of tangible and intangible content and their practices defying conventional professional designations such as archives, libraries, museums, galleries and documentation centres (Flinn & Bastian 2020). Some have even evolved through various instantiations and missions over time. While technically any kind of community or group could generate its own archive, community archives have been deeply influenced by social justice as well as "history from the bottom up" activism that has sought to use archives as a mechanism for liberation and community

empowerment as well as a place where personal and community self-identity can be celebrated and histories preserved. Ubiquitous access to the World Wide Web and inexpensive and accessible media production capabilities have allowed these archives to produce and distribute new forms of documentary content engaging community and other audiences both locally and around the globe. The so-called "community archives movement" has highlighted many of the deficiencies of and hurts caused by organizational and collecting archives, and developed new conceptual frameworks and practical approaches, including participatory, reparative and affect-informed practices, that have challenged and inspired more traditional archives to change their own practices.[9]

In summary then, the scope of what is considered to be a record, the ways in which it might be created, and the degree of participation in archival practices by affected individuals and communities have all expanded and diversified considerably to include today an almost unlimited range of tangible and even intangible forms of societal documentation and archival intentions. The roles of archivists have similarly expanded, to include being active documenters of historically under-represented or mis-represented experiences and people, as well as advocates for people affected by records that may or may not exist or be accessible. While this expansion is more notable in some parts of the world than in others, and it may also be held in check to some extent by what is permitted under current national archival legislation, it can either be regarded as a harbinger of a more diversified future for all archives, or as an indicator of a future existential crisis for archives that cannot or will not respond.

Are archives in a different position from that of other information and memory institutions?

The various archival theoretical frameworks and document-centric practices briefly reviewed here have engendered a wide range of ethical and equity concerns, especially as a result of their historical symbiosis with the bureaucratic machineries of governments and other powerful institutions that have been called to account for past and ongoing behaviours. Archival discourse at conferences, in blogs and other online forums, and especially

9 Caswell, M. et al. (2018). Imagining transformative spaces: the personal-political sites of community archives. // Archival science 18, 1, 73-93.

in the literature that is being published in English, is full of critical demands being made of and by archivists, and of new concepts and terminology that emphasize different aspects of human-centred practice. For example, we read about participatory practice, community-driven priorities, feminist ethics of care, liberatory archival imaginaries, trauma-informed practice, archival silences, reparative description, rights in records, and archiving diaspora. In different ways, each of these responds to disciplinary and contemporary political criticisms of the damage done to people by bureaucratic record-keeping, by the systems of power that archives and their holdings reflect and of which they tend to be a part, by the prioritization of records over people in archival ideas and practices, by the absence, marginalization, stigmatization or misrepresentation of certain people and events, and overarching all of this, by the ways in which archivists have clung to unachievable ideas of objectivity and value-neutrality and resisted taking a more activist stance. According to the Society of American Archivists Dictionary of Archives Terminology, such remediation targets the "practices or data that exclude, silence, harm, or mischaracterize marginalized people in the data created or used by archivists to identify or characterize archival resources."[10]

At the same time, however, archival holdings, audiences and activities increasingly overlap with those of other knowledge, cultural and memory institutions. Many countries and communities today seek to emphasize these commonalities and develop integrated practices and descriptive standards across different types of institutions (e.g., ALM – archives, libraries and museums; GLAM – galleries, libraries, archives and museums; and "larchiveums") that can provide more seamless and comprehensive access to descriptive systems and digital content. It seems reasonable to ask whether a shift in archival perspective and practice would have implications for these integrative ventures? Are other types of institutions under similar pressures? The answer to both questions today has to be yes.

Where archives have often presented themselves as a kind of bridge between the past and the future, with archivists making decisions about which records from the past should be preserved for assumed but uncertain kinds of future uses, libraries tend to have a more presentist orientation and direct contact with those they serve through their various activities. Although their collecting and access decisions are increasingly drawing fire from conservatives, especially public and school libraries, they have not until recently had

10 SAA Dictionary of archives terminology [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://dictionary.archivists.org/

to combat similar kinds of criticism as archives of being implicated with unpopular or oppressive bureaucracies. This is, however, also shifting as public libraries come under scrutiny for their "carceral logics". Likewise, the curatorial role of museums is heavily engaged with how collections are interpreted to diverse audiences, as well as with thinking through how the public may respond to exhibitions. For several decades they have been caught up in the so-called "history wars", especially in relation to controversial exhibitions and their historical collecting and classificatory practices. They are also increasingly having to explain the activities and behaviors of their own institutions that are captured in their institutional records.

