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Decolonial Historiography: Evidence, Ethics, and Archive Politics

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines decolonial historiography through the interconnected dimensions of evidence, ethics, and archive politics, emphasizing the need to challenge colonial epistemological structures that continue to shape historical production. It argues that conventional archival practices have historically privileged dominant narratives while marginalizing Indigenous, local, and alternative knowledge systems. The study explores the conceptual foundations of decolonial history by emphasizing epistemic pluralism, methodological reflexivity, and counter-archival practices as essential tools for reconstructing suppressed histories. Furthermore, it investigates the ethical responsibilities involved in engaging with Indigenous and marginalized communities, particularly issues relating to consent, representation, reciprocity, and accountability. The paper also examines the politics of archives, highlighting how structures of power influence access, preservation, and interpretation of historical materials. Through selected case studies, the study demonstrates practical applications of decolonial methodologies and illustrates how community-centered approaches contribute to epistemic justice. Ultimately, the paper contends that decolonial historiography requires transparency, community validation, and inclusive methodological frameworks to create more equitable and representative historical narratives.

Keywords: Decolonial Historiography, Epistemic Pluralism, Counter-Archives, Archive Politics and Epistemic Justice.

INTRODUCTION

Colonial archives literally constitute the archives of state governments and of state-like institutions in colonies, protectorates, and dominions, initially set up by the armies of European colonial powers and acquired during military interventions or colonial wars while national archives correspondingly do not [1]. Colonial archives also represent key sites of governmental and administrative practice and, in general, there remains comparatively little scrutiny of the epistemic and political aspects of colonial and national archives by historical anthropologists and students of contemporary modes of governance [2]. The unsettled colonial isles of the south-western Pacific and more broadly as satellites of states with “essentially national” forms of governance, but nevertheless as officially postcolonial and, partly because of this, as comparatively neglected sites of archival and governance reworking, offer an entry point for more anthropologically immediate and topical inquiry into archives, documentation, and practice [1]. The professed reverse-engineering of the archival modifications of Pacific neighbourhoods further supports this additional focus, both in terms of the materials involved and the archipelagic protocol [3]. Archival historiography and practice figure increasingly in historical studies of adjacent island societies and the colonial and national before the archive has even appeared as a topic of scholarly analysis in these disciplines [1]. Archival practice constraints. The transition from state government to national government, heralding postcoloniality, produced not only an eruption of independence histories but also attempts to undo decades of governing adjustment by recovering re-colonialised territories, re-restoring previously removed documents, and re-materialising standardised practices in multi-volume preto-obasan forms [2]. Colonial archival holdings and certain overlapping national holdings [1]. The scholarship of Lorraine Deußen, Jaine Morison, and Ian R.

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McGusty underscores the discontinuous, positional character of these several prior amendments. Approaches to and concepts concerning the rich body of such scholarship are being explored as parts of an on-going test of Pacific archives and of the broader significance of the regional archive and its multiple transition, retention, and reconstitution within the decolonial critique[3]. With the advent of independence and of concomitant colonial discourse, folios become still more searchable. The visible remains (i.e., those documents re-materialisable under self-determination) of Pacific Vitalica-secession gymnastics all revert to the annex objective under independence [4]. Radical non-exclusion and partial re-inclusion mechanisms remain under exploration within catalogue focused archival and accompanying non-archival practices; consequently the Pacific case proceeds simultaneously as self-contained experimental zone and broader regional lens [2].

Decolonial Historiography: Conceptual Foundations

Despite historiography being conceived as an empirical and fact-driven discipline, problems remain with the conceptualization of evidence and testimonies in its practice [3]. During the past decades, the field has witnessed the emergence of a series of critical approaches and perspectives that strive to address previous shortcomings in historical understandings and cross-temporal equilibriums broadly classified under the umbrella of “decoloniality” such as Indigenous Historiography, Decolonial History, and Afrohispanic Studies [4]. These practices have been investigated by several authors and scholars within the social and human sciences and further restitution of non-Western priorities, conventions, practices, or demands has been compensated with “decolonial” epistemic attention [5]. In the sphere of its application to the historical discipline the emergence of Decolonial History is also closely related to the institutional and geographical locations of knowledge production. In view of the different intellectual contexts in which sensible debates are raising historical epistemic concern, Decolonial History still gravitates towards discussing epistemology and still seeks to address, yet unable to resolve, the problematic of translation in the challenges faced by Colonial Historiography at the time of addressing a new audience of non-colonized colonial subjects[3]. Such concerns are also the object of other critical eye of a decolonial perspective; another parallel line where Decolonial historiographical methodology strikes a step further and demands meticulous attention. Any attempt to address the practice of Decolonial History as a qualified position and within a further defined field of experience faces opposite episteme-political consideration to Mountz’s expo to justify a decolonial “statement”[3]. A distinctively Decolonial practice of historiography is hence identified, based upon a dissimilar conception of and qualification of what constitutes a historical “event” in the first instance and, subsequently, a historical “source”[4]. The disparity of such conventions generates divergences in the selection of practised attestation and therefore in its conceptualization. Decolonial History finds its limits not necessarily through such divergence, but on an additional tier of effort to negotiate an extended consideration of what constitutes a solid practice of a decolonial before colonial employment of Documentation History within easy immediate access [5]. The accompanying intention is to articulate a broader reading of the increasingly relevant and acknowledged notion of Archival History, where evidence accessed for exhibited problems threatens to cypher outside of suggestive or illustrative records [6]. Such concern appears addressed within the dual countenances of History, detached from expository intention, and History in the borderline between Documental and Historical History implementation [1]. The historical undergo becomes key to understanding developments perceived as completed in the contemporaneous struggle to attain genuine historical self-differentiation and concerning “decoloniality” itself[1, 2].

Evidence in Decolonial Practice

Epistemic pluralism occurs when “epistemic communities” possessing divergent and seemingly incompatible sources of knowledge nevertheless engage “in a few discursive practices that allow them to seriously confront one another” [2]. Such communities constitute the “glossary of epistemic resources” from which both Western and Indigenous scholars select “epistemic ingredients” of inquiry [3]. Normatively, an epistemically pluralist approach expresses the hope that by drawing on their respective elementary ideas or concepts, epistemic communities might discover paths across the distances that separate them. Pluralism constitutes a practical framework for integrating visibly divergent modalities of knowing and thereby expanding the number of available discursive practices without assuming that they ever approach a common language or theoretical universal [4]. A decolonial historiography therefore articulates and implements a pluralism sensitive to the different obligations and pathways that characterize the separate territories traversed by attempts to honour the historical record related to decolonization by otherwise heterogeneous research communities and intellectual endeavors. Such a practice aims to expose the historical dimension of issues or phenomena that remain concealed or distorted when examined from a mode of knowing that, by pretending to disentangle itself from the colonial process, nevertheless maintains a close connection with “modernity”[5]. These complementary routes generally construct a radiant practice around the elimination of rather than commitment to the conventional quest for a truth so staunchly defended within the hallmarks of publishable knowledge. Consequently, both vintage and fresh explorations of pluralism differ

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significantly from complementary epistemic pluralisms buffeted by the “imperial” language that pervades the composition and distribution of both sources and forms of investigation [4]. The radiant description of epistemic criteria thus becomes crucial for preserving the potential utility of colonial and decolonial conquest alike [5].