One characteristic of the archival field that distinguishes it certainly from the library, and to a lesser extent, from the museology professions, is that within the archival profession, there are considerable differences in the history, influences, juridical formations, roles, and educational preparation of archivists across different regions and countries around the world. The profession in English-speaking Common Law countries, such as the United States, has been particularly active in pushing the theory and practice of the field forward in accordance with their own historical and institutional contexts and degrees of freedom to act (although it is important to remember that even these countries have their own distinctive archival cultures and histories). Archival traditions and contexts also vary considerably across Civil Law countries such as those in Continental Europe. Nevertheless, human crises and intellectual movements are imbricated in complex ways across time and space in all of these spaces and have been building globally towards this moment for the archival profession. For example:

- Post-colonialism and its preoccupations with history, oppression, cultural alienation, nationalism, and decolonization of knowledge. Also, the impact of imperialism on local populations. In both cases there is deep awareness that records and memory play key oppressive and liberatory roles as well as contributing to the development of distinct and hybrid national, community and personal identities.
- Ideological and regime change towards democracy have brought a new emphasis on public accountability, transparency of bureaucracies, and the experience of communities that were downplayed or actively persecuted during previous regimes.
- The "archival turn" of the social sciences and humanities has generated a large amount of scholarly discussion since the 1990s and especially the 1995 publication of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*

around the idea of the archive, the trace, classification and situated knowledges, although often only in a theoretical way that was considerably distanced from actual archival practice.

- The development of Indigenous protocols that recognize the moral rights of Indigenous peoples, respect for their cultural beliefs, practices and needs, and a both-ways approach emphasizing consultative processes regarding the management of archival material by or about Indigenous people but held in non-Indigenous institutions. These approaches have been significantly extended over the past few years to include digital repatriation, concerns about ownership and appropriation of knowledge and data contained in archival and museum collections, for example, relating to climate science or medicine, and Indigenous extensions to standardized descriptive metadata for these collections.
- The so-called "community archives movement", which has responded to theorists such as sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall and been led by scholars in archivistics and their community partners in England, a colonial and former slaving nation with a strong class history, and in the US, a formerly colonized region that has its own oppressive and genocidal history and imperialist behaviors to reckon, with as well as also having one of the world's most diverse populations.
- Long histories of separation or transportation of children from their families and even homelands who were then abused in out of home care facilities, or who were sent away as "war children" or refugees. Government inquiries in multiple countries have identified archives as central to these tragic histories, including how records were kept about these children and how, the inability of children to access or keep their own records or learn about other family members, and the need for archives to be completely reconceived in future to ensure that the rights and needs of careleavers and children are met.
- Documenting the global Black Lives Matter Movement protesting police brutality and exposing historical and ongoing and systematic racism that targets and affects the Black community.
- Refugee and migrant crises where records and other documentation are integral to state and international responses as well as humanitarian concerns and human identity and life.

- Climate change and the availability and trustworthiness of archival sources that could be used in analyses.

Educating Archivists for Human-centred Archival Practices

Although archivistics have been notably dynamic and diverse over the past fifty years, archival education has tended to be much less expansive, focusing on teaching a canon of principles that are now over a century old and techniques that have shifted remarkably little despite so much societal and technological change in the interim. Much of our current conceptual understandings as well as our professional work and priorities are closely delineated through infrastructures that include laws, regulations, professional codes of ethics, standards and best practices rather than through critical analysis of human needs and evaluation of archival performance in meeting them. The archival outlook that has thus been inculcated stifles critical professional thinking. This coupled with the inertia cultivated by infrastructure and chronic shortages of resources can make it for archives and archivists hard to contemplate how and where to begin to respond to the kinds of concerns laid out above. Moreover, these concerns touch on every area of archival activity, so it is difficult and often inappropriate to separate one out for priority attention. Realistically, despite the urgency of the need for change, the kind of transformation that is being demanded of the archival profession and its practices cannot happen overnight. It is necessary to take a longer view to ensure that the profession and archival institutions actually want to change, and that they have the ethical outlook and applied toolkit that will allow them to keep pace with the ever-evolving nature of archives and needs of society.

The starting point in this longer view has to be a heightened awareness of three things: firstly how records and record-keeping systems at all points in their life cycle privilege particular perspectives and intents; secondly how the ways in which records and record-keeping systems characterize and control people who are their subjects have real and often negative consequences for the lives and wellbeing of individuals and communities today and those of successive generations long into the future; and thirdly how absence of a person or group in records, or absence of representation in records about them also have detrimental consequences for their existence, agency and dignity.

The single most important place for building and reinforcing that awareness has to be professional education, in all the ways in which it can occur -- in university programs; in internships and other forms of practical training; in the kinds of continuing education that takes place in professional workshops, training courses and webinars; in the texts we use to teach; and in the knowledge base we test in archival exams. Archivists have to learn why records and archives are the targets of the kinds of critiques and calls already discussed. This means they need to attain a deep historical and procedural understanding of how recordkeeping functions inside institutions and societies and why; and they have to be able to look beyond the inherited and routine nature of archival practices and question why they take the form they do. They should be able to explain the theoretical and applied considerations that underlie the practices, and to evaluate how well they are working. They should have a sophisticated knowledge of new archival ideas and approaches that have emerged in recent decades, which means that they have to keep their professional knowledgebase up-to-date and be able to apply relevant new ideas and approaches in their archives. They also have to be able to articulate the central role of trust in archival practice and understand what happens when that trust breaks down. This means that they need to know how that trust is achieved and maintained socially, procedurally and technologically by the archive. Most importantly, they must be able to draw upon ethical principles and not just legal frameworks in establishing archival processes, policies and priorities.