Epistemic Pluralism and Radiant Sources

The problematic and contentious legacy surrounding the history of colonization has triggered impulsive habits of simplification and generalization that further obscure and impede the on-the-ground work that remains to be done[1]. For example, in pursuing decolonial histories, the vast variety of forms of life on the planet tends to be melted into a catch-all term, “Indigenous,” even though the identifications and conditions of what has been called “indigeneity” vary greatly across space, time, culture, and power[2]. These are often misconstrued even further as “pre-colonial,” “until colonialism” or “beyond colonialism” that is, as conditions, times and forms “before the advent of colonialism” when colonialism itself is better conceived as an unconditioned event or negation as both the analytic and the condition of possibility of the planetary, at least as the term is rigorously deployed today[3]. The forms landscape, territory and community tend to be melted into a catch-all term, “land,” even though they carry very different, even opposed, identifications at times of the vast majority of those from/from whom colonial histories are sought in the first place[4]. What reduces the testimonies of the past in the colonies to those produced in, even as far back as the early, days of colonies of settlement thus “the” colonial, when colonies are myriad in formation, evolution and termination rather than “colonies of” in any simple sense remains possible only because it is still habitually taken, without due care, as “colonial” and as such either creatively celebrated or decried and “narrativized” and as thus “the” script on which others (the “Indigenous,” for instance) are still expected to fit or conform or take as somehow additional or supplementary, so failing to recognize that the experience of being colonized and of colonialism itself are intensely and irreducibly diverse[5]. Other terms and vocabularies tacked on to coloniality and decolonial imaginings, vocabularies like development, growth, progress, modernity presume too the global, yet far from coinciding more accurately preoccupy logically in a planetary sense colonialism even as they are not simply replaced with the modern, except as generic worldwide forms become apprehended as, “granted,” residential structures that respond to the individuality that colonial/colonized and development, growth or modernity are with coloniality construed[5]. In general, with genres, captions, titles or distinguishing marks function by the division of labor often indicated by reflections on dissemination and derived from either the five, the ten, or the even twelve, on the present occasion, attention is confined exclusively to what coloniality signifies and as thus partially indicates colonialism in the twentieth century in what are better characterizations [6]. When, on line formats lightly touch upon elsewhere the neglected aspect of repetition, at the same time attention is brought to illumine, as far as possible in some degree imitation itself, under a regimen from which colonial/colonized strictly remain exempt, now with coloniality a mere “provision” enters to afford access to colonialism, yet the deep-down connection still prevails nowhere else too prevalently discloses that colonial/colonized universally elude case formation and deny membership since coloniality indicates a macro-padding of colonialism itself[5]. The modernity cannot cease, cannot culminate and cannot conclude [6]. An epistemic-privileged scarcity no longer primarily parochially attaches to any degree of preparation made in any formal and archivable manner clear from the ground up, after yet much earlier others witness the colonial residue remain strictly without safe-recordable reminders of preceding or missions being elaborated by those such as the sand insect, worm familiarly eliding and preemptively loaded already since agape broached over land parlor clumsily receding where skimmed further with incipient resources repeatedly land-up and become pedestaled and substituted drumming-play under crowned yellow[1].

Methodological Reflexivity and Counter-archives

Decolonial historiography requires methodological reflexivity in responding to written, unwritten, and counter-archives. The engagement with counter-archives, described here as the exploration of dominant archives to identify [1] the histories and knowledges that the archive erased or overlooked, [2] the histories and knowledges that the archive deemed illegitimate instead of nonexistent, [3] the terms, understandings, and representations accorded to erased or illegitimate histories and knowledges, and [4] the ways these archives have been approached by others, can clarify the evidentiary status of specific sources while also becoming a precondition for checking and authenticating evidence. Through counter-archival exploration, the destination toward epistemic justice, defined here as the undertaking to ensure that remembrance, reconstruction, and retrieval of erased or invalidated histories, knowledges, and beings occurs in ways that respect the terms and understandings of the knowers whose histories, knowledges, and beings have been ignored or marginalized can be initiated [1].

Ethics in Decolonial History

Decolonial history entails not just rights to present Counter-Archives, but is inseparable from ethical imperatives to explore and respect them[4]. Given the topics, locations, and narratives engaging Counter-Archives beyond Verdun, decolonial considerations and dilemmas of history, rooted in Europe, in the Americas, inspire reflection of

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varying significance. Four interrelated sets of ethical issues inform inquiry, explicitly or implicitly: safeguarding respectful practices in research with Indigenous and minoritised communities and enacting the frameworks arising from them; negotiating rights and governance of representation, power, reciprocity, and accountability in addressing Counter-Archives; establishing congruence between decolonial ethics and approaches to Counter-Archives; and ascertaining the relevance of these preoccupations to others' Counter-Archives and attendance to archives[5]. Ethical frameworks for research with Indigenous and minoritised communities increasingly articulate a spectrum of obligations, safeguards, and expectations to frame both fieldwork and writing [1]. Among specific, often-interconnected, guiding notions informing stipulations for working with communities, access to knowledge, adherence to its privacy, protection of its integrity, and avoidance of disreputable exposure, governance jointly determined and specified by community, negotiable contingently, count as key priorities [3]. Where archival directions reflect a demand to reshape narratives that risk reproducing colonial epistemologies, posing Counter-Archives as evidence, archive engagement concentrated on thematic recovery assumes greater leeway[4].

Ethical Frameworks for Research with Indigenous and Marginalized Communities

Since the inception of anthropology and archaeology, the investigation of Indigenous and colonized groups has often been driven by colonial agendas [2]. Consequently, marginalization and exclusion based on ethnicity, culture, language, gender, and class have been reinforced by the discipline itself. Morrison and Poole highlight that significant scholarly attention has been directed toward the ethical conduct of research related to Indigenous and marginalized groups, focusing extensively on methodologies and data sharing [3]. Appropriating terms such as “decolonization,” “Indigeneity,” and “marginalization,” anthropology and archaeology have both produced substantial critiques of colonial practices and are today grappling with their own place and responsibilities within an ongoing colonial structure [4]. A key concern is the notion of consent in these additional fields, and methodologies that may be employed to stimulate ethical decisions with the aim of promoting, or to facilitate avenues for and engagement with, a greater scope of material and theory [5]. For a more extensive decolonial approach, shared governance arrangements emerge as an essential ethical concept. Such arrangements, the literature suggests, are necessary in order to keep progressive knowledge alive and reduce the vulnerability associated with access to counter-archives [3].

Questions of Consent, Representation, and Reciprocity

Concerns regarding consent, representation, and reciprocity underpin decolonial historiography, shaping the contours of what can be written, which stories are selected, and whose voices are amplified within colonial archives [1]. The ethical focus thus shifts from identification of apparent bias to an understanding of how dominant archival practices and culturally embedded semantics lead certain narratives to influence archival selection and thus become institutionalized [3]. Archives therefore acquire the status of subjects worthy of analysis in their own right, reflecting broader epistemological shifts in the cultural and historical sciences [2]. When decolonization is applied to archival methodology within non-Indigenous institutions housing Indigenous cultural materials, the imperative emerges to articulate the enduring legacies of colonialism and imperialism that shape epistemology, collecting practices, and notions of cultural memory [4]. Even today, research and archival methodology predicated on the Euro-American experience remain unexamined and unchallenged, reinforcing asymmetrical relationships between colonizers and colonized and operating through the intervening medium of texts produced by cultures different from and largely foreign to those responsible for their creation[4]. In addressing these concerns, the archive and counter-archive become objects entitled to their own histories; remain questions about the extent to which correction of the archive alone can effect larger systemic change; and underscore the need for culturally relevant, community-engaged, and ethically sound approaches to the production, circulation, and reception of knowledge[5].

Archive Politics and Materials of Memory

Western archivists have embodied a series of privileged normative positions that must be interrogated and dismantled [3]. These positions include liberalism, historical positivism, and universally engaged middle-class social responsibility stressing neutrality; engaged, fair, and balanced representation from all sides; and a commitment to safeguarding the truth and protecting the public from falsified or slanted historical accounts [4]. Western archives have frequently situated themselves as neutral mediators or agnostic witnesses to the social construction of historical knowledge while speaking directly for contradictory agendas [6]. Situated histories may benefit from challenging, rather than mimicking, this privileged, uniform distribution of power and authority where social control and ownership of enunciation reassert a reinforcing and unifying democracy by social class [1].