Teaching archival ethics and values

Professional education should instill professional values and help professionals to navigate between those, their personal moral code, their institutional mandate and the laws they are expected to follow. This is most often done through a professional code of ethics. While not every nation or sector has its own archival code of ethics, a code developed by the International Council on Archives was ratified in 1996.[11] Athough no update has yet been adopted by the organization, the code's very existence underscores that despite all the differences across archival spaces, there are some universal ethical principles to which all archivists should aspire. At the same time,

11 ICA Code of Ethics, 6 September 1996 [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://www.ica.org/en/ica-code-ethics

however, this is a consensus-based document that was developed in a world that preceded many of the critiques now leveled at archives. The code barely mentions the human aspects already alluded to in this paper, with one of the only relevant statements being in a commentary on accessibility: "[archivists] must respect the privacy of individuals who created or are the subjects of records, especially those who had no voice in the use or disposition of the materials." By contrast, the Society of American Archivists Code of Ethics, on which the ICA code was based, has been rewritten several times since the 1990s.[12] It is also, today, accompanied by a statement of aspirational core values and is taught to all archive students. These are summed up thus:

- Expand access and usage opportunities for users, and potential users, of archival records.
- Actively contribute ideas and resources to our field's body of theoretical and practical scholarship.
- Cultivate collaborative opportunities not only with creators, users, and colleagues, but also with any interested parties that wish to engage with archival records.
- Develop and follow professional standards that promote transparency and mitigate harm.
- Respect the diversity found in humanity and advocate for archival collections to reflect that rich complexity.
- Recognize the importance of professional education and development by supporting lifelong learning for themselves and others.
- Devise environmentally sustainable techniques for preserving collections and serving communities.
- Create mentorship opportunities for library school students, new professionals, and any individual in the archives field who seeks to enrich their work experience.
- Actively share knowledge and expertise with creators, users, and colleagues.

These aspirational values are helpful in laying out basic professional expectations and activities for archives, archivists and archival educators. However, on their own they do not provide an framework to help archivists practice in ways that centre humans, their humanity, and their multifaceted relationships with archives or to set priorities or advocate accordingly. A set of basic learning objectives for archival students or practicing archivists re-

12 SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics [cited: 2023-08-18]. Available at: https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics

garding ethical stance and positionality for human-centred practice might instead look something like this:

Archivists should be able to appreciate, articulate and perform their professional roles based upon:

- how archives wield power in people's lives
- the roles that different and shifting values play in archival work and understandings of archives
- why documenting the diversity of human experience is important
- why personal reflexivity and reflective archival practice are necessary
- when professional authority needs to be shared and the need to acknowledge and respect other sources of expertise
- why participatory practice is necessary and how it changes the power of the archivist and the archive
- how archival responsibilities do not end at the borders of their own institutions and mandates
- how archival practices and decisions have human consequences
- when there is an ethical imperative for the archive to act.

These learning objectives can then be used to scaffold how the processes of archival practice are introduced and taught to students and new professionals. It could also be used as a framework to help professionals who have to make decisions about priorities and ways to reorient existing, or to introduce new practices and services. To be truly useful, however, it needs to be coupled with learning outcomes associated with specific archival skillsets that lay out not only the activity but also the skills needed to perform it effectively in a human-centred way. For example:

Archivists should be able to:

- work in ways that are, at a minimum, consultative, and at best, fully participatory or in collaboration with people who are referenced or affected by the materials archives collect or might collect, or any other actions of the archives that might affect them
- identify silences and gaps in their collections and develop strategies for addressing them through appraisal, documentation initiatives, redescription, algorithmic analysis and other means
- identify harmful or inaccurate descriptions or cataloging of archival materials and carry out reparative description
- process a collection with sufficient foresight and granularity that it could support future forms of digital retrieval and analysis designed

to promote the concerns of marginalized or victimized people while also protecting their privacy and security
- collaborate effectively and respectfully with community-based and other non-traditional archives
- approach physical and digital repatriation in a fully informed and respectful way
- work in-person and virtually, across institutional and juridical boundaries, national borders, cultures and languages, for example, with diaspora populations
- the ways in which archival concerns and dilemmas are integral components in global crises and their solutions, and how to engage to address them beneficially.

Conclusion

Although many archivists have qualms about engaging in archival activism because of the potential dangers of politicizing their work and role, they nevertheless have an obligation to engage in redress, repair, proactivity and care for the individuals and communities that archives have failed in the past. This is not work that can be done piecemeal, however. It requires a fundamental reorientation of archivistics that acknowledges and is accountable for past archival actions and is ethical and proactive in actions moving forward. That reorientation has to begins with professional education since that it the primary mechanism through which a solid foundation of professional awareness and ethical framing can be instilled and reinforced, thus preparing the archival field to be both responsive and proactive in centring the needs, voices and experiences of those individuals and communities.

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