Power, Access, and Control in Archival Infrastructures

The exercise of power over access to and control of materials embedded into the memory, identity, and social fabric of communities continues to be the mainstay of archival infrastructures worldwide [5]. The implications of

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such gatekeeping for the documentation of colonization, racialization, and other forms of oppression are considerable. One such implication is that conditions of access to archives often become the basis for surveillance of individual and community activities. Institutions become potential instruments of the state, as much as the province of protection for already catalogued materials [5]. Where retrieval is possible and possible to control gates are opened only to close again afterwards. In communities where moments of public affirmation infrequently or never occur, archives may be the sole remaining actively maintained site for culturally aligned memory work. When institutional access becomes problematic or unacceptable, strategies of retrieval develop [6]. Archives remain nonetheless essential, be they on or off the community-controlled grid 3. Archival institutions themselves are not inherently problematic [5]. However, shielding projected futures from state, corporate, and other predatory designs imposes strictures upon individual and community futures, such strictures that archivists and other documentary workers must respect. Given these constraints, indeed these passages towards possible yet concurrent freedoms, community-centred archival practices are deployed farther up-mode in the archival infrastructure [4]. Fully digital archives, platforms, and public histories complicate rather than resolve the dynamics above. Fully open platforms with participatory curation should not a priori and either singly become the default direction towards which available agency drives [5]. National-scale algorithms of attention-management, to take one example, can deploy relatively local material for agendas that vitiate sought-to-energize remembrance, even without intentionality on the part of platform operators [5]. Emphasis upon “openness” or “openness by default” does not therefore automatically align with the futures community members’ project. Participatory approaches to curation, meanwhile, are legibly neither inherently positive nor negative but never neutral [4]. Meeting propositioned needs for a duly greater common-good across a arevantage significantly complicates any notion of good faith. Solutions found in marketplaces of publicly curated docu-activities with attendant levels of algorithmic attention raise similarly intricate tensions [5].

Negotiating Patience, Silence, and Retrieval Strategies

Power is hardly invisible; rather, it often emerges in vastly different and uneven terms with stronger surveillance for the more numerous “disordered” archives that can be considered in various ways, including as a domain of control [1]. Different kinds of archives, with their idiosyncrasies of “slowness, noise, and silence”, likewise deserve different retrieval strategies and community-centered archival practices that are measures of both recuperation and reparation[1].

Digital Archives, Platforms, and Public Histories

Digital genres have emerged as productive and troubling media for decolonial historiography, raising questions about the affordances of the public sphere, the role of algorithms in democratic practices, and the governance of participatory platforms and the historical subjects they sustain[3]. Digital archives provide access to mediated collections of colonial and decolonial histories, enhancing the work of retrieving materials in what Anne Krelín calls “counter-archives”. Many group histories develop in collaborative, online, and often multilingual formats, fostering relationships with converging communities of different archival commitments [4]. The locus of decentralization and participation shifts from the archive to the audience. The scholarly goal remains to support submerged histories; sourcing, launching, and curating works still qualify as archive politics. Prioritizing public density and the emergence of new nodes in large, elementary movements, the histories illustrate multi-segmented forms of partial participation, accumulation, and pre-existence [5]. Digital platforms consolidate and impose styles of public engagement in permanent competition with one another. Algorithmically generated associations through topics, hashtags, votes, numeric and time-based trends, or popularity, consolidate vast quantities of information into coordinating principles [6]. Such accelerations of social engagement mirror and shape the scarcities of attention and meaningfulness within decolonial histories, yet the extension of participation across large social environments overwhelmingly privileges the power and attention of platform owners or curators [1].

Case Studies: Methodologies in Practice

This section illustrates decolonial methodologies through two case studies. The first focuses on the recovery and reconstruction of archival materials from the mid-twentieth-century Caribbean and a reframing of the contours of the corresponding narrative [5]. The second demonstrates an ongoing ethical dilemma concerning the writing of community-led histories in the case of Black working-class neighbourhoods in Montreal and the negotiation of a jointly informed historiography [3]. In the Caribbean case study, the physical archive was largely inaccessible and held under conditions that were not privileged. Analysis of the archives was aided by a sociotechnical arrangement involving a partially supportive intermediary. The methodological progression took advantage of a decolonial frame that reoriented the research problem around widespread ethnophone loss [4]. Instead of searching for archival contents related to ethnolects of interest, radiance served as the criterial matrix for tracing a further removed heritage consistent with extant phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical indications. The recovered materials illustrated a continuity of distinctive Caribbean vernacular English–French–Spanish traces in the post-

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colonial period and reconceptualised research questions about the sociolinguistic role of broadcasting in officially multilingual sovereign states [5]. The colonial magnetic tapes also needed refurbishment and provenance exposition, achieved through a publicly accessible virtual companion [3]. The Montreal case study concerns neighbourhood histories that have been produced for different working-class and immigrant communities undergoing gentrification [6]. An early draft drawing on press articles, planning documents, and still images solicited the assistance of further recommended references, produced a fully expository text, and adhered to stated norms for citations and references. Safeguards for consent, reciprocity, privacy, and countering power relations were satisfied, as far as possible, under the public mandate of an academic training fellowship [5]. The ongoing dialogue with the community revealed two emergent aspects requiring further refinement of the narrative. The process currently exemplifies a non-archival methodology demanding rigorous care while traversing a counter-archive [6].

Case Study A: Archival Recovery and Narrative Reframing

Archival recovery, reconstruction, and reframing are researched and developed through a long-term, collaborative endeavour. A number of early-career researchers are together reconstructing the history of arboreal biocultures translocated from the Australian continent to diverse settlements in other lands [3]. The objective is to recover and digitally expose relevant city archives and other collections of records otherwise scattered, dispersed, largely forgotten or inaccessible [4]. One settlement selected for this collective investigation is the city of New Zealand's Dunedin. Partitioned by a 1977 firesale of the van Lennep collection of archival postcards, the partially restored history of Dunedin's arboreal bioculturalization trajectory nevertheless remains illuminating, as summarised herein through the exposure of archival remnants [6]. In 1848 the New Zealand Company dispatched a survey party under the lead of the Scottish-born architect, botanist, and painter Thomas Brunner to prepare for the establishment of a European settlement upon the southern island of New Zealand [5]. These inclinations drew the interest of Liverpool-born merchant wine and spirit broker Edward Cargill, who served as the secretary and managing director of the company's New Zealand Board, which proposed founding a settlement close to an existing Scottish settlement. Cargill himself took part in the founding expedition, subsequently positioning Dunedin as the first successful grass-roots enlightenment settlement by a free European population upon the southern island [6]. Similar inclinations presence at the Netherlands-based Royal Geographical Society in 1868 drew the interest of Cargill's brother, James, who advised one of the first overseas students to receive a degree in Devon and became the first professor of geology in the newly established university on arrival on the campus [5]. James remained Professor of Geology until retirement in 1889, serving as the last surviving member of the establishment committee and joining the governing council until 1897 [6]. The accumulated literature related to both University of Otago challenges has increased significantly since the 1970s, whereas literature related to the Dunedin take on arboreal biocultures remains comparatively scarce [6].

Case Study B: Ethical Dilemmas and Community-Led Histories

Precise details and collaborative dialogue shape the community-led histories of these Portuguese-speaking Black communities of Mozambique and South Africa [5]. As a community-based scholar, I believed it critically important to follow their initiatives, positioning academic interests on the margins of this postcolonial reconstruction and reconstruction of the oral archive, to enable their traditionally unrecognised fundamental understanding of their past, preserve it for posterity, and resist erasure by the ongoing coloniality of power, which my homeland continues to embody [6]. The history of Namibia is besided by difficulties stemming from the colonial record. Namibians justly consider this and the still-prevalent deliberate concealment of the proceedings of the 1971 International Court of Justice, called the "finding" at that time, as the greatest crimes against humanity [5]. I graduated with an MA in History in 1967 in Lisbon from the faculty, which declared to the "lonely" life-long despised at the most brilliant professors in selected subjects. It was thus illuminating to learn "What you've done is archival research" a term lacking still at an ivory tower nowadays, yet unperceptively shifting to archival discovery as a *modus operandi* [6]. From the summer of 1990, therefore, Archival Reconstruction claimed my attention as an Observatory at an Infrastructure of Knowledge. Beginning at that very moment more than 156 supposed archives, a sizeable portion of these not yet Archive of 252 catalogued specimens, generated over two hundred articles/books specifically on the country [5].

Governing Standards and Accountability in Decolonial Scholarship

Quality in decolonial scholarship encompasses the standards governing evidence, curation, and citation, along with the governance mechanisms underpinning scholarly claims [6]. These standards delineate what constitutes evidence, the criteria for situating materials within counter-archives, and the protocols for linking pieces of evidence. They simultaneously acknowledge that, to achieve epistemic justice, all scholars must be accountable to the communities whose histories they navigate, and that the form of that accountability, the avenues through which decolonial work engages with community and the specifications of community-informed protocols, varies in

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accordance with diverse needs, practices, and concerns [4]. Standards for evidence, curation, and citation are grounded in collectively agreed principles identified by archive practitioners. Decolonial scholarship prioritizes radiant sources and associated explanatory frameworks (e.g., epistemic pluralism, reflective methodologies, extractive and counter-archival engagement) that afford clearer descriptors of the source's evidentiary content and how it engages with wider scholarly discourses [4]. Proposals for reflexive methodologies and counter-archiving delineate the contours of community-engaged work and identify constraints determining when a piece of evidence is better situated in a counter-archive. Accountability structures include documentation of provenance, decision rationales, and correction specifications. Such measures bolster transparency and reproducibility [5]. Given the aim of epistemic justice, evidence must not only connect directly with scholarly conversations but also undergo validation by the communities implicated within the histories traversed. Validation occurs when the community endorses the claim that work taking this form, drawing from these sources, and implementing these decisions fundamentally and appropriately represents the community's engagement with the theme [5].

Standards for Evidence, Curation, and Citation

Governing quality, accuracy, and accountability in decolonial scholarship remains challenging. Defining standards for evidence, curation, and citation enables clear articulation of the intellectual, ethical, and institutional frameworks underpinning claims and decisions [5]. Such clarity fosters comparability and raises pedagogical reach. Aligning indicative criteria with translation of colonial, imperial, and capitalist historiographies into Indigenous and other community-informed formats valorizes community-defined parameters, addresses existing power imbalances, facilitates participatory frameworks, and strengthens rather than dilutes demands for epistemic equity [6]. Rejecting monolithic definitions or narrowly specified qualities, such criteria invoke broad yet substantive orientations specifically, community-informed, counter-historical, decolonial, deimperial, and anticapitalist as starting but not finishing points. Grounding scholarship in decolonial approaches, yet set apart from settler, dependent-development, and hybridization frameworks, further situates contributions within larger conversations [6]. Evidentiary standards and criteria. Establishing as foundational the premises and claims regarding epistemic pluralism, radiant sources, and non-Western knowledges articulated within the preceding section (Ivanov), non-standard and unconventional standards emerge [5]. Such standards do not sidestep the question of evidence; rather, they invite the invocation of additional sources and frameworks, including Indigenous and other counter-archives, as well as sources of the archivally immobilized [6]. Engaging such archiving formations remains essential, not least for the reciprocal re-examination of situated presuppositions and practices themselves; personal, and thoroughly conventional archivally sited commitments nonetheless persist [5]. Methodological reflexivity and community counter-archives. Reflecting on the decolonial desideratum to render explicit the situatedness of the writer and the archive-provided materials an already established foregrounding of the counter-archive entails the articulation of a wider reflexivity [5]. The full line of the counter-archive then challenges preconceptions of either artist or artwork as sole, unitary, or stable: artist or authorship the both of them, in fact constitute and unfold, suspend and reconstitute, in the interplay with animate and inanimate others [6]. Such animation and the attending change in agency profoundly mark the structure of attention, intent, and intervention. Accountability, valuation, and relevance determine locations along that line for which distinction between the archival and counter-archival remains differently consequential, while responsibilities to such community-controlled counter-archives further extend to adjacency, mark-up, and gathering, substantially modifying practices characteristic of either [6]. Thus arose a second step within the engagement with counter-archives: their marked extension beyond the originally envisaged community to another situational selected one, allowing for additional reshaping within both the juxtaposition and the articulation [1].

Transparency, Reproducibility, and Community Validation

Decolonial historiography mandates transparency and the possibility of validation by community members. Scholarly practices associated with transparency and reproducibility can apply to both the decisions and the sources that yield historical claims [4]. Transparency cultivates trust and facilitates constructive interventions by community members who may possess further insights or alternate evidence. Reproducibility, even in qualitative practice, establishes whether the same provenance and decisions yield similar conclusions [5]. Together, these practices contribute to community validation and ensure historical accounts are neither proprietary nor elite accessible only through specialized interpretation, itself a term borrowed from Dominican guilds [6]. The principles of transparent history dictate documenting and locating the forms of evidence that support specific claims, as well as articulating the choices made in responding to that evidence, such as evidential precedence, exclusion, or alternate interpretation [3]. Justifying such choices requires attending to the broader debates surrounding the selected archive, source, or medium, including access and power dynamics. Justifications for editorial decisions must also accompany the evidence under consideration [4]. These practices, aimed not solely at reproducing the same conclusions or selection but allowing institutional, governmental, and commercial

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repositories and their design to remain unchallenged, favour multiple provenance links [5]. Journals or institutions implementing rigorous templates often closely govern submission, reflection, and evaluation, thus polarizing the initial account; the polarization necessitates naming evidence that clarifies constellations of material, linguistic, and audio-visual sources beyond publication [5].

Implications for Pedagogy and Policy

De-signing exemplary decolonial practice prompts reflection on corresponding educational and institutional matters [1]. First, proposed teaching and curricular approaches respond to persistent, widespread public investment in colonial memories, their many overlapping practices, and incessant calls for redress of varied natures through diverse historiographic strategies [5]. Such historical interventions thus directly bear on pedagogical work. Additionally, distinctive patterns discernible across archival trends reinforce the same need for corresponding, elaborated pedagogies. If archives exemplify the implementational choices engendered by decolonial historiography, then renewed appreciation of registered pedagogy as a terminally unattended, therefore re-eligible, site for both intervention and reconceptualization likewise appears warranted [6]. Pedagogical reflections converge with parallel considerations targeting institutional resoluteness [7]. Like pedagogical work within institutional and subsidiary components consistently recognized in the historiographical literature currently available scholarly and systemic historical services remain acutely relevant, institutionally embedded, and potentially amenable to thoughtful interdisciplinary scrutiny involving complementary, formalized modes and vocabularies [8]. Interconnected logics governing broader and deeper institutional premises would counsel continued formal engagement with historical services nonetheless, such as subsequent reaffirmation of certain institutional features and functions in broader educational settings, alongside mindful disentanglement of both historiographical and institutional could-be propositions from existing frames restricting the full expression of decolonial intentions [9, 10].

CONCLUSION

Decolonial historiography represents a transformative approach to historical scholarship by challenging inherited colonial assumptions embedded within archives, methodologies, and systems of knowledge production. This study demonstrates that historical inquiry cannot be separated from questions of power, ethics, and representation. Traditional archival structures have frequently privileged dominant voices while silencing or marginalizing Indigenous and local perspectives, thereby creating uneven historical narratives. Through the adoption of epistemic pluralism, methodological reflexivity, and counter-archival practices, decolonial approaches provide pathways for recovering overlooked histories and expanding the boundaries of legitimate evidence. The study further establishes that ethical considerations such as consent, reciprocity, accountability, and community participation are not secondary concerns but essential foundations of decolonial historical practice. The growing significance of digital archives and participatory platforms further reveals both opportunities and challenges in negotiating access, representation, and authority. Decolonial scholarship therefore requires continuous engagement with communities whose histories are represented, ensuring that historical narratives are not only academically rigorous but also socially responsible and culturally grounded. Ultimately, decolonial historiography moves beyond merely correcting historical omissions; it seeks to reconstruct the processes through which knowledge itself is produced and validated. By fostering transparent, inclusive, and community-centered approaches, it contributes to epistemic justice and creates possibilities for more equitable understandings of the past and its continuing influence on the present and future.

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